

Greater Los Angeles Area Mensa
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Meeting conducted electronically via Zoom
April 2nd, 2022

Area	Secretary	Delegate	Members-at-Large
Mid-City	vacant	vacant	[✓] Brian Madsen
Coastal	vacant	vacant	[✓] Andrea Nolan
SFV	[✓] Jana Bickel	[✓] Alan Stillson	[X:1] Courtney Seiter
ELAC	vacant	[✓] Jonathan Elliott	[✓] Madeline Walker
Hi-Desert	vacant	[✓] Lindsay Ross	[✓] Gregory Williamson
Inland Empire	[✓] Wilbert Woo	vacant	vacant

Key:

[✓] = present for entire meeting

[/] = present for portion

[X:#] = absent, with count (#) of consecutive absences

Guests: Mark Carpenter, Douglas Walker

I. Opening

A. Call to Order

- Meeting was opened by Jonathan Elliott at 11:00am.

B. Approval of Agenda

- Stillson moved to approve; Bickel seconded; agenda was approved without objection.

C. Approval of Previous Minutes

1. **January 8th, 2022:** Madsen moved to approve; Woo seconded; minutes were approved without objection.
2. **March 5th, 2022:** Stillson moved to approve; Bickel seconded; minutes were approved without objection.

II. Reports

A. Executive Officers

1. Chair (Seiter): absent
2. Executive Vice-Chair (vacant)
3. Administrative Vice-Chair (vacant)
4. Secretary (Madsen)
 - Madsen coordinated with Becky Folger at the national office to get all of our email aliases – Editor@glaam.us.mensa.org, Treasurer@glaam.us.mensa.org and

so forth – pointed at the right people.

- Madsen reported having finalized agenda and minutes ready to upload to the website, but without an active GLAAM Webmaster, didn't have a clear path to getting those posted. He planned to hang on to those and post whatever agenda and minutes have accumulated once that changes.
- At our last meeting, Toni Hansen expressed concern that she couldn't find our list of volunteer guidelines. Madsen found and forwarded those guidelines to her, and she confirmed that she received them.

5. Treasurer (Woo)

- “As of the end of March, we have in our regular account \$26,786.73. And in our RG account, we have a total of \$5,453.51 for total of \$32,240.24.”
 - Elliott commented that these are essentially the same balances that we've seen in the past several years, “so even though we don't have a working budget, as we typically have had in the past, we are basically managing anyhow, just kind of automatically, to keep our expenses level with our revenues.”
- During the month of March, Woo paid for printing of the newsletter, our post office box, our Directors & Officers insurance, and another year of Zoom.
- A number of payments have been made by various people from personal funds in recent months, and Woo wanted to make sure all of those people get reimbursed.
- Elliott reported an old check from 2018 written by Bruce Smith to Michael Wong, that was never cashed, and asked Woo if it should be cashed now, or if Woo would rather reissue the check. Woo stated that he wanted to reissue the check, and asked for the old check to be returned to him.
- Madsen asked if the following items were on Woo's to-do-list radar: reinstating GLAAM's tax-exempt status, closing the Hi-Desert account and reabsorbing those funds, and making sure that Lancaster is included in the list of people whose personal payments on GLAAM's behalf are reimbursed. Woo confirmed that yes, these issues are all in work.
 - Bickel started a discussion about having someone, “not necessarily Wilbert, since he's got his hands full,” such as Linda Dorfmont, to do our back taxes.
 - Elliott stated that in prior years, we had worked with Enrique de la Cruz, who filed our taxes for several years, but needs financial statements from us.
 - Woo confirmed that he is preparing those financial statements, and once we have those, filing with the IRS and the California Franchise Tax Board is not difficult, and can be done online.
 - Walker and Bickel provided an update on Lancaster, who is “out of the hospital and still recuperating.”
- Stillson offered “major thank you to Wilbert for the work that he's been doing. It's just really valuable for GLAAM.”

B. Area Reports

1. Mid-City (vacant)
2. Coastal (vacant)
3. SFV
 - Bickel reported continuing to hold her two regular events, the Contemporary Issues SIG and Sizzler, "and we had a couple of new members, which is really good."
 - Stillson reported "our first outing of sorts," an April 30 visit to the Valley Relics Museum followed by lunch at Maria's Italian Kitchen.
4. ELAC: no report
5. Hi-Desert
 - Ross expressed sympathy for Seiter, who is suffering from a migraine.
6. Inland Empire
 - Woo: Zoom meetings have continued on second Saturdays, and "we're starting a monthly luncheon, slowly picking up members."

