

MARAC

Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference

Delaware • District of Columbia • Maryland • New Jersey
New York • Pennsylvania • Virginia • West Virginia

STEERING COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 24, 2020

9:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.

Teleconference – Zoom Link: <https://psu.zoom.us/j/255414631>

MINUTES

In Attendance: Jennie Knies, Amanda May, Rachael Grove Rohrbaugh, Caitlin Rizzo, Josue Hurtado, Jessica Johnson, Molly Tighe, Sara Predmore, Diane Bockrath, Sara Borden, Andrew Cassidy-Amstutz, Joni Floyd, Hillary Kativa, Lauren Brown, Matt Testa, Danna Bell, Jane LaBarbara, Kate Palm, Josette Schluter, Sharmila Bhatia, Laura Montgomery, Jan Zastrow, Liz Scott, Anne McDonough, Don Cornelius,

I) Call to Order (5 min) (9:34 a.m.)

- A) Introductions
- B) Overview of Zoom Protocols/Procedures
- C) Approval of Agenda – approved

II) Approval of Steering Committee Minutes (5 min)

- A) November 2019 Minutes – Minutes approved.
 - i) Minutes Corrections: Typo in Andrew’s name in the list of attendees to be corrected.

III) Officer’s Reports (15 min)

- A) Chair
 - i) Chair’s Report (Rohrbaugh) – Report submitted
 - ii) Administrator’s Report (Predmore) – Report submitted
 - (1) Two more sponsorships have been received for Harrisburg: one sponsorsip for \$500 and another sponsorship from Atlas will support the Meet and Greet.
- B) Chair-Elect (Knies) – Report submitted
- C) Meetings Coordinator (Mannix) – Report submitted
 - (1) Will hold until and return after the break when Mary is able to join us.
- D) Secretary (Rizzo) – No report submitted

E) Treasurer (May) – Report submitted

- (1) The Second Quarter Treasurer’s Report is as expected. Any questions can be directed to Amanda now. (No questions.)
- (2) The proposed budget for Harrisonburg, VA (Spring 2020) is updated and available in the combined report. We do need to vote on it. In this revision, tours and workshops have been reworked, food costs have been lowered to make sure that we meet our food/beverage minimum but do not exceed, and registration prices have been raised. The current budget also reflects changes to audiovisual costs. We not only have better estimates at the moment, but we have definitely tightened the budget up. Right now, we’re projecting a profit, which we are excited about. Finance has approved the budget.
- (3) Motion to approve the budget for Harrison budget. **All votes in favor. None opposed. No abstentions.**
- (4) Discussion: Is there a cap on registration fees? Sharmila thought there may be a cap, but Amanda felt that there is not. The Meetings Manual indicates that the cap is \$115 for the base rate of registration. Any increases need to be brought to Steering Committee. The Steering Committee has approved this increase already, so no need to vote at the moment; however, we may consider the cap on registration costs as a topic for later discussion.
- (5) There is a \$40,000.00 credit from the Harrisonburg hotel, which is good news.
- (6) Thank you for the savings from doing a remote meeting!

F) Parliamentarian (Novara) – No report submitted.

IV) Old Business (60 min)

A) Membership Survey (Borden)

- (1) We will hold discussion for after break to ensure Sara can be here.

B) Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship (Hurtado)

- (1) Discussion: Harrisonburg Program committee co-chairs to test out the process for the Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship on the proposals for Harrisonburg. Together they identified 10 out of 27 proposals as being eligible for the scholarship. Those 10 proposals were run through the rubric for eligibility and three front runners were identified as eligible proposals including: a workshop from Archives For Black Lives in Philadelphia, a session on Suffrage Legacies at HBCUs, and a session on the Sights and Sounds of Civil Rights activism. The rubric worked well and if this would have been more than a run-through the winner would have been the workshop presented by the Archives For Black Lives in Philadelphia group. However, a few dependencies have been identified.
- (2) Discussion: There is no standardized form for proposals, which made it difficult to get enough information from the Program Committee to apply the rubric. We need to see more of the actual proposal submission, but also we need to consider a standardized form for proposals if there is not already a form as well as timing. Hillary offers that past Program Committess have used a google form for proposals. Molly adds that other groups use a “find-a-collaborator” spreadsheet, which could also be helpful. Rachel and Josette agree that this will be useful and agree to bring this to Meetings Coordinating Committee for further review. Josue adds that this should also help to assuage concerns around equity that can be posed when individuals must reach out directly to answer the call.

