

NatioMaryland Library Association  
Steering Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, December 17, 2025  
1:00pm - 3:00pm

Zoom:

<https://marylandlibraries.zoom.us/j/96070262083?pwd=VTV2eXNQRmNsZU8yK0kxb1g0TE5uQT09>

**Call to Order**

**David Dahl**

- **David called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm**

**Changes to the Agenda**

- David called for changes to the agenda. The only change is that Conni Strittmatter was not in attendance and the Business Agenda Item for Advocacy/Marketing Reorganization Discussion will be brought up at the next meeting.

**Treasurer's Report**

**Cheryl Nardiello**

- Balance Sheet
  - We are 5 months into the fiscal year. The checking account is up 15.91% compared to this time last year, and the Reserves account is up 2.38 % over the same time last year.
- Profit and Loss
  - Not a lot of activity this month
  - We had an increase in our investment income.
  - Vendor fees GL 3000-05 brought in \$2,400, and Sponsorships brought in \$500.00 from ESCO for a total of \$2,900 in Annual Conference income.
  - GL 3040 – Membership dues totaled \$1,267.50.
  - GL 3060.03 YSD brought in \$30.00.
  - Total Income \$4,383.49
  - Credit card transaction fees expense \$197.28
  - Dues and subscriptions for Microsoft 365 and Survey Monkey totaled \$335.84.
  - Total Personnel expenses included GL 4800 \$500.00 for CAE Exam fee.
  - GL 4800 \$608.08
  - Expense totaled \$75.00 for a total income of \$4,308.41, which is 10.02 percent spent so far, this year.
- Questions and comments

- David asked about our long-term reserves and asked about bringing in our account manager. Josh said he would investigate getting online and having someone come in to look the account over. He mentioned that we do have a generalized audit.
- David asked about the purple-highlighted area, and there is no highlight meaning.
- David asked if we had enough money to sponsor National Library Legislative Day. It would be \$1,000.00. Will discuss further later in the agenda. We also need to review allocating additional funds for educational grants., and Josh said he would be ok giving money to the educational grant for January. Will discuss further later in the agenda.
- David questioned whether there were 2 lines for the 4030 conferences. Both are linked together, not separate.
- Josh said that the expenses have been light to date because he just got a bill in from Cecil County for back payroll. The expenses will reflect in December.
- Starting in January, Josh hired QuickBooks to run his payroll for MLA. He got the high-tier plan and will review it in 6 months and eventually lower the tiers.
- There was a short discussion about the fee structure for individuals to be reviewed and possibly changed for next year, not this current fiscal year. Josh said we will also look at the whole pricing structure. Also discussed was that the bylaws may have to be changed to where the fees could be structured to go up yearly or another specific amount of time. Josh said that right now, the new system allows people to pay the annual dues, and we get a service fee. A suggestion was to build up that service fee when fees are restructured. A suggestion was made to review maybe a \$1.00 per year vs. \$10.00, so it wouldn't be a big jump at once. It could be based on inflation. David said we would have to do some homework on it.
- Motion made by Teonja to file the financial reports for audit. Joe Thompson seconded the motion.

## **Affinity Network Training Documentation**

**Teonja Jung**

- Teonja uploaded two documents to the shared folder: a PowerPoint presentation and a rubric. The PowerPoint presentation is expected to take approximately one hour to complete during the initial training session. Following the first training, the anticipated time commitment will be reassessed. If a recommendation is made through the EDI panel to create a group, the rubric will serve as the standard evaluation and guidance tool for that process.