C. Members-at-Large

1. Madsen
 - Spearheaded a trip to Chase Bank to update signers on our bank accounts. In accordance with the plan that was reported in last month's minutes, Woo, Madsen, and Williamson are now signers on the main GLAAM Chase Bank account, and Woo, Walker, and Bickel are now signers on the GLAAM RG Chase Bank account.
 - "We as a Board should talk about how much longer we want to keep paying for Zoom, and if and when we want to start meeting in person again, but since we haven't, and the bill was due, I went ahead and paid it for another year on the assumption that we were going to need it for some part of that year." Madsen requested and received reimbursement for that payment.
 - Bickel noted that she uses our Zoom account for GLAAM's book discussions twice a month, so she needs to keep that account for that purpose.
 - Elliott concurred that we want to continue meeting over Zoom for the near future, and that "it doesn't cost that much."
 - Stillson agreed that having a Zoom account is useful in case anybody else wants to start a virtual SIG like the book discussions.
 - Woo noted that having meetings over Zoom makes a big difference over meeting in person, and "would be very valuable, given the large geographic area that we have."
 - Elliott noted a general consensus from the Board that keeping Zoom is a good thing.
2. Nolan: no report
3. Walker: no report

4. Williamson

- Went to Chase Bank with the group to become a signer on the Chase Bank account.
- Planned a happy hour at The Black Cat starting May 4th, inspired by the pre-pandemic Mid-City event hosted by Burnett and Albert.
 - Albert commented that "The Black Cat is a great location because there's a lot of outdoor seating."
- Planned another event on May 18th at Batcade batting cages.
- Stated an intent to continue planning different kinds of events "to see what sort of response I get."
- Had sent information about The Black Cat to Stillson for the *L.A. Mentary* calendar, but not yet about Batcade.
- Wanted to form a Diversity Committee, to be discussed later under New Business.

D. Committees and Coordinators

1. Awards Committee

- Elliott announced the committee has identified our Member of the Year and that one member is advancing in the Hall of Fame. This information would be announced at the May board meeting and published in the June issue of *L.A. Mentary*.

2. Finance Committee

- Elliott noted that "it would be nice if we had a functioning Finance Committee," and encouraged us to establish one for the coming year.

3. Gifted Youth Committee

- Walker noted that there are approximately 460 youth, down from pre-pandemic levels of around 600.
- Walker sent email to those 460 listing different events including some in Orange County and in San Diego, and got positive responses.

4. Membership

- Elliott noted that we have no Rookie of the Year this year because we have had no rookies. He observed that this might be because we have had no new members coordinator. We used to have someone who would contact new members, get them oriented, and make them feel welcome. We also used to have a new members orientation where we would talk about opportunities to volunteer and get involved. "We used to have a membership committee organized with a new members coordinator and a recruitment coordinator and a testing coordinator and a retention coordinator." In the coming year, Elliott stated that he would like to see something like this reintroduced "because that is going to be key, I think, to getting more new members involved generally in the chapter and especially involved as volunteers."

- Stillson observed that the Mensa Connect community for Region 9 is awash in negativity (it “has gotten really out of control with personal attacks and rants and misinformation and so on”), which has been having the effect of turning off new members, who ask, “Is this what Mensa is all about?” Stillson has been trying to counter that with his observations about what’s good in Mensa. “I think we all should do what we can to help new members find the positivity of being in Mensa.”

5. Regional Gathering

- Walker looked forward to next February when “we can have a real RG.”
- Madsen asked when we typically contact a hotel to sign a contract. In response, Walker made a note to herself to contact the DoubleTree in San Pedro about holding an RG there next year.

6. Special Events

- Picnic in Griffith Park Saturday, May 14th. In addition, Walker announced that Sue Barr will lead a short hike to a special viewpoint half an hour before the picnic starts.
- Walker intended to explore a possible outing to the Hollywood Bowl.
- Walker intended to make available “behind-the-home-plate Dodgers tickets”, and would send out more information about this.

7. Calendar Editor

- Stillson reported “everything is moving smoothly.”