- (3) Discussion: Rachel asks what the current timeline for implementation will be. Josue offers that we would like to continue a dry run with proposal forms and see if there anything else we would need to implement. Right now, we would be considering feedback and planning to implement for Long Branch. Don adds that Long Branch will be using Google form, so proposal forms should not be a concern. Jennie suggests that Josue and Don meet to discuss the Google form and consider a check box to allow participants to “opt-in” to consideration for scholarship. Jessica suggests the current form might be altered to help address the need for more information as well, including additional questions and contacts. Jennie offers that we should make sure that Google forms live on MARAC’s Google account and Sarah adds that we may consider MemberClicks. Rachel suggests we consider Google as an easier option. Rachel offers to take the lead on implementing this for Long Branch by proposing some communication between Mary/Josette, Don, Josue, and Caitlin to create the Google Form, add it to the Operations Manual, and implement for the second call for proposals for Long Branch. Rachel says we will not offer at Long Branch, but we can definitely figure this form out and aim vote at Harrisonburg to move forward for Saratoga Springs. Amanda says that she knows it’s important to get it right, but we have been discussing this for 2 years. Rachel agrees and Josue adds he’s not sure but wants to make sure there’s no issues that may come up. Decision to move forward for Long Branch.
- (4) Discussion: Don adds that he would love to have a contact from the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to liaise with the Program Committee on these scholarships, and Josue agrees.
- (5) Discussion: Josue asks for final confirmation on the ability to pay recipients up front versus reimburse? Amanda offers that it is okay to pre-pay as long as we can have the receipts afterwards.
- (6) Discussion: Can we vote now? Josue clarifies that we are voting on Option 2 for this amendment. Rachael offers that if the Treasurer and DIC are comfortable we can go to vote, and that we should be aware that the text we are voting on requires a check box for proposals. Don adds that this would be easy assuming we go forward with codifying the Google form for proposal submissions. Decision to go to vote.
- (7) Motion to vote on Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship. **All votes in favor. None opposed. No abstentions.**

BREAK AT 10:53 AM RECONVENE AT 11:05 AM

V) Officer’s Reports—Continued (5 min)

A) Meetings Coordinator (Mannix) – Report submitted

- (1) Jane LaBarbara provides a correction to the submitted report on Mary’s behalf: the Morgantown hotel’s food and beverage minimum was actually \$15,000.
- (2) Jane also noted that Sharmila and Danna will be Program committee co-chairs for College Park.

VI) Old Business—Continued

A) Membership Survey (Borden):

- (1) Discussion: Working together we’ve come up with a new and improved survey for 2020. Both the Chair and Chair-Elect have approved and the Administrator has created a survey in Survey Monkey. Sarah Borden will test out the survey with the Steering

Committee to see how long it will take and draft language for the email to distribute the survey. Decision: The survey should then get officially sent out in early February to avoid any confusion that might come from sending out at the same time as the election ballot.

- (2) Discussion: Rachel asks what the timing is for compiling and distributing results. Sarah says she is not sure, but is open to the idea of a deadline. Decision: Sarah suggests four weeks would be enough and agrees with Rachel to report out on the survey results at Harrisburg.

B) Workshop Instructor Contracts (Newman)

- (1) Discussion: Paige is not here, so Rachel advises that we hold on workshop instructor contracts. Rachel asks Danna if we need to vote on these contracts. Danna advises that we do vote on them. Rachel advises that we vote via e-mail or at Harrisonburg. Matt would like a complete copy to vote on. Decision: Rachael will check in to identify the final version with Paige and whether there is an immediate need to vote. If there is, we will vote via e-mail; otherwise, we will defer this topic to Harrisonburg.

VII) **New Business (60 min)**

A) Conference Recommendations (May)

- (1) Discussion: Amanda has compiled a series of recommendations on how to prevent significant losses like those suffered during the Cambridge meeting. Amanda notes that this has been a contentious topic, but that Mary Mannix's report and the feedback offered by Steering Committee have prompted recommendations on how we might move forward. Some of these recommendations have already been put into action, however we need to discuss some further. Issues that need to be addressed include: conference budgets need to be changed to include services fees, food and beverage rates, and tax rates. We need to ensure that going forward the hit the food and beverage minimums required by the hotels, but do not exceed the minimums much more than that. Amanda adds that we also need to emphasize the difficulty we are facing with hotels not cooperating with us. For example, for the Cambridge conference, the Local Arrangements Committee chair signed a contract that did not include a 30% surcharge later added to the bill and did not receive the final bill until the last day of the conference. Also, the hotel refused to extend any credit to MARAC, which was unusual and meant that we needed to provide a full payment the week before the conference. This communication created much confusion and some mistakes and was exacerbated by the fact that one of the Local Arrangements Committee chairs left during the process and was not replaced. Additionally, Amanda acknowledges that her oversight was strained during this period.
- (2) Decision: Becky Collier and Robyn Emerick will now be stepping up as Budget Consultants for Long Branch and Saratoga Springs in order to help draft budget requests and initial budgets as well as to provide additional levels of oversight. Additionally, a Finance Committee liaison will work with the Local Arrangement Committee and Treasurer to help consult for food and beverage billing, tour bills, etc., and will provide an extra set of eyes for Amanda. For Harrisonburg, Edie Sandler from the Library of Congress will serve as the liaison. Additionally, we will plan on being harder on hotels in the future so we can ensure we have itemized bills and clear communication.

