



ASOR Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Denver Marriott Tech Center
November 17, 2018

Present: P.E. McAllister (Emeritus Chair of the Board); Timothy Harrison (Past President); Eric Meyers; Ed Wright; Susan Ackerman (President); Richard Coffman (Chair of the Board); Joe Seger; Heather McKee (Treasurer); Lynn Swartz Dodd (Secretary); Ann-Marie Knoblauch, Sharon Herbert (Vice President), Andy Vaughn (Executive Director)

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:07pm (Richard Coffman)

2. Approval of Agenda

BE IT RESOLVED: The Agenda is approved by unanimous consent.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the April EC Meeting (April 21, 2018)

Under item 9, Eric Meyers commented on the need for a correction related to the new tax law. The \$2,400 itemizing goal should be \$24,000.

BE IT RESOLVED: The April 2018 EC minutes are approved as amended, by unanimous consent.

4. Approval of the Minutes from the July EC Conference Call (July 3, 2018)

Approval of the Minutes from the July EC conference call is deferred.

5. Treasurer's Report (Heather McKee)

The preliminary audit statements were circulated to the committee in hard copy (we do not have a final audit at this time). Heather thanks the Executive Committee

for a wonderful first year, which was both a challenge and a joy, and the joys included getting to know everyone and the organization. We made management decisions, including writing down the book inventory by \$5,000 in order to better reflect the number of books that we actually sell each year. We made a vacation allowance account, to have set-aside amounts owed to employees for accrued vacation time. Had we not done this, our unrestricted assets would reflect an increase by that amount.

A discussion about the vacation pay terms offered by ASOR ensued.

The Treasurer recounted the details of her report. See details from that document, which was given to attendees at the meeting.

Kari Roane (University of Chicago Press) joined the meeting in order to present details of the partnership with ASOR.

Heather McGee continued her report. There is a significant balance in the General Fund, partly due to a \$103,000 surplus in the final accounting for FY 18.

Investments: Overall this has been a good year. ASOR fellowships, as of 9/30/18, posted a return of 4.3%, which exceeds the ASOR custom benchmark of 3.5%. At the end of the fiscal year, ASOR had higher returns (10%) but the markets fluctuated. Going forward, to help relieve staff time pressure, ASOR will record the changes on a quarterly basis, but the Treasurer will look at the accounts monthly to monitor the market changes, e.g., October was a tough month, and we are down to -1%, which is a minor loss. Heather McKee is monitoring the situation with our accounts closely. Our ASOR spending and investment policies help us avoid the lowest of the lows, and we also don't experience the highest of the highs.

The Audit Statement says DRAFT. The Final Audit is not available yet. We are not pleased with this, but this has been a tremendously transitional year, because of moving and because of losing our major financial staff person, Selma Omerefendic. It was a challenge to get Romeo Wiggins, our auditors, the needed information. We are in communication with the partner in charge there and the numbers on the Draft are good, and we expect to receive a CLEAN opinion. Because of the transition, Andy Vaughn and Heather McKee identified areas where ASOR can improve, including the tracking and roll over of our temporary and restricted accounts, and quarterly budget line items, So, we have an opportunity to strengthen the organization's accounting system moving forward.

Andy Vaughn gave some explanations about the unrestricted net assets. He mentioned that the Board had allocated up to \$100,000 for the moving and transition costs. He expressed his hope that we won't use all of this. We are doing well as we look to buying a building and making a move.

Richard Coffman: It will truly be a blessing to have accounts aligned across all platforms. He struggled with it himself (as Treasurer) and this change will benefit the organization massively. It will make us more productive internally and will result possibly in cost savings for our audit. He personally found it frustrating and so he appreciates the effort having been made.

Tim Harrison: when will the audit come in?

Heather McKee: the partner is working on the notes.

Andy Vaughn: The auditor says they are close, so it likely will be in by December 15th. The Finance Committee will have a conference call when the audit is received, and then the results of the audit will be disseminated to the rest of the Board.

Heather McKee: For the FY 19 budget, because of the mis-matches between the quarterly budget and the audit, we don't have an easy way to give you accurate variances, but we don't have major issues.

Andy Vaughn indicated that he would need a couple days to work through the trial balances, but he anticipates that this won't happen before December 15.

Lynn Dodd thanked Heather on behalf of the Executive Committee for all her hard work.

