

**Greater Los Angeles Area Mensa**  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Meeting conducted electronically via Zoom  
July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Area	Secretary	Delegate	Members-at-Large
Mid-City	vacant	vacant	[✓] Roy Ball
Coastal	vacant	vacant	[✓] Brian Madsen
SFV	vacant	[ / ] Alan Stillson	[✓] Andrea Nolan
ELAC	[X:1] Ignacio González	[✓] Jonathan Elliott	[✓] Madeline Walker
Hi-Desert	vacant	vacant	[ / ] Gregory Williamson
Inland Empire	[✓] Wilbert Woo	[X:1] Mark Carpenter	vacant

**Key:**

[✓] = present for entire meeting

[ / ] = present for portion

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

**Guests:** Jordan Byrne, Nikki Frey, Jay Friedlander

I. Opening

A. Call to Order

- Meeting was called to order by Executive Vice Chair Jonathan Elliott at 11:02am.

B. Approval of Agenda

- Elliott moved to relocate the budget discussion from the first item of unfinished business to the last item of Special Orders.
- Elliott moved to approve as amended. Approved without objection.

C. Approval of Previous Minutes

- Elliott moved to approve the June meeting's minutes. Madsen seconded. Ball, Walker, and Nolan abstained. Madsen, Elliott, and Woo voted approve. Minutes were approved (3/0/3).

II. Reports

A. Executive Officers

1. Chair (Williamson)

- Williamson arrived late and gave his report later in the meeting.

See the Testing Committee report below.

## 2. Executive Vice-Chair (Elliott)

- "I responded to a request from a member on the GLAAM general list to connect with other Mensa members who have young children. I notified her that we had a Gifted Youth Coordinator who may or may not have such connections and suggested that she work with Jana on putting an announcement in the newsletter suggesting the formation of a new Special Interest Group."

## 3. Administrative Vice-Chair (Madsen)

- Past Webmaster Billie Lee set up a web hosting account with a company called Bluehost to facilitate our use of WordPress on our glaam.org website. She sent us a bill from them, which Wilbert has paid. Because Billie is not in our area anymore, Madsen has agreed to take over ownership of that account so that when the bill comes due again, he will get that notification instead of her.

## 4. Secretary (Madsen)

- Madsen had hard copies of board member handbooks.
  - Walker has provided Madsen with materials that Sandra Smith used when she was responsible for board member handbooks.
  - Jordan Byrne has also given Madsen the handbooks that he and Vesper Burnett had had when they were members of the Board.
- Madsen's next goal was to find electronic source files that correspond to that printed material.
  - Discussion between Madsen and Elliott confirms that some, if not all, of that is on the website, and if anything from the handbooks is not there, Elliott has copies of those files in electronic form. Madsen planned to determine what he can find on the website and to coordinate with Elliott to obtain anything else.

## 5. Treasurer (Woo)

- "We have, as of yesterday, \$35,350.93 in our combined bank accounts."
- That amount is growing, partly due to a reduced number of activities because of the pandemic.

## B. Area Reports

### 1. Mid-City (vacant)

### 2. Coastal (vacant)

Williamson arrived, and Elliott transferred leadership of the meeting to him, at 11:16am.

### 3. SFV

- Stillson joined the meeting late, so there was no report.

### 4. ELAC

- González was also absent. Elliott and Ball noted that the Zoom meeting link was listed incorrectly on page 17 of the July *L.A. Mentary*, which may be preventing people from joining us.
- Elliott's report:
  1. Attended the AG in Sparks, Nevada and discussed various chapter operations with current leaders and potential new volunteers.
  2. Met at the AG new GLAAM member Matthias Bernd, who had reached out to Elliott by email because Elliott is the contact person for the Answers to Everything SIG. "We had several very interesting conversations at the AG. He attended the workshop hosted by Billie Lee on the future of Mensa, and we specifically spoke a lot about the Answers to Everything project. He might be a very good resource for our leadership team at some point down the road."
- 5. Hi-Desert (vacant)
- 6. Inland Empire
  - Woo: "We are continuing with our Zoom meetings."

