



**ASOR Board of Trustees Fall Meeting
November 24, 2024, 8:30 AM-12:30 PM EST
Boston, MA Park Plaza (Georgian Room)**

Present: Lisa Ackerman, Susan Ackerman (Past President), Solange Ashby, Emily Miller Bonney (Treasurer), Alex Brooks, Eric Cline, Sarah Costello, Erin Darby, J. P. Dessel, Lynn Swartz Dodd, Jane DeRose Evans, Sheldon Fox (Board Chair), Kate Grossman, Michael Hasel, Peyton (Randy) Helm, Sharon Herbert (President), Charles (Chuck) Jones (Vice President), Ann-Marie Knoblauch (Secretary), Carol Meyers, Eric Meyers, Robert Mullins, Kirsten Neumann, Ann Sahlman, Nancy Serwint, Rick St. Hilaire, Jason Ur, Andy Vaughn (Executive Director)

Guests: Andrea Berlin, Jaime Fraser, Emily Hammer, Marta Ostovich, Sarah Scott

Absent: Teddy Burgh, Margaret Cohen, Mark Lanier, Alex MacAllister, Donald Martin, Andrew Moelis, Joe Seger

Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order and Introductions (Sheldon Fox) 8:41
2. Approval of Agenda (Sheldon Fox): One change to the agenda under Committee Reports 3: change CHI to CHC.

Sheldon acknowledged the work of trustees who are finishing their terms (Susan, Ann-Marie, Erin, and Randy).

3. Approval of the Minutes from the Spring 2023 Board Meeting (Sheldon Fox)

Emily moved Chuck seconded. The minutes from the Spring 2023 Board meeting and the agenda with one correction (above) were unanimously approved

Sheldon commented on the role of the President-Elect and the shortening of the term of the Past President. There will not always be a president elect, but when there is, they will be a member of EC, ONC, and the Personnel Committee.

Changes to ASOR Bylaws

Motion to adopt the proposed bylaw changes that create the position of president-elect and the consequent emendations to other bylaws provisions necessitated by the inclusion of a president-elect.

Randy seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Board approve the amendments to the ASOR by-laws.
Unanimously approved.

Officer Elections (Sharon Herbert)

Thanks to Bob Mullins for leadership of the committee.

1. Sarah Scott as Secretary (3-year term January 1, 2025-December 31, 2027)

Ann-Marie seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ASOR Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Executive Committee, and on the recommendation of the Officers' Nominations Committee, elects Sarah Scott as secretary of ASOR for a three-year term (January 1, 2025-December 31, 2027).
Unanimously approved.

2. Jane DeRose Evans as President Elect (1-year term January 1, 2025-December 31, 2025)

Chuck seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ASOR Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Executive Committee, and on the recommendation of the Officers' Nominations Committee, elects Jane DeRose Evans as president-elect of ASOR for a one-year term (January 1, 2025-December 31, 2025).
Unanimously approved.

Board Elections, Part 1 (Kate Grossman)

Kate noted that Institutional trustees are elected by member institutions. Lynn agreed to serve another term as an institutional trustee so there was a need for one new institutional trustee. Four people were put forward for election as membership-elected trustees.

1. Institutionally-Elected Trustees
 - a. Andrea Berlin (initial three-year term January 1, 2025-December 31, 2027)
 - b. Lynn Swartz Dodd (additional three-year term January 1, 2025-December 31, 2027)
2. Membership-Elected Trustees
 - a. Helen Dixon (initial three-year term January 1, 2025-December 31, 2027)
 - b. Emily Hammer (initial three-year term January 1, 2025-December 31, 2027)

Board Elections, Part 2 (Sharon Herbert)

1. Board-Elected Trustees
 - a. Ann Sahlman (additional three-year term January 1, 2025-December 31, 2027)

Kate moved. Carol seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ASOR Board of Trustees elects Ann Sahlman to the Board of Trustees for an additional three-year term as a Board-Elected Trustee (January 1, 2025-December 31, 2027).

Unanimously approved.

Financial Matters Part 1 (9:15-10:00)

1. Treasurer's Report (Emily Miller Bonney)

Emily reported that the Finance Committee met yesterday, and their documents are posted.

- Two investment spreadsheets—one through June 30 and one through Sept 30. The June 30 spreadsheet gives a better sense of what happened in 2023. This is the spreadsheet that the audit would be based on, and it shows continued growth into the first quarter.
- Net investment spreadsheet shows percentage growth in all the funds:
 - 13% is outstanding.
 - Significant gifts have helped quite a bit. These gifts speak to confidence in ASOR.
 - \$923K contributions to endowment accounts (highest year).
- ASOR distributed \$252K to support programming.

Andy noted that the net growth to the endowments after the distribution is \$450K. It is nice to distribute that much and still have that amount left.

