



**ASOR Board of Trustees Spring Meeting (virtual)
April 16, 2023, 12:00-4:00pm EDT
Via Zoom**

Present: Lisa Ackerman, Emily Miller Bonney, Alex Brooks, Margaret Cohen, Sarah Costello, Erin Darby, J.P. Dessel Lynn Dodd, Jane DeRose Evans, Sheldon Fox, Kate Grossman, Sharon Herbert, Chuck Jones, Ann-Marie Knoblauch, Melissa Kutner, Carol Meyers, Eric Meyers, Bob Mullins, Tim Potts, B.W. Ruffner, Ann Sahlman, Joe Seger, Nancy Serwint, Carolyn Strange, Andy Vaughn (non-voting)

Absent: Susan Ackerman, Teddy Burgh, Pearce Paul Creasman, Peggy Duly Michael Hasel, Randy Helm, Sue Laden, Mark Lanier, Alex MacAllister, Jason Ur

Guests: Marta Ostovich

Preliminary Matters (12:00-12:10)

1. Call to Order (Sheldon Fox-SF) 12:03
 - The meeting was called to order at 12:02 PM
2. Approval of Agenda (SF)
 - Approved on consent
 - Quick notes: agenda items 5 and 6 are really one item, and will be combined
3. Approval of the Minutes from the November Board Meeting (SF)
 - Carol moved. Emily seconded. Unanimously approved.

Committee Reports and Discussion/Action Items

1. Finance Committee and Treasurer's Report (Emily Miller Bonney—EMB 12:10-12:30)

- Emily noted that ASOR is in good financial shape. Grant income was more than expected and the Annual Meeting came in positive. There will still need to be a push for the Annual Fund.
- a. Act on recommended change to investment policy (Exhibit D)
These changes will be useful for when large gifts arrive.

Ann Sahlman joined the meeting

- Andy outlined ASOR's investments with Schwab, indicating that this motion will put into place a procedure ASOR has been doing for the past few years.
- Sheldon noted that the accepted practice is that the larger the gift, the longer you take to invest it.

Lisa Ackerman seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Executive Committee and on the recommendation of the Finance Committee amend the Investment and Spending Policy as outlined in Exhibit D.

Unanimously approved.

- b. Act on recommended change to travel and entertainment policy (Exhibit E, pages 18–26).
- Emily noted that these changes are required by the State Department. ASOR submitted them in July 2022.
- The Finance Committee has reviewed and approved them. If ASOR receives comments from the State Department, they will be brought to the November Board Meeting.

B.W. Ruffner joined.

- Andy invited feedback from those who have experience with policies like these.

Lisa Ackerman seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Executive Committee and on the recommendation of the Finance Committee to accept the changes to the travel and entertainment policy as laid out on pages 18 to 26 of the ASOR Financial Management Procedure and Capacity document (Exhibit E).

Unanimously approved.

- Andy noted that the Assistant Director title will be changed to Finance Manager. Alex offered assistance on this policy.

2. Review budget forecast for FY23 and act on budget for FY24 (Exhibits A and B) (Andy Vaughn-AV 12:30-12:45)
 - Emily noted the budget is very similar to last year
 - Memberships are forecasted to grow at a rate of about 5%
 - We have one large grant of about 750K for work in SAHEL, there is much unrest in the region right now
 - Andy noted that about 1/4 to 1/3 of his time is charged to federal grants. If we are not able to carry out these grants, we have to revisit the budget
 - Andy thinks this is a conservative estimate for the next year
 - Sheldon noted that the budget is always prepared with a view towards a break-even on an operating basis. Andy pretty consistently bakes in a little bit of cushion on the expense side so that if the budget doesn't come in, there is a bit of a buffer. This is healthy. For this fiscal year we are on track to break even.
 - Andy: very fortunate that we have a 600K balance available for operations. If there were to be a situation in the SAHEL, we could pivot and still keep a balanced budget.
 - Sheldon noted that we do not budget for investment earning; we don't try to predict what the stock market will do, and hopefully it will be a positive growth .

Nancy Serwint seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees receive the FY23 Budget to Forecast report and adopt the Proposed FY24 Budget as received from the Executive Director and the Treasurer, and as discussed by the Finance Committee and recommended by the Executive Committee.

Unanimously approved.

