American Libraries Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes 7-2-2021
Attendees: Helen, Crystal, Susan, Janie, Rachel, Maria, Lori, Shanna, Peter
Staff: Terra Dankowski, Sanhita SinhaRoy, Carrie Smith, Amy Carlton, Becky Lomax, Phil Morehart, Sallyann Price

Meeting started at 10:30 a.m. Central.

Agenda:

I. Welcome and introduction by Chair Susan Polos
II. Review agenda
III. Executive Board report by Maria McCauley (optional)
IV. *American Libraries* magazine
V. *Americanlibraries.org* and *AL Direct*
VI. *Call Number with American Libraries*
VII. FY21 Finance Report
VIII. New business, hot topics, miscellaneous

1. Welcome/introductions

2. Review agenda/minutes

June 15 minutes approved.

3. ALA Executive Board Liaison report

Maria McCauley shared key updates: Furloughs are not planned for FY22. Annual went well, with huge credit to the Conference Services team, who is getting ready for LibLearnX. The ALA Operating Agreement Working Group has been extended for another year.

4. Review June issue of *AL*

Committee members commented positively on the Bookend, “The Reader’s Road Trip,” Librarian’s Library, and the variety of stories in general. Terra noted that AL staff is working on the September/October design showcase and 9/11 package. For November/December, we’re working on stories about small businesses and small and rural libraries.

5. Feedback on AL Direct/AL Online

Amy gave an update on AL Online and social media. Our traffic was down a bit from last year, but 2020 was an outlier because we covered a lot of pandemic stories as they were happening. We’re back to normal levels of output for online news stories.

Of our top ten stories for the year, about half are original for the web. Twitter and Facebook
followings are growing slowly but steadily. Our highest single-day traffic was the Youth Media
Awards announcement, coordinated with the Communications and Marketing Office.
For AL Direct, about half of the top ten links are AL stories and the other half are from Latest Library
Links. Most are related to topics such as intellectual freedom, privacy, and EDI. We publish between
80 and 100 Latest Library Links each month.

Committee members praised the variety of links and range of topics included. They noted they often
passed them on to people outside the library community.

6. Call Number podcast

Phil gave an update on the podcast. We’ve passed 200,000 total listens over five years. Last year’s
COVID-themed episodes earned us new listeners. We’ve done some bonus episodes this year, and
we’re working on more of those. Phil encouraged the committee to share topic ideas at any time.

7. FY21 finance report

Sanhita noted that our advertising lagged over the pandemic year, especially print. When we put the
budgets together in early 2020, we didn’t know how long the pandemic would last or what the
economy would look like; unfortunately advertising didn’t bounce back like we hoped.

We’re down 17.5% overall on revenue from ads. While that’s been disappointing, we did have a
bright spot with JobLIST, a shared project with ACRL. We have seen a 30% increase in revenue from
job ads, mostly in recent months when we’ve seen the economy improve. That has offset losses
from display ads.

Another reason for the decline in ads is the consolidation of vendors, as some of those
consolidations mean smaller marketing budgets. Regarding expenses, we’ve seen some production
cost increases, including paper and mailing, which we are working to reduce. We’ll have final
numbers for the fiscal year in October or November.

8. New business, hot topics, miscellaneous.

Committee members suggested stories on intellectual freedom and privacy, the death and dying
program series from San Francisco Public Library (http://www.ilovelibraries.org/janet-tom), how to
avoid burnout, how libraries will handle post-pandemic demands, transitions from public access
desktop computers to Chromebooks and other laptop checkouts, and the Newbery Medal’s 100th
anniversary next year.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned 11:33 p.m. Central.