### C. Members-at-Large

#### 1. Ball

- Stated his understanding that "these member reports are anything that the Board Member believes is important or relevant to the operation of the chapter, or to Mensa general, as opposed to Good of the Order, which is interesting, but not relevant to the operation of the chapter."
- Stated his understanding that meetings can be extended by 15 minutes if they run long, which extension requires a vote of the board, and can be extended a second time for another 15 minutes if needed.
  - Elliott wrote to meeting participants, rather than speaking: "actually, that's not quite correct, meeting extensions happen to a maximum of three 10-minute slots, not two 15-minute slots, also any questions offered at the end of a report must arise directly from the report"

#### 2. Nolan

- Has been attending Jana Bickel's discussion groups. Alan Stillson kindly picked Nolan up to take her to one of them.

#### 3. Walker

- The AG was a lot of fun.
- Walker brought Sandra Smith to the AG and she enjoyed it.
- Walker asked for the date of the next meeting. Will we delay the next meeting since the July meeting is happening so late in the month?
  - Madsen confirmed that the next meeting is on August 6th, and that we've agreed to hold meetings on the first Saturday in 2022 except in July and except in September, when the meeting will be on the second Saturday.

#### 4. Madsen

- Has been attending Jana's Sizzler dinner.
- Attended the AG, which he enjoyed very much.
  - At the AG, attended a discussion with Communications Officer Robin Crawford, and discussed at length some of this Board's concerns about our use of the newsletter, our website, and social media.
  - At the AG, met with leadership of the Mensa Foundation and learned a great deal about how GLAAM's scholarship efforts and funding work in concert with the Foundation's objectives.

#### 5. Williamson

- Hosted an event on July 6 at a club called 82 which was a retro arcade bar with pinball machines and video games and a large open area. It was a lot of fun.
- Planned upcoming events: Good Times at Davey Wayne's on July 21st, and Happy Hour at Beetle House, a Tim Burton themed bar, in August.

### D. Committees and Coordinators

#### 1. Awards Committee

- Elliott "updated our database with all the new elections and appointments occurring this past May."

#### 2. Diversity Committee

- Williamson: "At our last meeting, we came up with the idea of partnering with organizations in the community and tabling [that is, setting up tables with information about Mensa at] events in the community. Since then, we have been identifying organizations to work with, such as museums and chambers of commerce." Also, "at the end of the Board year, if we're lucky enough to partner with multiple organizations in the community, we would like to present the number one partner we have for that year with an award."

#### 3. Elections

- Friedlander noted that there will be an election later in this meeting, which the Board can handle without need for assistance from the Elections Committee.

#### 4. Finance

- Woo noted that the Finance Committee chair position is vacant, and stated his desire to see someone volunteer for that position.
- Woo also noted that "we need to do some planning to get our budget going." He reiterated his observation from earlier in the meeting: "Our expenses are tied to the amount of programs we have, and the amount of programs we have hasn't been that great in the last few years because of COVID. And so a Finance Committee will be very helpful in terms of budgeting for the next upcoming year."

#### 5. Gifted Youth Committee

- Walker referred back to Elliott's earlier Executive Vice Chair report and asked

about the member who asked for information about parents with young children. Walker would like to connect with that member. Elliott agreed to locate that contact information and provide it to Walker.

## 6. Regional Gathering Committee

- Walker: The committee is assembling a “pretty good list” of presenters, and invited anybody who knows anybody who would be a good speaker to contact Walker with that information.
- Walker: A volunteer lunch had been planned for July, but information wasn't included in the July *L.A. Mentary*, so that will need to be rescheduled.
- Friedlander: an announcement about a mask mandate is expected from L.A. County in the near future, which may impact people's decisions about whether to attend an RG, and in turn, the financial expectations for the RG. Hotel negotiations are underway, which may be impacted by this as well.
- Discussion of various hotel options ensued. No hotel is confirmed, but negotiations are underway with several possible venues.