6. Update: ASOR's Publishing Partnership with University of Chicago Press (Kari Roane, University of Chicago Press)

Susan Ackerman reminded the Executive Committee that ASOR entered into a publishing contract with the University of Chicago (UC) Press that will be effective January, 2019. The UC Press is getting going already and will "hit the ground running."

Kari Roane gave out a report on the UC Press plan for BASOR, JCS, and NEA. The report reflects the baseline of Institutional Circulation subscribers and was

provided by Inda Omerefendic to UC. She commented that this was one of the cleaner lists she had seen in taking on a new journal. Paid institutional subscribers provide the income that will sustain the journal. In future years, there will be year over year columns. So, this is a baseline.

Tim Harrison asked whether the UC Press had looked at institution subscriptions historically?

Kari Roane responded that UC Press did not know the historic data when they bid on the RFP. They had some data on related titles in their portfolio. Their bid was based on the growth that she thinks they can achieve. Inda Omerefendic sent the 2017 report and she made comments in her report on the rate of the decline in institutional subscriptions.

Kari said that she has been doing this for 18 years; you make your deal, with good faith effort, and some decline is normal. The rest of the report is focused on what to do in year 1 to boost the numbers.

Sales Program and Outlook for 2019: UC Press has both print and online for all their journals. There is a demand for print still, however small. On the business side: she investigated how much back content to allocate to the current institutional subscriptions. She increased the content for JCS and NEA back to 1998 and BASOR back to 1990. This is attractive to librarians, as it drives usage up and makes the journals a more attractive product. There is other usage happening; but librarians don't have information from other sites. Publications have to provide counter compliant reports. This will allow UC sales people to work well. They can make the case to the libraries that there are customers who couldn't get access without paying and they indicate that they would get a great deal if they subscribed.

Susan Ackerman asked why the different years had been assigned for back content access.

Kari Roane responded that this relates to the amount of content. She is hitting hard in talking to sales directors and associates, on value of the electronic edition. She sees some growth potential in the international domain. However, 30% of the international circulation comes from free exchange. Consortia sales will help (a buying group often regionally affiliated). UC will negotiate a fair custom price, including trial subscriptions.

Andy Vaughn points out that this could be new business for our journals.

Kari Roane is putting the quick wins on the list. It will plateau eventually as there are only so many institutions that will need these journals but she expects that there will be an initial bump.

Philanthropic Subscriptions: We had two, which will continue, and there will be other partner possibilities

We are in the print catalog for the University of Chicago (UC) Press.

Telemarketing: they will pursue recent, lapsed subscriptions. She discussed details about their approach to ensuring continuity and to alerting librarians that fees going forward will go to UC. Librarians are busy, so UC emails, then calls to ensure they get the data. If they were to cancel, we ask questions and check the situations. She indicates that she does not want to lose the core subscribers.

Web presence and online access will look a bit different. People will no longer end up on the click through JSTOR LOVI (list of volumes and issues) page. UC will show current content, and this means that people land on the most current issue and can see abstracts or search for past content.

E-books will be complete downloadable issues, and in addition, subscribers will have both pdf text identical and the interactive html with thumbnails that pop out as large images, which can be downloaded even as powerpoint files.

Susan Ackerman: It is important for us to see what our members will see as this is a critical benefit of membership. So we can direct our members to the UC website directly, or have a password protected website link from ASOR.

Kari Roane indicated that once all the QC on back content is done, UC will help ASOR to reach out to its membership to give members access to direct links. This is not the easiest way shown on page 7, but there are two other ways: trusted proxy or a Members-only locked down area could include journal access. ASOR authenticates the person for UC.

Susan Ackerman mentioned that this drives traffic to the ASOR website.

Kari Roane wants us to be aware of this benefit. UC stands ready to do help ASOR do this.

Andy Vaughn indicated that we will need to hire a software engineer to do this for us.

Kari Roane indicated that one of her staff members has written a primer, so that when ASOR is ready, this will be a KEY piece in the conversation about the software arrangements.

Abstracting and indexing sends basic data to services that make discovery available. They will spend a couple months and inventory these IA services, in order to ensure we are where we should be. This is an important publishing job that we need to do.

European authors in particular require metrics based on citation ranking services. UC will work with those who are expert in this to provide reports on where we stand in citation reporting services. These are all commercial services. UC will advocate with the services to get an archaeology group established. She indicated that she looked up the details about BASOR and it is doing fine. We just need to keep publishing top quality papers on time. She will create a statement of quality that can be shared with authors.

