



**Alabama Virtual Library**  
*Connecting you to a world of knowledge*

**Alabama Virtual Library Council  
Meeting Minutes  
May 19, 2021  
10:30 AM**

The May 19, 2021, meeting of the Alabama Virtual Library Council was called to order virtually at 10:30 AM by Chair, Cristin Dillard.

Minutes were prepared by Amy Henderson, Secretary.

**Members in Attendance**

Phill Johnson (ACHE)  
Ron Leonard (ACHE)  
Cristin Dillard (ALSDE)  
Renee Marty (ACCS)  
Brad Fricks (ACCS)  
Bill Paine (ASA)  
Nancy Pack (APLS)

A.P. Hoffman (ACCS)  
Amy E. Henderson (APLS)  
Annie Payton (ACHE)  
Tyker Carr (ASA)  
Susan Zana (ALSDE)  
Holly Flores (APLS)

**Approval of March 17, 2020, Minutes:** Ron Leonard motioned approve the minutes from the March 17 meeting. Phill Johnson seconded the motion. A roll call vote unanimously passed the motion.

**Financial Report:** Ron Leonard stated that we have a healthy reserve of \$502,361. That includes the money we were previously planning to use for training grants, etc. Of that amount, we carried over \$106,949 from the previous year. This was unusual due to an unusual year; we are not typically allowed to carry over a balance. Looking at the year ahead, our budget will remain the same, which is \$3,397,627.

Brad Fricks asked for clarification of whether we will be able to roll over any budget into next year. Ron replied that he has no knowledge of that capability this year, so he advised the council to use the money. Cristin said that she believed that Ron was correct; all money must be used in this fiscal year. Nancy confirmed, as the Fiscal Agent, that all money must be used in this fiscal year. Ron stated that the total available balance is \$502,361, of which \$56,512 is for Financial Fees and Services. \$445,329 is for the databases, supplies, materials, and operating expenses.

**Unfinished Business:** There was no unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Usage Statistics:** Bill Paine reported that usage had dropped significantly due to the COVID crisis; this year, it looks as though the numbers are approaching (pre-COVID) normal.

**Expenditures for FY21 and deadlines:** Cristin reminded everyone that we must spend all funds before the end of the fiscal year to remain fiscally responsible. Nancy Pack reported on upcoming deadlines.

- June 11 – Any bids related to IT
- June 30 – Any non-IT related items that require bids
- July 30 – Items that don't require bidding (under \$1,000 or sole-source)

Cristin began the conversation about how the Council should spend the remaining balance that will meet the needs of our users. She invited Brad to speak about the Database Review Committee.

Brad said that the Database Review Committee has reviewed several products this spring. The Committee ranked the recommended products by priority.

1. E-books (one-time purchase instead of a subscription)
  - a. Capstone
  - b. Gale K-5 E-books

The Committee thought that the Capstone E-books were the better product, but also liked Gale E-books. The Capstone E-books are \$200,000 for 100 e-books (pre-negotiation). The Gale e-books are \$103,000 for 64 titles with nine new titles pending.

2. Gale Legal Forms (Provides state-specific fillable forms with legal information). This was across-the-board voted as a definite priority that would benefit constituents from higher ed to public libraries. Ball-park figure for this database is \$91,000/year. The committee also looked at EBSCO's legal-help resource, which was not as robust but cheaper.

Brad invited Ron to talk about planning for future subscription price increases. Ron suggested that the Council plan on a minimum 5% increases across-the-board increases next year. That is about \$170,000. With the Council's approval, he will ask the existing vendors to provide flat pricing for the next fiscal year. The price of the Gale Legal Forms might be leveraged by letting them know that we also reviewed EBSCO's product, which was less-than-half of the price. Another suggestion is to purchase Gale E-books to give more leverage to get a better price for both services. We must consider, as well, the possibility that the vendors will not budge on their prices; will the Council be willing to pay full price for these products?

Brad commented that this is a little bit different than what the Database Committee was thinking at their last meeting. The Committee's recommendation is to definitely purchase Capstone Interactive E-books and Gale Legal Forms. So, the question becomes: Do we want to use the money that is left over this year for a one-time purchase of Gale E-books (to provide that cushion if we need it) and plan to purchase the other products that the Committee really liked next year? Those products were:

3. Teaching Books (Reading and book resources for elementary)
4. Weiss Financial Literacy Tools
5. World Book Early Learning modules

Ron also suggested maybe spending more on e-books. Instead of spending \$200,000, look at maybe spending \$300,000 on e-books, whether from Capstone or Gale. The money we spend on these one-time purchases will provide for potential subscription price increases in upcoming years.

Brad asked if it would be best for the Council to go ahead and purchase additional resources at the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year if it turns out that vendors do not increase their subscription prices (or if they don't increase as much as expected). Ron agreed that we should go ahead and purchase big purchases to boost e-books and the Legal Resource, and then as soon as the new fiscal year, we can have all of our ducks in a row for these other resources. As it stands, we are talking about amending two contracts and entering into three new contracts. In the past, we have asked for a couple of free months, and that is a consideration to do again.