## 7. Scholarships Committee

- Madsen:
  - “I met with the Mensa Foundation leadership at the AG. I never really understood how the Foundation and our scholarship funding work together, and now I do. I understand the budget, I understand scholarships, understand where the money goes and where it comes from, and how it gets awarded.”
  - “We used to have a \$1,500 Dave Felt scholarship and a \$1,000 secondary scholarship. [Foundation Director Jill Beckham] told me that Alma changed that last year. Now we have the same Dave Felt scholarship and two other \$600 scholarships, one of which must go to a Mensa member. I'm thinking we should change that back, largely because she told me that they couldn't find anybody to give that \$600 award to.”
- Ball stated his understanding that any money won from participation in CultureQuest is supposed to be directed to our scholarship fund.

## 8. Special Events Committee

- Walker:
  - We don't have anything planned for the Hollywood Bowl.
  - Kedem Har-Shalom has been running monthly dinners.

## 9. Belated LocSec report, also Testing Committee

- Williamson:
  - Our current membership was 1,733 members.
  - Attended the AG on Friday and Saturday.
  - Tested negative for COVID but did catch something while there, and encouraged the rest of us to be mindful of our health and test for COVID if necessary.

- While at the AG, Williamson observed a qualifying exam, which was part of his journey to becoming a proctor. Three others are either doing proctor training now or are about to start.
- Met with the RG committee, which needs more volunteers, and so Williamson planned to recruit for the RG committee.
- GLAAM has been assigned a new ZIP Code, 93222, in the Hi-Desert Area.
- Bill McBride was ready to be appointed to the Finance Committee. Also, "I've been talking with another person who was interested in becoming the Chair of the Finance Committee."
- Chandler Kyle had agreed to be appointed as Social Media Coordinator.
- Pejman Azarmina had been approved by the national office to be a Gifted Youth Coordinator. Two others, Seiuli Fa'auliulito H. Meni and Mike Castle, had submitted paperwork to be approved, but had not yet been approved.
- "I thought I'd try to attend events that I didn't plan that are not in my area. I think that would be a great way to learn more about the full geography and membership of our chapter."
- "I'm working on reaching out to lapsed members."
- Jordan Byrne discussed with Williamson about login credentials for our various social media platforms, to make sure that our new Social Media Coordinator has what she needs.

#### 10. Archivist

- Elliott found additional Board member handbooks, boxes of testing supplies, and "other archive material."
- Madsen found ASIEs on the GLAAM website.

#### 11. Calendar Editor

- Stillson will update the Zoom link to this Board meeting in the calendar going forward.
- Ball noted errors in the calendar-at-a-glance in the last newsletter. Williamson asked Ball to forward those observations to him in an email.

#### 12. Circulation Manager

- Stillson noted that the July issue went out late, that we hope this will happen "very infrequently", that he picked up the extra copies from the printer, and that he forwarded the invoice from the printer to Woo.

#### 13. Open Forum

- Byrne:
  - is interested in budgeting money for honoraria for Open Forum speakers.
  - is interested in making Open Forum a fundraiser, in some way, for GLAAM scholarships.
  - is interested in cross-promoting GLAAM's Open Forum with other local groups and with groups outside of Mensa.

- is considering starting out quarterly rather than monthly.

#### 14. Public Relations

- Williamson referred back to his earlier Diversity Committee report, noting that plans to partner with outside groups for Diversity Committee purposes also apply to Public Relations interests.

#### 15. SIGHT

- Madsen: "Arlette sent me email saying that she has no news for SIGHT, so there is affirmatively no report."

#### 16. Webmaster

- Elliott:

Secretary's interjection: This should be read as a quotation which has been formatted for readability.

1. Brian has updated the website with as many recent minutes and agendas as he has in his possession.
2. Jordan sent us a link to some old newsletter scans created by Lindsay. They will require some further work to format because they are untitled as some of the scans are upside down, but it's good that we have some raw material to work with, so that's on my list.
3. Brian and Gregory and Billie worked together to renew the website for the next three years because it is still listed under Billie's name.
4. While beginning to work on the site this week I received a notification that we can update the email contact for the site or leave it as it is. It currently points to a personal address for Trevor, who has been trying to distance himself from Site Administration, so at some point we should decide when we want to migrate the admin authority to a different address and whose address it should be. It is an easy change to make on the Settings page whenever we are ready.
5. Fixed punctuation and grammar and the cover paragraph for the five recurring events in the San Fernando Valley.
6. Added Certificate of Appreciation which we awarded in 1998 to Ellen Clark for her career as Calendar Editor.
7. Changed Desiree's last name in the Hall of Fame back to Sagray and re-alphabetized, pursuant to our recent divorce agreement.
8. Moved Jana [Bickel] to silver [in the volunteer Hall of Fame].