8. Circulation Manager

- Stillson reported “everything is good,” and expressed gratitude that we were able to resolve our issues making payments to our printer.

9. Data Officer

- Madsen notified the national office of Gene Schneider's passing, and she has been removed from our membership list.
- Madsen reported that Elliott had asked him to provide a “decennial census” of where our members live.
 - This would give us a sense of where our population center is.
 - Elliott noted that we did a similar study in 2002 and again in 2012, and so it's time to do that again.
 - Elliott observed that in 2002, our population center was in Burbank, but in 2012 it had moved to Glendale. Elliott is curious how things have changed since then.

10. *L.A. Mentary*

- Madsen repeated a question that a member posed to our Mensa Connect community and never got an answer to, namely (paraphrased), “When we declared that Kamala Harris was a member of the Mensa Hall of Fame, was that an April Fool's joke?” Madsen continued, “And I literally have no idea. Why was

she listed as a member of the Hall of Fame? What is that about? And can we please get somebody to respond to that question, because I think it's a question that deserves an answer."

- Stillson confirmed that Frey "made it very clear that it was an April Fool's joke."
- Madsen replied, "I'm not sure it was that clear, but I still think the guy deserves an answer."
- Stillson suggested that the questioner can ask Frey about this directly rather than getting an answer secondhand.

11. Open Forum

- Albert hoped to offer a list of potential speakers in the near future, and "hopefully by summer," relaunch Open Forum virtually.
- Elliott asked Albert if he was willing to continue that role in the coming year. Albert confirmed that he was.

12. Public Relations

- Ross: "This is the first time I've heard that – do I understand that Kamala Harris was on the cover of our newsletter with the idea that she was our Member of the Year? I just want to say that's stupid, and this is why I was proposing an editorial committee for the newsletter: we've got to eliminate degrading material like that, which makes us look foolish to the public."
 - Elliott responded that this is something that "certainly is within your capacity as PR person to tell us your perspective on and we should pay attention to it" and "if something can cause a problem, we need to be aware of that and try to prevent it from happening."
 - Madsen: "I was resisting the urge, but now that Lindsay has brought it up, I want to join in with him and say that as April Fool's jokes go, this was really not funny[...]. I don't think that it's an April Fool's joke in good taste. So yeah, if we need an editorial committee to provide guidance on such things, I think it's a good idea to have one."

13. SIGHT

- Chew's written report:

Conversations continue with the Korean member temporarily living in So Cal. She did get one response from a local Korean Mensan to the email I sent out to our general membership, so she's happy about that. Now expecting a visit from a relative in Korea, so we're talking about things to see/do in LA and around the US.

We may be getting more activity from LA SIGHT! The other host, David Ilan, plans to include his contact info on an international SIGHT hosting map and verify membership himself. I have not done so, preferring referrals verified by the national SIGHT

Coordinator, but David's approach is likely to produce more traffic. He'll keep me posted on any activity so it can be included in my monthly report.

- Walker, in her role as Gifted Youth Coordinator, reported that a mom, relocating from Australia to Los Angeles, asked for information about schools for her very bright child. Our Gifted Youth parents were very helpful with relevant information in response to this request.

14. Webmaster

- Elliott had explored the website to learn how to make changes to it. He found that text updates were straightforward, but document uploading and overall design changes were not trivial.
- Albert asked if Elliott was considering taking on the role of webmaster.
 - Elliott wanted to continue learning how to do the webmaster job, but said that if that goes well, and if Bickel would be willing to assist with calendar and similar duties, "then I am willing to serve as webmaster for the upcoming term to be appointed at the May board meeting."
 - Albert pointed out that, in that situation, we would still have a need for someone with more in-depth web development and WordPress experience who can handle things like software updates and redesign issues. Albert suggested that we consider retaining Billie Lee on an as-needed basis.
- Madsen noted that Gililland's membership is about to lapse, which would mean that he's not our webmaster.
 - Elliott responded that in fact, our Webmaster doesn't need to be a member of Mensa, and so Gililland remains our Webmaster even after his membership lapses.

15. Archivist, Elections, Scholarships, Historian, Ombudsman, SIGs, Social Media, Testing, and Young Ms all offered no report.

III. Special Orders

A. Filling of Vacant Board Positions

- No vacancies were filled at this time.