Renee asked if the Gale Legal Forms would be updated each year (as laws change). Phill commented that, having taught at law schools for fifteen years, his experience shows that they keep those types of

databases updated all the time because if they don't and there is a legal issue, someone could accuse them of proving incorrect information; they are very diligent about that. We should definitely reach out to them to verify their policy on that.

Renee followed up to ask if they have any documents in Spanish or any other language. Ron said that he would ask Jackie about both of those questions.

Nancy asked if there were other items in our budget we are looking at. Cristin replied that there are not other items waiting to be purchased unless the Council decides to move forward with a virtual platform for training. It is not a huge expenditure, but it is one that we would have to move on now to get it in by the deadline.

Renee said that the e-books seemed heavy on the elementary side; if we purchase this, would the Council be able to add books to serve other areas later? Cristin replied that this purchase is aimed to support the Governor's K-3 initiatives. Also, these books can be used for English language or adult literacy students in a public library. Amy confirmed that the Oxford Public Library frequently uses low-level books in the Adult Literacy Program to help adults learn to read. Cristin also commented that if these e-books drive people to the AVL, we might see overall usage increase as e-book users learn about the other resources offered by the AVL over the summer.

Brad said that the Teaching Books was another priority for the Database Review Committee, and it would be more important to have in place quickly (before the approaching school year) than the Legal Forms resource; he suggested that the Council purchase Teaching Books with this fiscal year's money, and Legal Forms with next fiscal year's money. Ron and Cristin liked that idea.

Nancy moved that the Council accept the Database Review Committee's original recommendation of Gale Legal Forms and Capstone. Ron seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote, and the Council unanimously agreed.

Susan moved to purchase Teaching Books. Brad seconded that motion. This motion was brought to a vote, and the Council unanimously agreed.

Cristin requested that as soon as the two prorated contracts [Gale Legal Forms and Teaching Books] are negotiated to know the full costs, I would like that information to be communicated to the Council so we know exactly how much was spent; this way, if we need to have a called meeting to act, we will have full knowledge of these transactions.

Ron asked what start dates Cristin had in mind. Cristin suggested June 1 or July 1, depending on the time it takes for negotiating and processing. Cristin said that she would prefer to use purchasing best practices, asking for a prorated contract for FY21, and then prepare the full FY22 ready for the next fiscal year.

**Summer Conferences/Publicity** – This is a follow-up to a conversation that was happening over email earlier; our contract with ASA typically covers appearances at two conferences. They normally appear at ALLA, but that conference is virtual this year with no opportunity for vendors to appear. There are still two conferences that we would be able to utilize ASA. Upcoming opportunities:

- AETC – Alabama Educational Technology Conference – Primarily K-12, but with other age groups of interest, too. June 14-16. The booth for this conference has already been reserved. (There is no charge at this conference for the booth.)
- Mega Conference – They are only accepting virtual vendors at this point. They are no longer accepting in-person vendors.

If any Council members know of a conference (or the like) where we can engage potential users, please let Cristin know. Amy recently spoke to the Oxford City Council about the AVL in a presentation; this went over very well; maybe this would be an opportunity to speak to other city bodies. Nancy said that the League of Municipalities met last week, and the AVL was represented in the form of flyers, etc.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Reminder: Please send committee reports to Amy Henderson or place them in the Google Drive folder.

- **Finance Committee** – Ron Leonard – Nothing additional.
- **Database Review** – Brad Fricks – Nothing additional.
- **Selection and Licensing** – Ron Leonard – Nothing new to report, but Ron invited any other Council members to help with these new licenses that need to be negotiated.
- **Bylaws** – Nancy Pack – Report was provided via email.
- **Legislative Committee** – Phill Johnson – The Committee has been tracking bills, and they are starting to prepare “Thank you” notes that will be sent to the legislators.
- **OER Commons** – Phill Johnson – The Committee has contacted the administrators at the two- and four-year institutions to obtain updated information regarding OER activities on their campuses: current OER projects, key people involved, and whether any of those campuses have OER repositories. Also, Sheila Snow-Croft let committee members know that SLIS students need internship projects, so the committee let her know that we would love to have a SLIS intern to help with OER Commons publicity, metadata, ADA compliance, compiling projects, etc. Cristin reminded Phill to encourage SLIS students to take advantage of the stipend available, not just for OER interns, but also for publicity and training interns; it is available in this fiscal year, and the application is up on our website now. Phill said he would let her know that information.
- **Publicity Committee** – Amy Henderson – Nothing additional.
- **Training Committee** – Susan Zana – The training committee solicited training materials from constituents. It was sent to school libraries, and there have been zero responses so far. Training Committee will meet again soon to rethink how we can solicit materials.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements.

## ADJOURNMENT

A.P. Hoffman motioned to adjourn. Ron Leonard seconded the motion. The motion was carried and the May 19, 2021, AVL Council meeting was adjourned at 11:50 PM CST.