- The Board discussed whether it was appropriate to proceed with the proposed EDI training. Teonja reviewed the PowerPoint presentation with the Steering Committee, going through each slide and the accompanying notes. The group members include Teonja, William, Dillion, with Shirley Mason serving as a resource.
- The presentation begins with three stated objectives through which attendees may earn CEUs. The slides explain the use of the term *Affinity Networks* rather than *Affinity Groups*, emphasizing that these spaces are intended for individuals who carry identities that are historically marginalized or underrepresented, rather than for allies. Allies may be invited by the group for specific purposes. The presentation clarifies the distinction between affinity networks and interest groups.
- A concern was raised regarding the potential for unintentional exclusion if a facilitator questions an individual's self-identification. Teonja explained that the training includes discussion of intersectionality and multiple identities and that no proof of identity will be required. Efforts will be made to ensure participants are not made to feel uncomfortable based on appearance or assumptions.
- The importance of a strong connection between the EDI Panel and affinity network facilitators was emphasized, with a recommendation that facilitators attend EDI Panel meetings. Facilitators will also be asked to establish clear norms for their spaces, which will outline expectations and be reiterated at each meeting. Josh noted that this is where the Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics will apply. Teonja stated that she will incorporate the Code of Conduct into the presentation after this meeting.
- The presentation further addressed the rationale for creating affinity networks, citing MLA values of diversity, empathy, understanding, and inclusion. As a professional association, MLA seeks to create spaces that support engagement from individuals across different backgrounds, libraries, and communities.
- Slides go into the different roles of the facilitator. The facilitator will be the guide and the lead of the group. They will handle all the logistics of how and when they meet. Attend the monthly EDI panel to share what has happened in the group. If the facilitator can't go, then the Co-facilitator should go if there is one. Having a co-facilitator helps but is not mandatory. The co-facilitator can also act as that second set of eyes in the meeting and read the room as a process observer and a time manager. If it is a virtual meeting, they can monitor the chat. The last part explains the overlap. How are they sharing duties, and how to work together?
- The next two slides outlined what happens next in space. The first one talks about the environment as we identify it as a safe and brave space. Space means no judgment or criticism and a lack of pressure. Don't call people out, especially if they don't want to speak up.
- There was a whole conversation around notes and minutes. Minutes are good if you have action items or for people who miss meetings. Let everyone know at beginning of the meeting that notes will be taken and what the purpose it has. Should be active.

- The Steering Committee discussed facilitation practices related to listening, noting that elements of the training content were adapted from Anne Arundel County and Cassie from BPCL. Emphasis was placed on allowing moments of reflection and pause during discussions when needed, and on clearly communicating participant anonymity.
- David expressed continued questions regarding the documentation of meetings, specifically whether participant comments would be quoted. It was clarified that documentation would consist of general highlights rather than verbatim statements. A suggestion was made to refer to these as “discussion highlights” instead of minutes. Teonja confirmed that the text included on the slides serves as facilitator notes.
- The second key component discussed was group discussion. It was recommended that discussion topics be identified in advance but limited to one or two items to avoid overwhelming participants and to support conversation if discussion slows. The presentation includes sample questions designed to help generate conversation and brainstorming. It was noted that no single perspective should dominate discussion, and that a co-facilitator could assist in monitoring balance and engagement.
- The importance of celebration and positive moments within space was also discussed, noting that meetings do not always need to be heavily focused or emotionally intensive. This concluded the training content review. The final slides addressed available resources, and Teonja stated that the Code of Conduct will be added to the presentation following this meeting.
- The Steering Committee discussed the need for a fair and equitable process when individuals or groups approach the EDI Panel with a request to create an affinity network. A scoring rubric was developed for use at full EDI Panel meetings to ensure all required criteria are consistently addressed. The rubric aligns with the MLA Diversity Statement. Teonja concluded the slide presentation at this point and returned the discussion to recommendations and next steps.
- It was noted that the original intent was to issue a call in December; however, a January release was deemed acceptable. Teonja stated that, pending Steering Committee approval of the materials reviewed, she is prepared to present the proposal to the EDI Panel. The Panel will determine when to issue the call and how long it will remain open. The first training session would then be scheduled, with implementation anticipated in February or early March.
- The Steering Committee endorsed both the proposed plan and the projected timeline.
- The committee also discussed existing affinity network models at BCPL, noting that there are currently three groups at different stages of development: one well-established group, one active group, and one newly formed group. BCPL previously convened facilitators from these groups to share experiences and engage in collaborative discussion. A similar concept, tentatively referred to as a “Facilitators Conference,” was discussed as a possible future initiative, to be considered after evaluating how the MLA program develops.
- David and Teonja will coordinate on the timing of the call and will defer to the EDI Panel regarding the length of time it remains open. Josh will begin developing a forum and will share it via MLA Connect, with support from Marylib and Danielle to assist with broader distribution.

