



# asor

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting  
May 14, 2020 1:00 4:00pm EDT ZOOM

Present: Richard Coffman (Chair), Sharon Herbert (Vice President), Ann-Marie Knoblauch (Secretary), Heather McKee (Treasurer), Andy Vaughn (Executive Director), Lisa Ackerman, Susan Ackerman (Past President), Emily Bonney, Teddy Burgh, Erin Darby, J.P. Dessel, Lynn Dodd, Peggy Duly, Jane DeRose Evans, Paul Flesher, Debra Foran, Joseph A. Greene, Michael Hassell, Randy Helm, Øystein LaBianca, Susan Laden, Chuck Jones, Carol Meyers, Eric Meyers, Bob Mullins, B.W. Ruffner, Joe Seger, Meagan Shirley, Carolyn Strange, Eric Welch, Bryan Wilkins.  
Guest: Meagan Shirley

### Preliminary Matters (1:00-1:15)

1. Call to Order
  - The meeting was called to order at 1:04 PM
2. Approval of Agenda
  - BE IT RESOLVED: the agenda is approved by unanimous consent.
3. Approval of the Minutes from the November 2019 Board Meeting
  - BE IT RESOLVED: the minutes of the November 2019 meeting were approved with minor revisions by unanimous consent.

### Business Items (1:15-2:30)

1. Board Trustee Appointment (Sharon Herbert)

Timothy Potts, for an initial three-year term, retroactive (January 1, 2020-December 31, 2022): biographical sketch posted at <http://www.asor.org/hidden/board-info>.

- Carol Meyers moved, Øystein La Bianca seconded:
- BE IT RESOLVED: The Board appoints Timothy Potts for an initial three-year term, retroactive (January 1, 2020- December 31, 2022).
- Approved unanimously.

#### Committee Chair Appointment

Jane DeRose Evans, as the chair of the Cultural Heritage Committee, on the recommendation of the CCC and adopted by the EC.

- Lynn Swartz Dodd moved.
- BE IT RESOLVED: The Board accepted the recommendation of the CCC to appoint Jane DeRose Evans as the chair of the Cultural Heritage Committee for an initial term to run through December 31, 2022.
- Approved unanimously.

#### 2. Approval of New BASOR Editors

The Committee on Publications recommends that the following team fill the position of editors of BASOR: Susan Cohen, Regine Pruzsinszky, Jana Mynárová, Marwan Kilani. CVs posted on hidden board.

- Joe Seger moved.
- BE IT RESOLVED: The Board accepted the recommendation of the COP to appoint Susan Cohen, Regine Pruzsinszky, Jana Mynárová and Marwan Kilani as the editors of the BASOR.
- Approved unanimously.

#### 4. ASOR By-Laws Revision

- Richard noted that revisions to the ASOR By-Laws have been an on-going process. All current proposed revisions are small issues of consistency, with one exception:
- After the approval of the creation of a Facilities Committee in November 2019, it was determined that the chair of the Facilities Committee should also serve on the Finance Committee, so the By-Laws have been amended to reflect that addition.
- The revisions come as a recommendation of the EC.
  - Øystein LaBianca moved.
  - BE IT RESOLVED: The Board accepted the recommendation of the EC to accept the proposed revisions to ASOR's By-Laws.
  - Approved unanimously.

5. Treasurer's Report (Heather McKee)
  - Heather noted that the past few months have been unprecedented, and commended Andy, the ASOR staff and the Board for acting with great prudence and taking a proactive stance so that we were able to continue to fulfil our mission.
  - We are currently stable, to a large degree because of the generosity of donors.
  - Investment Reports (Exhibits E and F)
  - The structure of our investments is that we do not capture the highest of the highs, but we don't suffer the lowest of the lows.
  - Andy met with the Finance Committee and recommended that large donations to the endowment for operations and all donations to the Building Fund should not immediately be invested in securities into those accounts. Rather, these new gifts should be invested in equal amounts over 12 months in order to absorb volatility.
  - Exhibit F: Heather noted that the account currently being managed by Scott & Stringfellow on a trial basis is performing slightly better than the account being self-managed. (Scott & Stringfellow down 2.9%; self-managed down 4%). We will continue to monitor their performance with the possibility of allowing them to manage ASOR's fellowship and named endowments.
  - Heather noted that Andy took proactive steps to apply for a Paycheck Protection Program Loan (PPP). ASOR was awarded \$118,700. It is likely that much of this loan will be forgiven (provided we maintain our staffing levels.)
  - Heather noted that we've paid off the BBT line of credit on that building in the first quarter of ASOR's FY20.
  