17. Data Officer, Historian, *L.A. Mentary*, Membership Committee, Ombudsman, SIGs, Social Media, and Young Ms all offered no report.

### III. Special Orders

#### A. Filling Vacancies on the Board

- Ball nominated Nikki Frey as San Fernando Valley Area Secretary.

- Elliott noted that Frey “three previous times vacated her board position for non-attendance. That happened in 2005, in 2009, and again in 2017. Before I can be persuaded to vote in favor of the nomination, I would need to be assured that somehow this time is going to be different, and that the nominee will stay in the position all the way through to the end, including attending board meetings actively and regularly. If that's not going to happen then I would rather leave the position vacant and have somebody fill it who's actually going to attend meetings throughout the entire term.”
  - Williamson asked for clarification about Elliott's use of the word “vacated”. Elliott noted that under our bylaws at the time, three consecutive absences counted as “an effective resignation of the position”, and Frey was considered to have resigned on that basis in each of her last three terms of service. Williamson asked if she had been removed on that basis, and Elliott clarified that she was not removed, but rather was considered to have resigned due to nonattendance. Also, this was not an active resignation, such as by letter of resignation, but rather, “any Board member is assumed to have resigned if he or she fails to attend three consecutive Board meetings.”
  - Frey: “I have two points I would like to make. The first is that, yes, I do intend to attend meetings. My second point is that over the years, I've put on many parties, and events, many, including a party at the carousel building on the Santa Monica Pier, for which I paid out of my own pocket \$700. So I think it's more important to put on activities than it is to attend meetings. But yes, I will attend meetings.”
- Madsen: “A couple of points with regard to Nikki's absences in the past, which I don't think have been made clearly. Right now, our bylaws say that three consecutive absences is a *de facto* resignation, regardless of whether or not you get yourself excused. In the past, [one] could have gotten [oneself] excused for those absences. Nikki didn't even bother to give herself an excuse. She just stopped showing up. And I think it's also important to point out that this happened right away. She got herself on the Board, and then came to one or two meetings, and then just stopped coming to meetings after that. And I personally think that that history is a good indication of what we can expect in the future. She intended to come to Board meetings then too, but didn't.”
  - Frey: “I will repeat myself. I put on many activities. I did an entire RG by myself in the year 2000 for 200 people. I've put on many parties very successfully. And I'm sorry that I don't particularly like coming to meetings. Like Jana. At one time, I stopped coming to meetings because of the minutiae. You notice Jana has stopped coming to meetings. She's dropped off the board because of the minutiae she encountered at meetings. But I will, I promise I will come to meeting. And I promise I will put on activities.”
- Ball noted that now that we are meeting over Zoom rather than driving to Pasadena, “it'll be easier for all of us, including Nikki, to make the electronic trek instead of driving out to Pasadena. I'm pretty sure that if Nikki continues to use her electronic method, you're gonna see more of us than you care to see.”