- (3) Discussion: Danna offers that she thinks the hotel is to blame. Amanda adds that hotel contracts added \$2,000.00 fines to the bill but that the hotel was not communicative about these additions. Amanda adds that Mary's report suggests that we rethink receptions when there is not an acceptable reception space available because of some of the complications around the weather for the reception at Cambridge. Amanda says that this raises questions about what we expect for meetings and how/when we pull a plug on an event or meeting if we need to do so because of issues around the budget.
- (4) Discussion: Are receptions necessary? Are there cases when we would not have a reception? Decision: Rachel offers that she is not sure there is a precedent, but that at the least we could cut costs by having a reception in the hotel.
- (5) Discussion: Jennie asks if this experience points out a need to step back and examine roles and time commitments being required by members. Jennie offers that the work Amanda is being asked to do is perhaps excessive and above/beyond what is reasonable to expect. Don adds that Cambridge has been controversial, but that this is not often a problem and suggests that we treat this as an isolated event and do not add additional layers of oversight that make it increasingly difficult for the Local Arrangements Committee to make decisions. Sharmilla and Danna add that this is not necessary an isolated event.
- (6) Discussion: Danna ask for Amanda to return to questions of how we cancel or end contracts with hotels if there is a problem. Amanda confirms that there are 20% surrender fees that increase in percentage as the date of the conference approaches. Amanda adds that she agrees with Don that we do not want to burden Local Arrangements Committee, but that additional oversight would be helpful. Jennie adds that we Steering Committee should feel free to act as additional oversight and ask questions as well.
- (7) Discussion: Sara asks if the cost savings from holding Steering Committee meetings over Zoom will help cover food budget for conferences. Amanda says that it will and offers that the food costs sometimes help us meet our food and beverage minimums at hotels. Discussion on the costs of food and potential alternate options.
- (8) Discussion: Amanda adds that Finance also thinks it is worth discussing the high costs of amenities at hotels or even the idea of a scaled back conference model with one main meeting a year and a scaled back symposium for the second meeting.
- (9) Discussion: Andrew asks if it would be worthwhile to have a paid set of eyes review conference budgets to reduce reliance on volunteers? Decision: Amanda says it is but we should consider free options first. Though, Amanda mentions she talked to the SAA Treasurer and they confirmed that SAA has a professional in that position.
- (10) Discussion: Are there ways to cut costs at the venue? Matt asks if there could a potential cost savings for contracting with one hotel chain? Amanda offers that most hotels are more site specific, but this question could be referred to Mary. Danna asks if we are willing to consider dorms and college campuses as options? Amanda offers that this is a question for the membership. Amanda suggests that we need to be more transparent with the membership and see what they actually want.
- (11) Decision: Sara offers that we might consider adding questions to the membership survey. Josue suggests that we may not want to overburden the survey, but others add that this is the only way we can ensure we hear from all members. Sara will discuss adding 2-3 additional questions with Rachel and Jennie further.

(12) Decision: This will be a continued discussion; however, Amanda is happy to have feedback via e-mail and will update the recommendations document with any feedback she receives. Rachel adds that she would like to discuss this further at our next meeting. Don offers that a meeting model task force be raised to address these issues and Rachel agrees that we should move on to the next item.

B) Meeting Model Task Force (Rohrbaugh)

(1) Discussion: Even before the Cambridge loss, Jennie and Rachel had discussed reviewing the meetings model. Rachel discussed with Lauren and Lauren pulled a variety of information but this is something that has come up in the past. Decision: Rachel will convene a Meeting Model Task Force to discuss Lauren's findings and think about presenting to the membership at a future Business Meeting..

(2) Discussion: Our by-laws do not require two meetings per year, so since we have the option we might consider if we exercise it. Rachel is proposing that we form a task force and discuss who should be on it. Today we're not deciding anything, but we're getting feedback on should we have a task force and who should be on it. Lauren adds that there have been several committees/ discussions about improving meetings, and in 2002 we had a big discussion about one meeting but it was voted down by the membership. There have been traditions about having one meeting in the boondocks and one in the I95 corridor too. There's an additional dynamic: that the membership numbers are dropping slowly, etc.

(3) Decision: Task Force will be convened. Liz and Hillary offer to serve as co-chairs and Rachel agrees to contact them to move forward. Rachel asks if a vote is needed, but Danna says it is not. Rachel says we will then agree to convene the Task Force and discuss more at Harrisonburg.

VIII) Advisory Positions (5 min)

A) Historian (Brown) – Report submitted

B) Archivist (Floyd) – Report submitted

C) Development Coordinator (Bhatia) – Report submitted

D) Web Team (Caringola/Sailer) – Report submitted

E) Regional Archival Association Consortium (Cassidy-Amstutz) – Report submitted

(1) Nothing to add, but asks about sharing a vendor contact list with RAAC. Adds that this could go to next meeting or e-mail in the interest of time. Rachel advises that we discuss at a later point.

F) National Coalition for History (Jan Zastrow) – No report submitted

(1) Rachel adds that Jan emailed to say that because of the impeachment/issues with Iran there was particularly nothing going on in the federal government going on related to NCH.

IX) Standing and Operational Committees (5 min)

A) Awards (Bell) – Report submitted

B) Communications (Tighe) – Report submitted

C) Diversity and Inclusion (Hurtado) – Report submitted

(1) Josue adds that they are digging into considering neuro-diversity issues and have gathered a few resources related to accessibility issues for conferences. Jessica will follow up with Josue.

D) Education (Newman) – Report submitted