6. Review and adoption of the FY 2021 budget (Heather McKee)
  - Budget to Forecast (FY 2020) and Proposed 2021 budget (Exhibit B)
  - Expenses and revenues highlights: The total income is much larger than what we originally budgeted because of designated gifts to endow operations, including PE MacAllister's gift of \$500,000, a gift of \$200,000 into the Dana Fund, and the establishment of the Geraty Endowment.
  - Because excavations have been cancelled, we will not be awarding dig scholarships and (most) excavation grants. Monies will be kept in temporary restricted account so when the time comes we can make those awards.
  - Øystein commented that people in Jordan look forward to using awards from the Geraty Fund to help support local endeavors (site maintenance, etc.) We can help out local communities where we work in that way.
  - Heather noted that she expecting a break-even budget for 2020, if our annual fund reaches our goal. We hope to hit \$125,000 for the Annual Fund to meet a break-even budget. 2021 Budget: (Exhibit B) The Annual Meeting. We are proceeding under the expectation that we will have an in-person meeting in Boston. There is still uncertainty, but it's a central part of our mission.
  - Income: \$65,000 (line 19). This amount is part of \$100K that the board set aside for unexpected moving expenses when we moved to Alexandria. This is what remains, and we are using some of that money (\$65K) to help us balance our operating budget this year.

- Expenses: The budget reflects events associated with the Annual Meeting and other educational events. These may need to change in the future due to the pandemic, but we are proceeding in good faith with an in-person meeting as planned.
  - In sum, this is a balanced budget, but with uncertainties as to whether the pandemic will permit us to hold an in-person annual meeting, and relying on the generosity of donors to strengthen the scaffolding that holds up ASOR and allow us to continue what we do.
  - Discussion:
  - Paul Flesher noted that he is pleased to see balanced budget, but asked about the 2021 budget being approximately \$300,000 less than 2020.
  - Andy responded by noting Exhibit B (line 16) Designated Gifts for Building. He also referenced extraordinary gifts received in FY2020. We have received more than budgeted and so less has been budgeted for 2021. The big drop is money coming in that is going directly to the building, this is not affecting operating expenses. There are other areas of smaller drops (CHI is \$70,000 less than last year.) Andy noted that he is forecasting on the conservative side.
  - Andy noted that registration fees for the Annual Meeting in Boston is also impacting the budget. It is forecasted to be higher for an in-person meeting in Boston.
  - Andy is forecasting for a balanced budget, relying optimistically on people giving at the same rate they have given in the past plus some addition fundraising. (for a total of \$50-55,000) If we don't meet that goal, that will mean a deficit and we'll have to use unrestricted.
  - Conversation continued about the November and April 2021 Board Meetings, and convenience and money saved by meeting remotely rather than face to face.
  - Andy noted that this (the Zoom meeting) was a very high attendance for a spring Board meeting.
    - Joe Seger moved.
    - BE IT RESOLVED: The Board adopts the 2021 budget on the recommendation of the EC.
    - Approved unanimously.
7. Allocation of P. E. MacAllister Legacy Donation (Andy Vaughn)
- Andy provided some background: P.E. discussed his Legacy Donation with several ASOR members, indicating that he hoped this legacy gift could go into our endowment for operations. At its February EC retreat, the EC discussed the MacAllister Legacy Donation at some length, agreeing to recommend that the gift be allocated to the endowment for operations.
  - If this recommendation is accepted by the Board, the Finance Committee recommends that we invest the gift over a period of 12 months, so that around \$41,667/month would be distributed to our equities allocation, in order to avoid extreme results because of the current volatility in the market.

