AVL Executive Council Meeting
Meeting minutes / July 15, 2026 / 10:30 a.m. / Virtual and in-person at APLS

Participants: John-Bauer Graham, Sheila Limerick (Chair-Elect, Secretary), Susanne Estes, Mary Alice Pouliot, Alicia Johnson, Amy Henderson, Kevin Pearcey (Chair), Alex Perry, Noelle Morin, Brad Watts, and Matt Sponsler

Safety Agreement from APLS: must be reviewed prior to each meeting.

1. **Call to Order and 2. Welcome** – Chairperson Kevin Pearcey called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.
3. **Review and approval of minutes from the meeting July 15, 2026** – Susanne motioned to approve the minutes, and Alex seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
4. Financial Report – Available at hyperlink
5. AVL Overview (Usage Stats) – Available at hyperlink
6. **Unfinished business**
   - **AVL Renewals FY2027 & Operations Plan Budget ($3,611,637)**
     Kevin has received the renewal information from Gale, and the pricing is the same as last year. He will also send a request to Capstone.

     EBSCO's pricing increased from $1,669,073 to $1,719,210, an increase of approximately $50,000. Susanne noted that AVL does not necessarily have to accept the increase and asked whether anyone had experience negotiating with vendors. John-Bauer Graham said it would be worthwhile to ask EBSCO about negotiating the price. Usage statistics could also provide an opportunity to evaluate the increase and determine whether the cost is justified. John-Bauer said they will try to bundle as many products as possible during negotiations. EBSCO resources are probably among AVL's most heavily used resources, which Amy confirmed. Kevin will hold off on responding to EBSCO for now. John-Bauer also pointed out that EBSCO is an Alabama company and suggested that AVL's relationship with a Birmingham-based company could potentially be emphasized during negotiations.

     Contact information is still needed for Encyclopedia Britannica.

     ProQuest increased from $95,282 to $98,617. Oxford University Press (OUP) is approximately $74,000 and has higher usage statistics than ProQuest. OUP provides the Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford Reference, and Oxford educational searches. Kevin still needs to contact OUP.

     Pronunciator has approximately 75,000 in usage, and Kevin needs contact information for the company. Alex does not know when a decision will be made regarding resources for English language learners. Pronunciator collects usage data differently from the other

databases. While other vendors may count usage by clicks, Pronunciator tracks accounts that have been created.

Amy H. noted that PebbleGo offers three mini-modules at no additional charge to customers who subscribe to five modules; AVL currently subscribes to four. This may present an opportunity to obtain additional value from the subscription. Susanne said teachers rave about PebbleGo and that the resource has a passionate user base.

Mary Alice asked about Pronunciator from a school library perspective and whether it is comparable to Duolingo. Duolingo is expected to begin charging for some services. Alex said Pronunciator is a good resource, although its tracking capabilities may differ. It is an expansive database offering a wide variety of languages, but he was unsure about some of its specific features. Amy Henderson said Pronunciator is used for adult literacy. If competing services begin charging next year, some users may turn to AVL because it provides access to Pronunciator.

Susanne said she hopes there will be more information about APLS's direction before AVL has to make a decision about these resources. She also noted that English language learners do not have as many resources available to them as they need, so she would hate to eliminate one of the resources serving that population.

Alex reported that OUP and ProQuest have a higher cost per use than some of the other resources.

OER Commons costs approximately $2,000 but has only three users. Kevin requested a contact person for OER Commons. He also needs contact information for TeachingBooks.

The Gale Cengage Learning databases are $728,797, while Legal Forms is $82,375. Those prices remained the same. Susanne asked whether anyone could identify practical uses for the resources.

Ethnic NewsWatch is one of the resources for which AVL pays, while some related resources are available at no charge. Black Freedom Struggle is a ProQuest resource. The group discussed whether it fills a unique niche and what makes its information different from other available resources, particularly because some resources will likely need to be eliminated. Alex said that he received an email in February 2022 indicating that Black Freedom Struggle is an open resource.

The group questioned whether the information in Ethnic NewsWatch is available elsewhere or duplicated in other AVL resources. John-Bauer said a deduplication analysis could be conducted to identify overlap, although Ethnic NewsWatch probably contains some unique titles because it includes underground newspapers. Susanne asked whether AVL has usage data specifically for Ethnic NewsWatch, since that is the resource for which AVL is paying. She also emphasized the need to be cognizant of the perception

that could result from eliminating a resource that specifically provides information for or about ethnic populations.

Gale's pricing remains the same.

Weiss Financial/Grey House Publishing costs $22,329. Amy noted that this resource does not appear in the current usage statistics. The database provides information related to investments, banking, and similar financial topics. John-Bauer said that, according to the collection development policy, every database should provide usage statistics. If a vendor cannot provide those statistics, that should be a consideration when determining whether to discontinue the resource. Kevin said the vendor has responded to him, and he will follow up to request usage statistics before a decision is made.

The only other additional expense identified was $1,234 in shipping charges.

