Citizens for Libraries – Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations
Board of Directors Meeting

American Library Association Annual Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana
June 26, 2011

MINUTES

Board members present: Rod Gauvin, Donna McDonald, Rod Wagner, Susan Schmidt, Rose Mosley, Gail Griffin, Clare Delaney, Robin Hoklotubbe, Peter Pearson, Ed McBride, Helen Wilbur, Kathryn Suarez, Kay Runge, Charles Hanson, Barbara Prentice.

Visitors: Peggy Barber, otherwise sign-up list not available.

Staff: Sally Reed, Beth Nawalinski, Jillian Kalonick

Welcome – President Rod Gauvin called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and welcomed all present. Rod congratulated Rose Mosley for receiving the ALTAFF Trustee Citation award (with applause from all).

Accomplishments – Rod Gauvin reviewed past year accomplishments. He noted efforts and success in re-branding the association as “Citizens for Libraries.” He said there isn’t yet recognition by the ALA that membership isn’t the sole basis for supporting the work of Citizens for Libraries. Rod acknowledged the corporate task force’s work and their remarkable efforts that resulted in a $10,000 increase over last year. This accomplishment is even more notable given consolidations taking place. H.W. Wilson, a long time contributor and now merged with EBSCO, was mentioned as an example. Gauvin said these changes need to be tracked along with bringing in new organizations. Rod has offered to continue with corporate recruitment and stated that it would be great to have a board member linked to each corporate sponsor, staying in touch with them throughout the year. Rod said that Citizens for Libraries performs a critical role in bringing new members into ALA. In turn these new members move up to contribute to the ALA. In response to a question about when companies make decisions on contributions Rod said that companies typically make these decisions four to six months before the start of the corporation’s fiscal year and that it may take two or three years before a company decides to contribute.

Executive Director’s Report – Sally Reed noted contributions to ALTAFF of over $3,000 from board members. She referred to budget information and reported an approximate $75,000 deficit. Sally added that this figure is misleading because revenue reporting is lagging. Recent activity isn’t reflected in the financial report including some corporate contributions. Sally acknowledged Playaway as a new underwriter.
Staff is working hard to bring back lapsed member groups. Some 40% were lost in the merger. Staff and volunteers have been calling and are having success. Sally estimated that these personal contacts have resulted in getting back 20% of these lapsed members. Calls will continue as a monthly activity.

Sally reported that she prepared a business plan. She said that the association realized $60,000 in added overhead with the merger. This was another obstacle that the organization did not previously have. Sally estimated a $25,000 deficit at the end of the year, but moving closer to even. Sally declared that all trends are up. ALTAFF has some of the highest membership increases within the ALA. Gifts are up, ticket sales are up, every revenue stream is up. It is taking longer than expected but we are doing well.

Sally referred to the priority list from prior board planning activity. She noted the priority for recruitment of academic friends groups as a growth area. Charles Hanson’s session on academic library friends, “That’s What Friends are For,” was mentioned as a great program on this topic.

Rod Gauvin noted staff effort to reduce expenses. Expense reductions have resulted from a staff position elimination and other actions. Sally said that staff is seeking alternate office space that will further reduce expenses.

Sally referred to the board list and list of committees. She asked those serving on committees to read their committee charge and responsibilities. Sally reported an “astounding” response from membership to the request to serve on committees and Donna McDonald’s desire that everyone that responded have a slot. All have been given a slot. The number and quality of the organization’s programs is based on the great work of our committees. All success depends on doing committee work.

**Division Councilor’s Report** – Susan Schmidt noted two specific issues to mention that the ALA Council will be taking up and that ALTAFF would have a special interest in. One of these concerns library self-serve reserve books. The issue is the matter of privacy – names placed on the book spine and availability of books for pick up. The other issue Susan noted was e-book publisher policies placing limits on book check-outs, notably HarperCollins decision to limit the number of downloads. Susan said that ALA has a task force (Equitable Access for Libraries - EQUACC) addressing this issue and having discussions with publishers. Rod Gauvin added that he served on the task force as ALTAFF’s representative this past year. Rod said that the task force will be dissolved and standing committees will be organized around issues. The number of issues is huge and they are complex. The task force report has been filed. ALA executive staff has taken ownership and is speaking with the publishers.

Sally Reed commented on another issue that is under continuing consideration and discussion – privatization. She served on a task force this past spring that concluded recently. ALA has already taken a policy position in opposition to privatization of publicly funded libraries. An additional action is preparation of a checklist covering all the things that should be considered
before privatization. The checklist, she said, is a useful tool for trustees and city and county governments because it highlights the pitfalls of privatization as well as the philosophy of the role of the public library in the public domain. It was noted that the privatization documents are available on the ALTAFF website. Sally said that trustees, whether advisory or governing, are best positioned to challenge privatization.