- Conversation continued about the recommendation to put the gift in the endowment for operations.
- Sharon noted that raising money for operational costs is always difficult, and here we have a large gift that P.E. indicated he wished to have used for that purpose. We need the income, and this is the place to put it.
- Eric and Joe had both spoken with P.E., indicating these were his wishes and this was the right way to honor P.E. adding that we were unable to raise money for this purpose during the Torch Campaign.
- Susan reminded the group that the Building a Foundation for ASOR Campaign that ended in 2014 was extremely successful, but the goal in that campaign to raise \$500,000 for the endowment for operations was not met, not even close. It's the right decision.
- Carol noted that she agrees completely, suggesting that we honor P.E. MacAllister by naming something in the James F. Strange Center for him.
- Andy suggested the Development committee could discuss this issue for the MacAllister gift as well as ways to recognize P.E. and other donors to the building fund.
- Paul asked questions regarding the endowment, spending income (not principle) and whether there is a percentage limit to what can be spent each year (reinvesting any excess)
- Andy responded: our Investment and Spending Policy (posted online) guides the Board. ASOR has two types of endowment accounts:
  - Endowment for Operations is invested 80% equity, 20% bonds and cash. We distribute 3.5% based on the average of the last 12 quarters of the market value, the value of the endowment will go up more slowly.
  - We are conservative in the amount we draw out, and we are conservative in the average of the last 12 quarters.
  - Named Endowments are handled similarly, but we distribute 5%
    - Eric Meyers moved.
    - BE IT RESOLVED: The Board affirms that the unrestricted gift from P.E. MacAllister should be allocated to the Endowment for Operations, on the recommendation of the Finance Committee and the EC.
    - Approved unanimously.

## 8. Other Business

### Development Committee Report (Lynn Swartz Dodd)

- Lynn thanked fellow committee members, noting that the committee meets monthly, essential during this time of upheaval and change. With the cancellation of excavation seasons, the need to pivot to other ways to serve and advance ASOR's mission have been discussed in order to help members feel connected. Some specific actions and discussions included:
  - Development Continuity Funds (pay membership for members facing financial difficulties)
  - Reach out to supporters with hand written notes (with the help of Felice

Hermann)

- Build up the number of members in the Legacy Circle (established and exemplified by P.E.); by including ASOR in your estate planning.
- Lynn reminded the Board that the Development Committee exists to help the Board fulfil its legal and moral obligations. She asked the Board to think of three people among your friends, family, community groups and consider telling that community about ASOR and the work it does. The Development Committee can help in articulating ASOR's value and help reach out to them.
- Lynn also noted discussions around targeted micro-giving opportunities.
- On our current donation report, trustees have given nearly \$40,000, and non-trustee ASOR members have given \$36,000, which is a testament to member generosity.
- Lynn also noted that through the Amazon Smile program, a (very) small percentage of any purchase on Amazon can be donated to ASOR, if the buyer designates ASOR as the charity.
- Andy commended the committee for their work, adding that ASOR is viewed as a leader among learned societies for broad range of supporters. Thank you.
- Carolyn Strange noted that one of the values that ASOR provides is making world citizens of students by helping to send them abroad and helping them see the world. It's important that we understand the impact we are having, and it's extremely important what we do.
- Erin raised a question about a development initiative that would prioritize scholarship money for students at their institutions to pursue several related majors or minors (history, religious studies, anthropology, etc.) that we consider to be aligning with ASOR's mission. Is this something we could do, such as we do to raise money for the field schools? Supporting students who don't want to be professionals, perhaps channel some money towards affiliated majors or minors and institutions; raising money for scholarships, etc.
- Paul gave an example of a non-fieldwork project (digitizing archives of various digs), and also supports Erin's suggestion of supporting non-archaeological/fieldwork projects.
- Lynn noted that in ASOR there is going to be an emerging conversation that how funds that cannot be used as fieldwork scholarships might be put to use in other productive ways.
- Andy provided some background: In 2005-2006 gave away around \$10,000/ year in scholarships and grants. Last year (FY19) we gave away \$86,000, and we were on track to give away \$120,000 for our 120<sup>th</sup> year (FY20). This should be celebrated.
- The Board can ask, where can we have the most good? There is no legal problem to give money for students to pay for tuition or to take a course. We should ask where are scholarship funds can be most effectively used, and how they will best advance ASOR and best serve our members.
- Erin notes we want to think creatively to get students in the pipeline, into classes, into the field, otherwise in 15-20 years we'll have no early career scholars.
- Lynn notes this might be part of the discussion in Strategic Planning.

## Report from ACOR

- Øystein gave a report from ACOR, explaining it is currently in a period of transition, with a new director and a new board.
- The new director Pearce Paul Creasman has already has been proactive in raising funds, procured \$85,000 through the CARES act and other sources, which has allowed the institution to operate at full staff.
- Øystein notes that a major renovation will begin at the ACOR facility that will run for 12 months or so, reduced capacity for lodgings, meetings, etc. but ACOR will still be able to help scholars, etc.