- Sheldon commended Emily and Andy on the presentation of the materials. The transparency and presentation makes it much easier to get through the content. He added thanks to the staff as well.
 - Andy: Brita does most of the work before it goes to Emily, and Andy sees it towards the end.
3. Other Finance action items (AV 12:45-12:55)
 - a. Act on recommended change to investment policy (Exhibit D)
 - See above under Finance Committee and Treasurer's Report
 - b. Act on recommended change to travel and entertainment policy (Exhibit E, pages 18–26)
 - See above under Finance Committee and Treasurer's Report
 4. Update on fellowships and grants awarded (AV 12:55-1:10)

J.P.Dessel joined.

- Andy referenced the handout on fellowships and grants. There is a slight decline this year because last year unspent monies during COVID were awarded.
 - The strength of our fellowships and grants programs is a result of the generosity of annual gifts from ASOR members and also in newly-established endowments. Fellowships and grants are also growing in terms of scope with the new Dar Ben Gacem Fellowship in Tunisia.
 - By 2025 we hope to give out \$250,000 or more each year, consistently.
 - There was discussion of the growth of ASOR grants and the efforts of the volunteer committees who assess the applications. There may be a need to form more separate grant committees in order to reduce the workload.
 - Two donors (Steve Dana and Wayne Shepherd) choose to invest in ASOR because they feel the money is being spent well, with low overhead costs.
 - Nancy asked about Urgent Action Grants and the outcomes. Andy reported on the projects that received funding this year and explained that these are awards between \$2500 and \$10,000, with money disbursed within two to six weeks of the application being received. These grants are funded by an annual gift and the donor (Wayne Shepherd) is considering an endowed fund.
 - Erin asked that the advertisement for ASOR fellowship opportunities be shared with offices of undergraduate research at institutional members of ASOR, not just faculty or institutional representatives. There was further discussion on how to publicize ASOR fellowships and grants.
5. and 6. Development Committee Report and Discussion on ASOR 2025—
Strengthening Our Foundation | Expanding Horizons—A Call to Action.
Fundraising for ASOR’s 125th anniversary, goal five million dollars (LSD, SCH,
and AV 1:10-2:00)—see posted Provisional Development Statement for ASOR
2025)
- Lynn reported on the new fundraising initiative. A one-page brochure advertising this initiative will appear in a variety of formats on website and as a tri-fold. (Thanks to Ann Sahlman for lending her expertise.)
 - Report on results of silent phase (AV)
 1. Legacy Circle: Goal is 40 people and we are currently at 39. Legacy gifts will be counted as part of the 2025 fundraising initiative. Sheldon, Sharon, and Andy have been contacting people about sharing the amount of legacy gifts.
 2. Encouraging people to give to the Annual Fund.
 - How to proceed (LSD, SCH, SF et al.): We need to craft a response to “what will ASOR look like in 2025?”
 - There was discussion of Legacy Gifts and how they change over time and past ASOR fundraising efforts.

Eric and Carol Meyers left the meeting

Ann Sahlman seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Executive Committee, and on the recommendation of the Development Committee, ASOR goes public with a fundraising initiative, ASOR 2025—Strengthening Our Foundation | Expanding Horizons—A Call to Action, in the amount of five million dollars in celebration of ASOR’s 125th year.

Unanimously approved.

- Lynn thanked the Development Committee.
- There was discussion of the new online store which will allow one to make recurring gifts.

Break 1:18-1:30

7. Plans for 2023 Hybrid AM in Chicago (SCH, AV 2:15-2:30)
 - Sharon reported on the change to the hybrid meeting format. ASOR is working on providing technical support for all sessions. The meeting will be a one-way hybrid in that virtual attendees will not be able to see who is in the room.
 - Andy noted that this is the fourth year in a row of a new meeting format and ASOR is doing a good job of adapting.
 - There was discussion of the technical aspects of the meeting, the costs of doing a virtual versus hybrid meeting, and of what other societies are doing.
 - Registration for the meeting will give one access to this year’s recordings, plus all of the previous years. ASOR will honor requests to remove recordings.

Nancy Serwint moved, Lisa Ackerman seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ASOR Board of Trustees deeply thanks all the ASOR staff members and the Program Committee for their exceptional efforts in the successful staging of the annual meetings in the last four years as ASOR has responded to the ongoing pandemic.

Approved unanimously.