Marketing: in future years this will be more extensive. They are setting up websites. The description of scope will be static as long as it is correct. They have made some marketing items, such as notebooks, a table drape. This makes a groovy exhibit possible (and this is Marsha's work).

The final page of Kari Roane's report includes all the contact information for the staff on the team for ASOR at Chicago. She encourages ASOR to call Kari first, and she will route things. Inda Omerefendic and Andy Vaughn have been doing all the work that these people do...it's a pretty big job.

Tim Harrison recalls when Jeff Blakely was at COP. We were told that we were trying to run a mid-sized press with a bunch of volunteers.

Andy Vaughn: Inda's reporting has been as good or better than others. The ASOR team is Inda alone, but here we can see a list of a dozen people or more.

Kari Roane explains that UC has 3 people who provide 24/7 support. She is impressed that ASOR had support for the editors. UC has support for the editors. When there is a new assistant or when the new NEA editor starts, UC will train

them by webinar. Also, they put funds in the budget to support face to face training on site.

Andy Vaughn: when the JSTOR decision was made, we hoped income would go up over time, but we did not budget that in. We have been shown here more substance from UC. Andy thanks Kari because UC has exceeded our expectations. Also, UC agreed to take the journals and start fulfilling claims July 1, 2018, rather than Jan 1, 2019, and it cost the press something but they did not charge ASOR. Thank you for all you are doing.

Susan Ackerman: UC made commitments to the journals to enhance color for JCS. So, that editor is happy two times over. They will commit to issues with greater page count for NEA. This is also good news. They have moved to make the journals better quality.

Kari Roane says that the Press shares the same goal and so these have been easy decisions.

Susan Ackerman notes that ASOR can use the staff time for other programmatic initiatives.

Kari Roane responded that being a small publishing company is tedious.

Andy Vaughn commented that our skills will be better focused on delivering value for our membership.

7. Other Business

EC retreat (Susan Ackerman):

The Executive Committee will meet in early February in Alexandria, VA, for a full day Saturday and a half day Sunday. Among the topics to be discussed will be the issue of the location of the annual meeting. A straw poll was taken during the Meeting Location open session. 38% thought they wanted to split with SBL; 38% thought they wanted to stay with SBL; 15% thought that staying together when possible could be good, but that meetings without SBL were an option. So, there is a split membership. It became clear that the behind-the-scenes planning is not clear to the members.

The crisis occurs in 2021: in San Antonio there is no place for us. Susan will need the board to make a decision at the April, 2019 meeting so that Andy can contract somewhere. A full discussion of the issues related to the critical meeting location issues ensued. The Executive Committee is committed to resolving the issue this year.

7. The ASOR Building Campaign Cabinet

Ed Wright announced that the building campaign is no longer a secret. We are now half way to our goal and have gone public with our drive to raise resources to support buying a home for ASOR.

Sharon Herbert agreed to lead the Building Campaign Cabinet with P.E. MacAllister as Honorary Chairman. Other members are Sheldon Fox, Carolyn Strange, Lynn Dodd, Susan Ackerman, plus Ed Wright and Andy Vaughn ex officio. A preliminary meeting was held on Thursday at 10AM at which half the committee was able to attend. We will plan a Skype call with the whole committee with more prep about the vision.

Additional discussion about the timing of the move to a new space (from the Virginia Theological Seminary space) ensued.

The Executive Committee empowered Andy Vaughn to investigate purchase and financing options related to a particular property and to report back to the EC.

8. ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives (Susan Ackerman, Andy Vaughn)

There is no additional information. We discussed the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Department of State (DOS) for restoration in Mosul. ASOR voted to apply jointly with WMF, and the application did not succeed. We have been trying to determine who did get the award, so we can assess the strengths in that application and weakness in ours. No news yet.

Funds came through from DOS to carry us through 2018. They are discussing a possible renewal on January 1st, with the possibility of more regular process.

A funding request was submitted to the Ambassador's Fund for work in Libya for pop up museums at archaeological sites.

9. Staffing ASOR's New Home

Andy Vaughn reported that Felice Hermann was hired. Britta Abeln will work remotely doing financial specialist activities. Cynthia Rufo works 10 hours on Whiting Foundation and 10 hours on website, and related projects. Both will be with ASOR through December 31, 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56pm.