Break (2:30-2:40 PM)

## Reports

### 9. Chairs Coordinating Council Report (Chuck Jones)

- Chuck noted that the CCC meets twice a semester. These meetings include committee chair reports and nominations for the Annual Meeting plenary speaker. The ccc meets monthly during academic year.
- The 2020 plenary speaker is Monica Hanna, an Egyptian archaeologist who specializes in the antiquities trade in Egypt since the Arab Spring
- The Program Committee is the busiest this time of year; the program for Boston is strong. Boston is a popular meeting place.
- Chuck has asked each of the committees to look at the Strategic Plan and think about how their committees has contributed and what they might need going forward.
- Traditionally the CCC stops having meetings in May but this year there will likely be additional meetings over the summer in order to discuss the Strategic Plan.
- Overall, they are a good collegial group—committees all know what the others are doing; it's an excellent system.

## Discussion/Action Items

Agenda Item 13 Plans for 2020 Annual Meeting (below) was discussed at this point

### 13. Plans for 2020 Annual Meeting

- The Board held a lengthy discussion about the November 2020 Annual Meeting.
- Sharon remarked that our goal is to carry off an in-person meeting, but we have to be realistic that the pandemic may force a change. We can't be certain the pandemic will force a change, so we are investigating ways to do increase our online capacity. This increase in capacity will facilitate a virtual meeting if the pandemic forces us to reconsider the in-person meeting. .
- In the pandemic were to force a change, there are a variety of ways of holding a virtual meeting: for example a truly synchronous 3.5 day meeting online, or a non-synchronous meeting with a month of presentations online, with synchronous discussion.
- Andy reiterated that our goal is to meet in-person, but we don't know if that is

going to be possible given the pandemic. The decision is complicated by our contract with Marriott for the Westin Waterfront Boston Hotel, and decisions the governor of Massachusetts might make about large gatherings in the fall.

- While planning for a face to face meeting, the staff and Program Committee are also working on increasing the capacity for online lectures, as even if we meet face to face it is likely that many members will be unable to attend and so building an infrastructure for those people to present their research will have long term benefits. Arlene Press is also learning what other ACLS members are doing so that ASOR does not have to reinvent the wheel. It's possible to hire a company to handle an online meeting if the pandemic forces us to make a change, but they are quite expensive.
- Conversation turned to registration costs for an online conference. Andy supports making an online meeting as affordable as possible to members. If the pandemic forces a change, we have several options for those who have already paid their registration: members can receive a refund, apply the fee to a later conference, allow registrants to donate the money, or a combination if they decide to use the credit for a virtual meeting registration fee.
- Øystein noted that spring experiences in the classroom for him showed that asynchronous teaching did not go well.
- Emily added that she is currently participating on a conference, where they have done something in between: live sessions are not recorded, but scattered across the month, with opportunity for discussion at the time of the meeting. Attendees can use the chat function to ask questions, and for further questions you can stick around and have more conversations.
- Jane added that some students hate the asynchronous; but it allows for other people who otherwise would have been quiet to speak up
- As for the poster session, Erin noted that even if the meeting in Boston happens face to face, moving the poster session online might be beneficial to members and attendees.
- Erin asked if there is a way to engage dig directors and students to keep them involved? Perhaps by opening up the poster sessions?
- Randy mused that he believes the new normal will not be like the old normal. Members will want to get together in person when they can, but it won't be critical if it's not convenient, and moving forward there will be a greater cost-benefit analysis with regards to traveling to meetings. Even if we meet face to face, "putting our toe in the water" and experimenting with some online features will benefit us long term.
- Teddy asked whether it would be out of the question to have participants prepare for both a digital presentation and a face-to-face presentation?
- Andy noted that we should ask the Program Committee to think about we can advertise the call for posters early, and say be prepared for a virtual poster if face-to-face is not possible, We'll know a lot more before the August deadline.
- Susan noted that an online poster session would affect what the call looks like. If you are doing a virtual session, you can increase the capacity.
- Carol asked about the financial implications of meeting in person, assuming many will have to back out (international, people with health issues, lost travel money,



etc.) What are the financial implications if we only get half or 2/3 of what we were expecting?