2. Discussion of Budget to Actual (Exhibit C), Notes to Budget to Actual (Exhibit D), Net Investment Reports (Exhibits A & B), and Audited Financials for FY2024 (Emily Miller Bonney, Andy Vaughn)

Emily noted that memberships are down by about 200 because of challenges in Israel, which also affected AM attendance and costs.

One small edit was noted: ISW should be ISAC.

3. Finance Committee Action Items (Emily Miller Bonney and Andy Vaughn)
 - a. Action: vote to receive audited financials

Sarah Costello seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ASOR Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Executive Committee, and on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, accepts the audited financials.

Unanimously approved.

Sharon reported on the hiring of Rachel Bernstein as Communications and Friends of ASOR

Manager.

Sheldon commented on the audit. He pointed to page 3, which shows that at the end of the year we have \$793K in net assets available for operations. This is up from \$600K two years ago, which is a result of the momentum for the Annual Fund. ASOR is in a very healthy position, though we should not expect this number will always grow.

Andy responded that the \$793K is the number we can use for priorities that lie outside donor designation and respond to opportunities and needs that may arise. He also commented on the need for new grants and the salary percentage covered by grants will be lower this year. Prior year surplus provides a cushion in leaner times.

Andy noted that we are still \$50K short of our goal for Board-designated building fund (\$500K). This year we used some of these funds for new HVAC systems and it is nice to have the building fund help with major maintenance.

There was further discussion of membership numbers and tracking. Andy stated that the budget is built on 3-5% membership growth.

Break (10:15-10:30)

ASOR 2025 and Development (Lynn Swartz Dodd and Sheldon Fox)

Lynn began with a thank you and a reminder that the Development Committee exists to help the Board achieve its responsibility to provision ASOR to achieve its mission.

- Annual Fund: the goal is \$140,000. So far, we have raised \$25,333.
- ASOR is special—the percentage of members who give beyond above their dues is huge—upward of 40%.
- We've set for ourselves the highest goal ever for the 2025 fundraising initiative—\$5 million. We are at \$4.55 million.
 - If you have not yet decided how you will support this initiative, there is still time. Lynn mentioned the white form with 2 sides: Call to action pledge form, Legacy gift pledge (percentage, or a specific amount).
 - ASOR can give \$250K annually to support the work of ASOR members because of the success of the campaign.
- The Development Committee recommended to the Executive Committee that we have a party to celebrate ASOR's 125th year. and conversations are ongoing as to who might we invite to anchor and celebrate this moment.

Sheldon echoed Lynn's comments and encouraged people to donate. He offered his services for legacy planning.

There was further discussion of the 125th anniversary celebration, including the size of the event, date, and process for planning. The hope is to have a committee in place to help with planning by the start of the year.

Lynn noted Carolyn Strange's impact on ASOR specifically in making the new communications position possible.

Andy mentioned the section in his report that contains ideas for establishing an endowment. ASOR has 15 endowed funds, by end of 2026 it probably will have 17. He is pleased to make a legacy pledge and start with incremental gifts in memory of his parents. ASOR is unique that with \$50K can start an endowed named fund.

Jason emphasized the importance of ASOR adhering to its mission as this will encourage donors.

Committee Reports, News from Overseas Research Centers, and Discussion/Action Items

1. CCC Activities (Chuck Jones)

Chuck reported that each committee meets on its own schedule. The CCC meets once a month during the year and held a 3-hour meeting at the Annual Meeting. All committees submitted written reports for this meeting and Chuck acknowledged the immense amount of work the committees do. Committees also serve to encourage new voices, and the CCC is an incubator for leadership

2. Publications (Chuck Jones)

a. Appointment of *NEA* Editor

Chuck noted that there were 7 candidates interested in the position.

Kiersten moved. Emily seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ASOR Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Committee on Publications and appoint Christina Tsouparopoulou as editor of *Near Eastern Archaeology* for a three-year term (January 1, 2025-December 31, 2027).

Unanimously approved.

Lynn asked about a sliding scale for membership for middle/high school teachers as FOA expands. Andy replied that we have scholarships, and we've been able to meet 100% of requests (25%, 50%, 100% depending on need)

3. CHC activities (Jane DeRose Evans and Andy Vaughn)

Motion for affiliation status for Civil Society Organizations and Conservation Projects

- Jane stated that Andy and Will Reynolds brought to the committee's attention. Certain organizations and civil societies were not eligible for types of funding because they do not have ASOR affiliation, which is currently restricted to field projects.
- CHC has discussed with CAP.
- There are organizations interested in ASOR affiliation, though probably not a huge number.

Rick seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ASOR Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Executive Committee and approves the motion from the Cultural Heritage Committee that the Cultural Heritage Committee will create a mechanism for Civil Society Organizations and Conservation Projects to be affiliated with ASOR.

Unanimously approved.

4. Brief Report on Renovation Plans for James F. Strange Center (See Supplemental Materials pdf)

Andy referred to the proposed plans for the renovation.