- David shared his screen to review the proposed Code of Conduct. A vote was not taken at the last Executive Board meeting, as members had only a few days to review the document and limited feedback was provided at that time. No major concerns were identified during the review.
- Teonja noted that while harassment is referenced under prohibited behaviors, the language could be strengthened by explicitly including microaggressions as a separate bullet or clarification. It was discussed whether prohibited behavior would require a pattern or could be a single occurrence. Teonja clarified that a single occurrence would be sufficient. Suggested language included: “Harassment or intimidation (including microaggressions) are prohibited behaviors.”
- David proposed taking a vote to adopt the Code of Conduct on an interim basis for use with conference registrations occurring prior to the January meeting, contingent upon agreement that the proposed language revisions were sufficient.
- Josh raised the need for an appeals process to be included in the Code of Conduct, noting that individuals reported for violations should have a clear investigation and appeals pathway. Josh shared examples from other associations for reference. It was agreed that an appeals process is an important component and should be added during the Code of Conduct review.
- David stated that the Code of Conduct does not need to be fully finalized prior to the conference, and that attendees could be asked to acknowledge the Code of Conduct during registration or via the MLA website. David also described revisions made to the application section to align with MLA language, removing references across the Board except where applicable to MLA events, the Advisory Council, and the Executive Board. The only substantive change was the addition of language specifying that incidents involving the Executive Director would be reviewed by the Executive Board. No other sections were identified as needing close review.
- David will complete the proposed updates and place the revised Code of Conduct on the agenda for the January Executive Board meeting for a full vote.
- The Code of Conduct references the Code of Ethics, which addresses professional ethics. David noted that the current Code of Ethics is adapted from an older ALA version. The Board discussed whether to continue using the current version, adopt the updated ALA Code of Ethics, or develop a new MLA-specific version. Josh suggested adopting the updated ALA Code of Ethics, given MLA’s status as an ALA chapter, pending Board review in January.

## **Educational Grants for January Cycle**

**David Dahl and Josh Stone**

- The Board reviewed funding levels for Educational Grants, noting that \$6,000 had been allocated across two cycles this year. However, nearly all funds had been expended during the first cycle, leaving a balance of approximately \$5. No funds were currently available for a second cycle. The Board discussed whether additional funds could be added to the January Educational Grants cycle.
- Josh recommended allocating additional funds, noting that Educational Grants remain central to MLA’s mission and demonstrate support for members. He stated that the organization could sustain a potential deficit of up to \$3,000 if necessary. Cheryl indicated she was comfortable with this approach, and David agreed.

- It was noted that this would be the first grant cycle managed by the Awards Committee. As no funds were currently budgeted for this purpose, a formal vote was required. The Board discussed the amount to be allocated and reached consensus on \$3,000 – the typical amount for each cycle - to be added to the Educational Grants line item.
- **Motion:** Cheryl moved to approve the allocation of \$3,000 for Educational Grants. **Second:** Joe seconded the motion.
- Joe cautioned that reallocating funds in this manner should not become regular practice and emphasized that this decision should be treated as an exception. David confirmed that this was intended to be a time-bound decision. Teonja recused herself from the vote.
- **Vote:** The motion passed, with approximately 75% of attendees voting in favor of allocating \$3,000.
- Josh will work with Cathy to publicize the availability of funds to potential applicants.

### **Elected positions without candidates**

**David Dahl**

- The Steering Committee received informational updates regarding the LDD Vice-President vacancy. It was noted that all bylaws and manual documentation assume candidates are identified **five months in advance of the conference**, and while the Association nearly met that timeline this year, the LDD Vice-President position currently remains vacant.
- David reported that he posted a message on **MLA Connect** announcing the slate of candidates and specifically noted the lack of candidates for the LDD Vice-President position. He expressed hope that a nomination may be submitted by petition, which requires signatures from **ten members of the Association at the appropriate membership level**. The petition process remains open until **January 8**, and completed petitions should be submitted to **Tif**.
- David stated that if a petition is received, the Association would have a full slate of candidates. If no petition is submitted, efforts should continue to identify candidates that can be voted on through a **special election**. Should that approach also be unsuccessful, and the Association enters July with an officer vacancy, probationary status for the division may need to be considered by the Executive Board.
- David invited ideas or suggestions from the Steering Committee.

### **National Library Legislative Day**

**David Dahl and Josh Stone**

- The Board discussed a potential sponsorship opportunity related to an American Library Association (ALA) initiative – National Library Legislative Day - scheduled for late February. Applications to express interest in participation closed the previous Friday. The sponsorship cost is **\$1,000** and would cover attendance for one individual.
- It was noted that under a newly implemented ALA model, ALA staff will determine the participant selected to attend, and sponsoring organizations will not have input into the selection process. There was discussion regarding whether sponsorship would influence eligibility; however, it was confirmed that sponsors do not have a role in selecting attendees.
- Joe explained that the program is structured as a hybrid model. Staff may be in the office, but the event would be considered part of the district workday. The first day consists of

training, and on the second day the House will not be in session. Josh added that the event may align with a district staff day.

- The Board acknowledged its general support of ALA initiatives and the importance of being represented; however, the Legislative Panel expressed that it did not see sufficient value in attending or sponsoring the event at this time. The risks of not having MLA members involved were discussed.
- David confirmed the sponsorship amount is \$1,000 and noted that there is no current deadline for committing to sponsorship.
- After discussion, the Steering Committee agreed to **delay a decision** until the **January full Board meeting**. Josh will contact Lisa to confirm how long the sponsorship opportunity will remain open and to inquire whether she has information regarding expected participation. David will place the item on the January Board agenda for further consideration.