- Andy responded that the hotel would likely work with us on an attrition fees. The real cost will come with memberships and giving back registration fees if the pandemic forces us to make a change.
- Andy then noted that we should work with the Program Committee and within their structure. Need to tell the PC what we've talked about –and bring it to CCC. Chuck can communicate with the CCC and the PC.

#### 10. Report from the Ad Hoc Committee for a Code of Conduct for the Annual Meeting (Emily Bonney)

- Emily explained that the current document had been reviewed several times, and comments had been solicited. Comments were extremely helpful.
- The critical issues for the committee were about implementation. These are difficult to put into a code of conduct without encountering liability issues.
- The biggest changes to the previous draft (Feb. 2020) is in the last paragraph; it leaves decision making to the EC without specifying a particular person or process.
- Sharon thanked the committee for all the work, suggesting a friendly amendment to the code: In that last paragraph about implementation, consider changing language to “the EC or its delegates.” This amendment was accepted by Emily.
- Erin reminded the Board of the discussion at November's meeting regarding acting on the code.
- Emily explained that the current code worked very hard to avoid language of implementation, suggesting that would be a separate, next-step document involving ASOR's legal counsel.
  - Carol Meyers moved.
  - BE IT RESOLVED: The Board accepts the recommendation of the EC to accept the report of the Ad Hoc Committee for a Code of Conduct for the Annual Meeting with the friendly amendment introduced by Sharon.
  - Approved unanimously.

#### 11. Ad Hoc Committee on ASOR's Name Interim Report (Randy Helm)

- Randy presented the interim report from the Ad Hoc Committee on ASOR's Name, beginning by thanking members of the committee.
- He noted the only question with broad (but not total) consensus was that the name should address the geographical and chronological range of ASOR's work, neither of which is currently referenced in ASOR's name. Other than that, no consensus.
- He described two viable options that enjoyed the closest thing to a majority in poll results:
  - Keep ASOR as the name without using the words the letters stand for, with a tag line that explains what we do. (Randy then asked for ideas for

tagline)

- A new name that forms an acronym. (This option did not have majority or even close to majority support)
- The committee seeks the Board's advice for moving forward.
- After some discussion, Andy thanked the committee, noting that the trend in member dissatisfaction with the name (particularly the word "Oriental") is growing, though others commented that such dissatisfaction with the name has been an issue for close to fifty years, and a poll taken in the 1980s showed a similar response as polls completed more recently.
- Susan noted that if Randy's committee is interested in reporting to the membership before November's meeting, it could be an opportunity to solicit suggestions for a new name with a new acronym from the membership.
- Randy noted that it's probably not possible to come up with a name that explains the chronological and geographical range of ASOR members.
- In addressing the membership on this issue, many Board members asked that the committee make clear that the Board strongly objects to the word "Oriental." Apart from the intellectual objections, the word is viewed as offensive by many, and becomes problematic in explaining ASOR to colleagues in other fields. Trustees were asked if they objected to using "Oriental" in the name, and many (if not most) raised their hands over zooms to indicate their discomfort with continuing to include "Oriental."

## 12. Status of Strategic Plan (Sharon Herbert)

- Sharon explained that we are operating with a five-year Strategic Plan that evaporates on December 31, 2020. Discussion of a new Strategic Plan was a top priority when she became president, and the EC worked on it extensively at its February retreat.
- The result of that discussion was that overall the EC is still happy with ASOR's goals as outlined in the current Strategic Plan, but fresh eyes were needed to discuss and craft a new document.
- As global events unfolded in March, Sharon began to think that now is not the time to craft a new plan, as the ground is shifting under our feet.
- The EC agreed that the best route is to extend the current plan with some revisions; that while the goals are still in place, in some areas the implantation has fallen short.
- The recommendation was that the CCC would work on it over the summer, as many of the Strategic Plan goals align with standing committee goals.
- Sharon suggests an interim plan in which the CCC holds meetings over the summer to discuss the Strategic Plan with a goal that by the end of summer, one page of revisions/recommendations to tweak the current goals.
- The EC and the CCC could then meet and bring a revised plan to the Board at its November meeting.
- Eric Meyers noted that this proposal has complete support of the EC.

### 13. Plans for 2020 Annual Meeting

Agenda Item 13 Plans for 2020 Annual Meeting was discussed above after Item 9

### 14. Matters Arising

Closing comments:

- Richard and Sharon thanked everyone for coming, with a special welcome for new members.

Meeting adjourned at 4:13 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Ann-Marie Knoblauch