- Skip Maginiss (architect and previous owner of the building) designed the project.
- Renovation goals:
 - Multi-purpose meeting space to facilitate educational programs for northern Virginia and DC areas. ASOR's historical work is connected to heritage in the modern period.
 - Space to hold Board meetings.
 - If successful, it will save ASOR \$15-17K in property taxes, as an educational building.
 - Movable tables, an updated kitchen (for cooking classes), and workstations.

There was discussion of details of the plan and Andy invited feedback from the Board. The architect would like feedback by Dec. 15.

5. News from AIAR (Jamie Fraser)

Jamie thanked people for their words of support.

- Fellows program is continuing, though some had to suspend their fellowships, because of cancelled flights and insurance.
- Two employees live in the West Bank and cannot come to work. One won a service award and Jamie invited people to email congratulations.
- Matthew Johnson and Emily Johnson (Assistant Director and Librarian) are leaving next month and Jamie thanked them
- Next year is 100th anniversary of AIAR, which is in a good position in 2025. The board has been running a centennial campaign that has been successful.
- Jamie noted the amazing work that JP and Joe have done.
- Jamie shared that two scholars have been meeting every day in the library and sharing meals—one from Ramallah and one from Tel Aviv. AIAR is a place for mutual coming together and he is proud of this.

6. News from CAARI (Lindy Crewe)

Nancy Serwint reported for CAARI as Lindy is at a fundraising event.

- CAARI is doing very well this year. Things are vibrant and active.
- Building issues: stone facing needs refacing and they are still waiting on bids.
- Birgitta, a former board member is planning a series of events for 2027 at ASOR.
- 2028 is the 50th year of CAARI

- CAARI is working on their strategic plan.
- Lindy is doing a great job and there are good relationships with the Department of Antiquities and staff.

ASOR and the Political Landscape Update (Sharon Herbert)

Sharon reflected on areas of conflict and how members and others have been affected. We do what we can, whatever we can, whenever we can, wherever we can—to support our research, for regions that are in terrible pain right now. She also commented on funding and support ASOR has received previously from the State Department. She asked for thoughts and suggestions.

Nancy brought up ASOR relationship with ACOR. There are still connections here and ASOR projects in Jordan are ongoing.

Kiersten commented on positive messaging around the hybrid format of the Annual Meeting. People were able to shift their presentations and participation to virtual days before the meeting. The online format helps with accessibility and inclusivity. Sarah and Kiersten thanked ASOR staff and the Programs Committee for making this happen.

Carol asked about restoring the trust of people who were put in difficult positions because of ASOR's position. Sharon replied that there is still work to be done.

Next Strategic Plan Preliminary Discussion (Breakout Sessions 11:30-12:00)

Sharon provided background to previous Strategic Plans, showing a shift in foci of ASOR interests. The current 2021-2025 plan was adopted in November 2021.

Before entering breakout sessions, there was a motion to thank the ASOR staff.

Ann-Marie moved. Carol seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees thanks the ASOR staff, particularly Jared Koller and Arlene Press, interns, and the Program Committee as well as the leadership of Boston Park Plaza.

Unanimously approved.

Nancy also acknowledged the efforts of Andy Vaughn and Sharon Herbert.

Breakout Groups

Emily's Group

- ASOR and the situation in West Africa (colleagues in Sudan).
- Mission creep: ASOR in Africa.
- Increasing local engagement wherever ASOR works.
- Scholarly vs. humanitarian mission
- Cultural Heritage as a part of outreach and engagement: attracting new members and audiences
- Membership is rapidly changing—want to see more social activism—how do we

continue to move it forward?

Lynn's group:

- How are we using the talent of our Board?
- If we have a Strategic Plan, are we going to take it seriously by measuring what we do?
- Employment landscape: resources for members, professional development, workforce development
- How we might do better at communicating the way we acquire knowledge?
- Institutional membership: one page for university administrations
- CAP affiliations and how might to brand those opportunities
- Mission creep: there is real value in CH—and it is not separate from fieldwork.

Kate's Group:

- CHI work and its connection to the mission statement
- DEI
 - Good: public outreach at the annual meeting
 - Not working as well: heavy workload of session assistants from Hansbury Society
- Digital challenges (AI, ethics, increased access) and how they fit in the plan
- Pedagogy and broadening our understanding of professional expertise
- Structure of committees and the Board.

Jane's Group:

- Where does ASOR fit in the upcoming political landscape
- Improving communications with the membership
- Geographical range of ASOR: what we are doing and why we are doing it, how do we expand? What does expansion look like?
- Strategic Plan process and the need for a task force

Spring Board Meeting Dates:

- Executive Committee: Sat. May 3, AM.
- Full Board: Sat. May 3, PM and Sun. May 4, AM.

Both meetings will be in person, in Alexandria, VA.

Thanks to those cycling off the Board.

Meeting adjourned: 12:11.