The Supercomputer Authority has a contract that AVL must sign. Noelle said she will investigate whether there will be a cost increase. Susanne said AVL currently has a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the organization. She recalled that Deborah Wallace and James Hampton, the legal advisor, signed the agreement. Deborah is the organization's CEO. The group noted that normally the fiscal agent signs most agreements of this type.

The group also discussed the previous AccessScience issue. AVL had apparently signed a multiyear contract, although Alabama bid law may restrict the ability to enter into multiyear agreements. John-Bauer said there may be some flexibility for libraries under the law and that what is allowable could depend on the auditor.

Susanne will create a spreadsheet containing the usage statistics available for the past year alongside last year's prices so that the group can better visualize cost and usage. Noelle said there is already a spreadsheet containing some usage information, which she will share with the group.

Kevin will send the renewal letters this week.

- AVL RDA Requirements Storage (Noelle)
  Noelle reported that there has been an internal discussion at ASA, as well as a meeting with Susanne, to discuss potential solutions for meeting AVL's RDA requirements. Paperless-NGX is one potential solution. If AVL decides to use it, the software would be installed on a server at ASA. Additional meetings will probably be necessary to establish appropriate workflows because there is a significant amount of information and documentation to track.

  Noelle provided a demonstration of Paperless-NGX, an open-source document management solution with a user-friendly, web-based interface. Documents can be

dragged and dropped directly into the system, and the software can be self-hosted. ASA would host the system and provide enhanced security, off-site backups, and other safeguards. The software also includes built-in optical character recognition (OCR), which makes the contents of uploaded documents searchable.

During the demonstration, Noelle reviewed several features of the software, including metadata fields, interface views, tags, document types, and workflows. The system can accommodate email documents, PDFs, images, and nearly any other type of file AVL might need to retain.

Noelle demonstrated an automated workflow by dragging the day's meeting document into the system. Because she had already created a workflow, the document was automatically tagged as an agenda. The system can also perform actions based on information found within the contents of files, although the current demonstration was configured to identify information based only on document titles.

The group will need to meet again to determine which tags, document types, workflows, and other organizational structures should be created. This will be particularly important because AVL must report to the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) regarding records that have been disposed of. Additional meetings will therefore be necessary to ensure that the system and workflows meet AVL's records-management requirements.

Paperless-NGX can treat attachments to an email as separate files while also saving the body of the email separately. A designated email account would need to be associated with the system. Alternatively, files could easily be downloaded from emails and uploaded into the system.

Susanne asked whether documents could be organized into folders by month. Noelle explained that this could be accomplished through tags or storage paths. She said the system could be configured with specific storage paths and agreed that organizing records by month would make sense.

Susanne asked about the advantages of using Paperless-NGX rather than a shared platform such as Google Drive. Noelle explained that users and groups can be configured within Paperless-NGX so that, as individuals rotate off committees or change roles, their access can easily be added or removed. Because the software would be hosted on ASA's servers, AVL would also have greater security and control over the system. Noelle said she has limited experience with Google Drive from a management perspective but has heard that it can become difficult to keep track of documents or locate specific information as the volume of files increases.

Susanne asked council members whether they had any additional insight into or working knowledge of the platform. Brad noted that Google Drive is generally linked to individual

accounts, which can create complications when responsibilities or accounts need to be transferred. Paperless-NGX, in contrast, would provide a centralized platform under AVL's control rather than being dependent on a single individual's account. While it offers much of the same functionality, a major advantage is that AVL would retain access to the system when individuals change roles. It would also eliminate the need for everyone using the system to have a Google account.

Mary Alice suggested including vendor information in the system so that users would not have to determine which vendor is associated with a particular document or resource.

Brad also noted that the system could function as a secure file-sharing platform. Committees could be assigned their own tags or storage paths, allowing committee documents to be stored in a centralized location. Access could be restricted to members of a particular committee when appropriate. In addition to records storage and management, Paperless-NGX could therefore serve as a secure document-sharing platform for AVL committees.

7. **Committee reports**
    a. **Budget:** Chantae Calhoun, Chair
    b. **Database Review:** Alex Perry, Chair
    c. **Committee Spreadsheet:** Amy Henderson, Chair will be next physical year, nothing this year
    d. **Selection & Licensing:** vacant, Chair
    e. **Bylaws:** Alex Perry, Chair
    f. **OER Commons:** Alicia Johnson, Chair
    g. **Publicity:** Alicia Johnson, Chair
    Amy gave the report. She is happy to say that Oxford Public Library no longer has our swag, which is now at APLS. The committee is making digital materials available. They took the bookmarks and updated them and created a digital copy to send out; the committee can make other material available digitally and could possibly even use the new platform to make a public folder to share from.
    h. **Training:** vacant, Chair
    i. **Strategic Planning:** vacant, Chair
8. **New business**
9. **Announcements/reminders/discussion**
    a. Next meeting: Sept. 16, 2026
10. **Adjournment –** With no other business on the floor, Susanne made a motion to adjourn, and Alex seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.