### **Advocacy/Marketing Reorganization Discussion**

**Conni Strittmatter**

The Advocacy/Marketing reorganization discussion was **not held**, as **Conni Strittmatter was not present**. It will be tabled until the next meeting. There is a document that Conni put together in MLA Connect if you want to look over it.

### **President's Report –**

**David Dahl**

- David reported that a MASL Board meeting and the Legislative Panel meeting were held on the same day; however, due to illness, he was unable to attend either meeting.
- The Board was reminded that at the November Board meeting, MLA approved providing support to ACRL for its 2029 conference in Baltimore. A letter of support was submitted, and acknowledgment was received. ACRL indicated that a decision will be made at their Board meeting in January.
- David noted that he is responsible for identifying a recipient for the President's Customer Service Award and requested assistance with nominations. He indicated particular interest in receiving nominations from academic libraries and noted nominations for other MLA awards as another possible source .
- David reported on his attendance at ALA's Chapter Advocacy Workshop for chapter leaders, which is typically offered to incoming state library association leaders and school library association counterparts. During related discussions with a counterpart from Maryland Association of School Libraries (MASL), renewed interest in exploring the possibility of MASL joining under the MLA umbrella. David indicated that no commitments were made and that the MASL counterpart was encouraged to follow up if the conversation progresses within MASL.
- David stated that it may have been more beneficial for Conni, as President-Elect, to attend the advocacy workshop this year. The workshop focuses on assessing and strengthening advocacy efforts; it would be helpful for someone coming into their year as MLA President more than it may be helpful for the current President to prepare for the

legislative session. He noted that this is something MLA may want to review in future years.

- Josh asked whether the Legislative Panel Chair might attend in the future; David clarified that the workshop is not exclusively legislative in nature. Josh also asked whether Conni could attend as the complimentary ALA chapter leader representative and whether MLA could afford to send an additional attendee. David noted that this question should be directed at appropriate ALA staff, perhaps in the Chapter Relations Office, and that not every state sends two representatives. He also observed that he was not aware of any state sending more than two attendees.
- As a related aside, Joe Thompson announced that he has been accepted to attend National Legislative Day.
- Another idea that arose during the ALA advocacy workshop addressed the use of personal or work email addresses for Google for Nonprofits accounts. David expressed ongoing concerns about confidentiality and noted that he maintains a separate email address for this purpose. The possibility of establishing role-based email addresses for officer positions was discussed as a way to ensure confidentiality. Josh noted that a generic President email address already exists for MLA.
- The Board discussed the possibility of establishing role-based Google accounts for all officer positions to ensure confidentiality and provide consistent points of contact for ALA communications. It was noted that this approach would simplify annual roster updates and ensure communications are sent to the appropriate individuals each year. Google for Nonprofits has identified this as a feasible option. Josh stated that he could contact Bob to request a current list of officer email addresses. Overall, David commented positively on the workshop and noted that he found it beneficial.

### **Executive Director's Report**

**Josh Stone**

- Josh provided a membership update of 3,874 members, including 319 active members, 15 affiliate members, and 172 new members since January.
- Josh also reported that he sat for the CEA exam on Friday and expects to receive results in February.

### **Past President's report**

**Teonja Jung**

- Teonja reported that she has been working closely with the EDI Panel and the training for the Affinity network over the past month or so.
- Teonja also raised a concern regarding the current nominations process. The Board discussed the need to review the nominations process, including whether a threshold for eligibility should be established prior to placement on the ballot and whether the Nominations Committee should conduct a review of candidates. This was identified as an issue to consider for the next election cycle; the slate is already set for this year.
- Joe noted that this situation provides a timely example for evaluating and improving the process. Suggestions included offering a virtual MLA orientation session to help prospective candidates better understand the organization and encouraging informed

participation in leadership roles. It was noted that the Nominations Committee would be responsible for maintaining fairness and transparency in the process.

**ALA Councilor's report**

**Joe Thompson**

- ALA Council will be meeting over three virtual meetings at the end of January. There is no Midwinter, and there is no LibLearnX event . He will attend those three council meetings on Zoom.

**Conference Director Report**

**Paula Mitchell not in attendance -Josh Stone**

- Speaker agreements are going out. We are waiting to hear back from accepted nominees before we tell people that they have not been accepted. Registration opens in early January.

**Adjournment - Josh** moved to adjourn the meeting, and Joe seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.