8. Location of 2024 and 2028 AM (AV and SCH 2:30-2:40)
 - Sharon stated that in November there had been discussion about the location of the 2024 Annual Meeting. The Board had previously resolved to meet with SBL when logistically and financially feasible. San Diego was not financially feasible for 2024 and ASOR staff and leadership have been looking elsewhere.
 - Andy anticipates a signed contract by Tuesday for 2024 and 2028 at the Boston Park Plaza. He thanked Arlene and also Greta Brooks for her help on the contracts. Staff are working on 2027 in the Baltimore-Washington

DC area inconjunction with SBL. This means ASOR will meeting in the same place as SBL in three of the next five years.

Melissssa Kutner left the meeting

- There was discussion of ASOR meeting in the same place as SBL and the impact this has on attendance, book vendors, etc.
9. CCC Activities (Chuck Jones 2:40-2:50)
- Chuck reported that the CCC continues to meet monthly during academic year and chairs provide reports on their respective committee's activities.
 - The DEI Committee co-chairs are active in advocating for DEI within all of the committees. COP is integrating a new journal, *Ma'arav*, and working on new editor for *JCS*.
 - Chuck is grateful to committee members, all of whom are volunteers and he thanked Marta for organizing the CCC meetings.
10. Climate Impact Report discussion and action items (SCH, AV 2:50-3:15)
- Sharon noted that the Climate Impact Report was accepted by Board in November with the idea that action would be taken in the spring. Sharon posted summary of recommendations, four of which ASOR has already taken action on.
 1. Meeting format: hybrid (at least for 2023)
 2. Meeting location: east of Chicago (this is happening through 2028, for the most part). There was discussion of potentially meeting on the West Coast as show of solidarity for West Coast members.
 3. Continue to negotiate about sustainable practices with hotels
 4. Publish report on ASOR's website (done). Further publication of ASOR's efforts?
 - There was discussion of promoting and incentivising sustainable choices.
 - Andy brought up the establishment of a sustainability fund to support climate projects done by ASOR members. Members could make proposals for these types of projects.
 - Ann-Marie shared the language of the motion approved by the Executive Committee:

Lynn moved. Eric seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee recommends to Board that ASOR establish a pilot climate impact sustainability fund to provide funding for ASOR members to carry out projects in the Near East and wider Mediterranean regions that would address the range of issues identified in the climate report that was received by the ASOR Board at its 2023 November meeting.

Unanimously approved.

- There was discussion of administering this fund, how to make sure the projects follow individual government regulations, and including climate impact/sustainability statement on grant applications.
- Chuck will introduce these ideas to CCC tomorrow, as well as the possibility of committees creating climate impact sub-committees.

Sarah Costello seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Executive Committee for ASOR to establish a pilot climate impact sustainability fund to provide funding for ASOR members to carry out projects in the Near East or Wider Mediterranean regions that would address the range of issues identified in the climate impact report that was received by the ASOR Board at its November 2022 meeting.

Unanimously approved.

- Lisa Ackerman noted that this is such an evolving topic, a year from now we might want to revisit this and wordsmith
- Sharon noted a recommendation that the CCC committees create subcommittees—taking this idea to the CC to see how they want to handle this.

11. Status of Ad Hoc Committee on Governance and Ad Hoc Committee Contested Territory Language and Guidelines (SCH 3:15-3:30)

- Sharon provided a progress report. The Committee on Governance is formed and charge issued. The Contested Territories Committee is formed.
- Sheldon thanked all the Board members involved on the Governance Committee.

12. Future Spring Board Meeting Venues (SCH 3:30-3:40)

- Sharon invited discussion on the costs and benefits to meet in-person vs. virtually vs. hybrid. Do we want to go to a variable model? All in person? In person every other year? Meet face-to-face when there is something crucial to discuss? Having just approved a new campaign, it makes sense to meet in person for the next couple of years.
- The following topics were discussed:
 - Timing of the meeting (it's very busy time for academics, but also hard to catch people before they leave for the field)
 - Alternating in-person and virtual
 - Integrating new members and collegiality that comes with face-to-face meetings
 - Benefits for fundraising
 - Events outside of the meetings to add value to those who travel
 - Costs of meeting in person and who these costs might exclude
 - Climate impact

- Lynn commented that the topic of board composition (affording space for those who may not have such a high ability to invest funds for ASOR giving or travel) is one that the governance committee can take up, too.
- Erin commented that the ad hoc governance committee might take on the question of how to maximize the value of ASOR service for tenure and promotion applications.

13. Personnel Committee Report on Annual Evaluation of Executive Director (SCH 3:40-4:00)

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann-Marie Knoblauch
with assistance from Marta Ostovich