IV. Unfinished Business

- There is no unfinished business.

V. New Business

A. Future GLAAM Board meeting dates (Madsen)

- Madsen noted that, at our January meeting, we only picked Board meeting dates through June, and now we should consider dates for the rest of the year.
- Stillson moved, and Williamson seconded, "That we have the July meeting on the third Saturday," which is July 16th. Motion was adopted (6/1/2).

- Williamson moved, and Walker seconded, "to reschedule the September board meeting to the second Saturday, which is the 10th." Motion was adopted unanimously.
- There was general agreement that Board meetings for all other months in 2022 will be held on the usual first Saturday.

B. Board meeting times (Elliott)

- Elliott proposed meeting at a constant time of day throughout the year, disregarding the movement of clocks due to Daylight Saving Time.
- Ross concurred, proposing that we "start at 1800 UTC year round, whatever that happens to be locally."
- Bickel felt that changing the start time during the year would be too confusing, and encouraged staying at 11:00 local time as we have been doing. Nolan and others offered similar comments.
- Elliott decided, based on this discussion, not to offer a motion at this time, so that meeting times will not change.

C. Diversity Committee proposal (Williamson)

- Williamson stated his desire to form a diversity committee that he could chair.
- Based on his previous work with the 2020 US Census, Williamson had access to demographic data from the Census Bureau and elsewhere, and had also been in contact with Mensa's national Diversity Committee to see what they were doing to foster diversity.
- Based on this information, Williamson wants to study GLAAM's demographics in relation to the demographics of the greater Los Angeles area, and "if I find communities that appear like they might be underrepresented within GLAAM, this could be a possibility for a community to reach out to."
- Both Elliott and Madsen expressed surprise and interest that there is national Mensa Diversity Committee, and asked to learn more about that.
 - Williamson explained that this is a new entity, which is still in an exploratory stage, still figuring out what purpose it will serve.
- Elliott reminded the Board of his earlier comments during this meeting about organizing a membership committee with a variety of subcommittees, and wondered how Williamson would feel about his diversity committee being a part of a larger Membership Committee, rather than a separate entity of its own.
 - Williamson responded: "My personal feelings on this, and what I'm interested in, is a distinct committee, because while it sounds similar on the surface to many things that the membership committee already does, I think there's a fundamental difference, which is about learning the underrepresented community, creating a relationship with that underrepresented community, and understanding them well enough to know how to reach out to them, which is a very different sort of process than the traditional membership committee."
- Madsen suggested that a GLAAM diversity committee might not just be about recruitment, but also retention. "Diversity is something that should be ongoing. There should be things going on in our in our local group that appeal to a diverse group of people. And it should not just be how to get people who are from various other

communities into our community, but how do we keep them once they're here?"

- Williamson responded that "one leads to the other," that "it's more than just recruitment," but that there are questions to explore about how to reach out to a large variety of underrepresented groups. "The Diversity Committee is meant to look at this, to come up with answers to these questions, because they're all very good questions, and we don't know what the answers would be yet."
- Mark Carpenter: "At the college where I teach, the committee is called the Committee on Diversity Inclusion and Belonging. It opens up discussions on embedded biases that not everyone is prepared for. There are a lot of different definitions of intelligence, and the ones relied on for Mensa may have some of these embedded biases."
- Stillson and Woo expressed support for the idea.
- Walker suggested that this is a good topic for discussion at the upcoming AG.
- Williamson moved "to form a Diversity Committee," Stillson seconded, and the motion was approved (7/1/1).

VI. Closing

A. Good of the Order

1. MensaPhone

- Albert raised questions about MensaPhone.
 - Madsen reported that we voted to retire MensaPhone at our last meeting.
 - Albert asked if this meant we didn't want a phone for other purposes, such as verifying accounts for social media.
 - Madsen agreed that we do want a phone for that purpose, but that MensaPhone Coordinator is no longer a position. Instead, we decided to pass the responsibility for a mobile phone to the Social Media Coordinator.
 - Albert agreed to reach out to Seiter to coordinate the handoff of the phone and its responsibilities.
2. Madsen reminded the group that next month's meeting will be held at 10:30am rather than 11:00am.

B. Adjournment

- Woo moved, Williamson seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:03pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Brian Madsen, GLAAM Secretary*