Planning for 2011-2012 – Of the items on the priority list, one that was held back is the branding of Citizens for Libraries since this change had not been approved. Sally said that the feedback to the proposed change has been very positive. The vote was overwhelmingly supportive and validation that this is a better name to move forward with. Sally said that a problem is the progression of name changes from FOLUSA and ALTA to ALTAFF and now to Citizens for Libraries. Sally said that a “big” launch is needed with press releases, website changes, and stationery. Sally asked Peggy Barber for her thoughts. Peggy said that the best place to start is with a marketing plan and that a small team might be a way to proceed. Peggy said she liked the idea of having a specific date for when the roll out will happen with a clear idea of who will do what and when. She said it would be great to have a major feature story. There is a lot that even the library family doesn’t know about what partnerships exist, corporate memberships, and the history of programs. What’s our position and what do we want people to think and feel about the organization. What are the main audiences we want to target?

Sally responded that a small team is a good idea but wanted to use the opportunity to collect ideas from those present including guests. A question was asked if there should be a date when all things change or if there are dates when different things change. Peggy responded that she wouldn’t wait until everything is finalized. The logo was mentioned and the strategy to keep it familiar. Robin Hoklotubbe suggested an outreach launch at the midwinter meeting (Dallas) and annual conference (Anaheim). Do something “crazy” on the order of the Paula Poundstone champagne toast of a few years ago celebrating the merger. Ed McBride encouraged attention to the audience and the message to corporations. Connect the change to libraries as corporate customers. Concern for expense followed with comments about promotion as an investment, the low cost of the materials such as ribbons and buttons, and the suggestion that corporate sponsorships could be sought to underwrite the promo expenses. Quotes and testimonials were suggested to highlight the benefits of membership.

Sally mentioned a FOLUSA survey done in 2006 asking about friends groups’ fundraising. Where does the money go? The money goes to publishers, database providers and other businesses. Friends fundraising activities have a big impact. Trustees and foundations also raise funds. A one-pager with facts was suggested, something simple that could be handed out. Sally said that one of the things that came out of the last board meeting was the idea of a toolkit that members could use in their own communities for promotion and membership recruitment. This, too, was put on the back burner in anticipation of the change to Citizens for Libraries. Sally said that a small group that could be brought in from the eastern corridor (in concern of expense) to brainstorm things that can be done at the midwinter meeting, perhaps involving Marilyn Johnson.
Peggy Barber encouraged keeping an eye on external partnerships. She noted one—a partnership between journalists and libraries and a project involving PLA and stories about people using libraries. Some others mentioned—Dollar General, Verizon, real estate (National Association of Realtors). Peggy noted ALA in-coming president Molly Raphael’s presidential advocacy initiative on empowering communities to speak out for libraries: “Why Libraries Matter: Empowering Community Voices.”

**Recognition and Thanks to Retiring Board Members and Committee Chairs**—Rod Gauvin thanked board members for their dedication and support. He reminded that “you can come back.” Rod encouraged those going off the board to remain involved. Rod recognized Charles Hanson, George Coe, Kay Runge, Rose Mosley, and Clare Delaney (with applause to all). Sally Reed announced that the staff has a tradition of thanking the president and stated that Rod Gauvin has been an exceptional president, engaged and involved, and with great ideas and effort on organizational fundraising. His contributions have been magnificent. Sally thanked Rod for all he has done for the organization (with applause). Sally recognized members serving as committee chairs and presented certificates of appreciation.

Rose Mosley commented on the ALTAFF Specialized Outreach Services luncheon program held on Saturday: “How Louisiana Libraries Created New Beginnings.” Rose said that the program idea was change. She mentioned five new libraries that have been built after Hurricane Katrina, something that was not expected. Rose said she was thrilled with the speakers. Speakers spoke to the experiences and changes that came as a result of Hurricane Katrina five years ago. Rose said that $250 was raised during the luncheon for friends’ building efforts.

Robin Hoklotubbe was acknowledged for a great “Nuts & Bolts for Trustees, Friends and Foundations” program, one of the better attended programs in a while.

Shirley Bruursema was recognized for being “the best model for a committee chair.” Sally Reed said Shirley has agreed to serve again as chair of the legislation, advocacy, and intellectual freedom committee.

Sally Reed thanked Rose Mosley for being a wonderful person to work with as president, past-president and as chair of the nominating committee. Rose will again serve as chair of the nominating committee.

ALTAFF programs and activities during the conference were highlighted.

Donna McDonald gave kudos to the people involved in the Leadership in Action program held on Saturday.

**Turning Over the Gavel**—Rod Gauvin passed the gavel to Donna McDonald. Donna expressed appreciation to Rod for the great job he has done as president. Donna adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.