- Frey: "I plan to come to meetings. I promise I'll come to meetings. I really think you should appreciate the work I've done over 30 years for Mensa. I've worked on RG's. I've put on parties. I was a personal friend with Lance Ware, who was the originator of Mensa, probably most of you don't even know his name. I think I deserve some respect here."
- Stillson: "I think one of our most important standards is to do what's good for GLAAM. And I think what's good for GLAAM would be to have two active people in the San Fernando Valley planning and executing events. Nikki is willing to do it, and I think if I can alternate the months with Nikki, we can probably put together things that our members will enjoy. And I think that that overrides all other considerations."
- Elliott: "Nikki, I am very happy to acknowledge all the things you've done for our chapter in the past including your work on the RG Committee, including the one RG you put on single handed. That was awesome. And we have you in the Hall of Fame. And we have your accomplishments highlighted on the website. Because, you know, for a permanent record, we want to enshrine that. And we want to recognize, we want to appreciate it. It's important. But I still have a concern. And you said it yourself just a couple of minutes ago. You said putting on activities is more important than attending meetings. From your own words you indicated that you stopped attending meetings because of the minutiae. Well, the minutiae is going to continue to happen. So if that's turned you off in the past, what reason do we have to imagine that it's not going to happen again in the future? And if you don't want to attend meetings, if running activities is more important than attending meetings, then why is it that you're interested in attending, in joining the board at all? You might speak to that point. On the point where you said, running activities is more important than attending meetings. Well, I'm not going to dispute that. That's probably true. But anybody can run activities without attending meetings, and without being a member of the Board at all. So if you want to run activities, by all means run activities, that'd be great. We can use more activities. But that doesn't necessarily mean that you should or need to be on the Board. If you want to be on the Board, then I'm curious as to why you want to be on the Board given especially given the minutiae, which has driven you away in the past."
  - Frey: "As a matter of fact, it does help to be on the Board in order to run activities because the Board members have the ability to send out an email blast, which is very effective in getting a response. And I will repeat one more time, I will attend meetings. I've enjoyed this one. This one has been fine. And I promise I will attend meetings."
- Williamson: "I'm just going to make a comment and while it's relevant to the current conversation, I think this applies to everybody on the Board and in any positions that we have. I want to reiterate that we're all here volunteering our time, and we're all grateful for people who want to help our community move forward. When somebody does commit to a formal position, we do count on that person. But things do sometimes come up and things change. When that does happen, it's helpful to formally let the group know, 'Hey, I need to step down from this.' Because [otherwise] we lose, [for] at least a quarter of our year, the opportunity to have somebody in that chair and attending meetings."

- Williamson called for a vote.
  - Elliott and others reminded that we have options for secret vs. open voting at this point. Elliott expressed no preference as to how the vote was conducted. Ball encouraged open voting. Williamson asked if anybody was uncomfortable with an open vote, and there were no objections. Williamson called for Board members present to vote by raised hand.
  - Voting in favor of the nomination: Ball, Stillson, Walker
  - Voting against: Elliott, Madsen, Nolan, Woo
  - Abstaining: Williamson
  - Williamson declared that the nomination failed.
- Frey: "I just can't believe this has happened. I'm willing to put on activities and you don't want that? This is what Mensa has become? When you won't even appoint me to the board, how do you think I feel? How do you think I feel now? You think I'm going to do activities now? How can you be so cold?"
  - At this point, Frey left the meeting.

#### B. Appointment of Committee Chairs and Coordinators

- Williamson began a discussion about appointing Pejman Azarmina as Gifted Youth Coordinator.
  - Madsen and Elliott asked if this is intended to take Madeline's place as GLAAM's Gifted Youth Coordinator, or is he a member of a committee together with Madeline as chair?
  - Williamson and Walker confirmed that anybody who is approved by the national office can become a Gifted Youth Coordinator, but that Walker remains Chair of the Gifted Youth Committee.
  - Elliott noted that as members of the committee, they don't require GLAAM Board approval. Walker can appoint them as members of the committee without Board action.
  - No Board action was taken.
  - In addition to Azarmina, two others are on the road to the same approval: Seiuli Fa'auliulito H. Meni (who goes by "To"), and Mike Castle.
- Williamson nominated Chandler Kyle, who "wants to be our Social Media Coordinator." Williamson asked for comment, then appointed her without objection.

#### C. Budget

- We saw a draft budget at our last meeting. Williamson updated the budget since then and presented a new draft for discussion. See attached [GLAAM Budget 2022-2023 - Draft 2.pdf](#).
- Discussion ensued, clarifying existing line items and/or proposing new ones as appropriate, including the amount of the expense for our mailbox, monthly storage at our storage facility, website expenses, social media expenses (e.g. Hootsuite), newsletter printing and postage costs, etc.
- Byrne asked about the future of a GLAAM company phone, and asked to have that

expense included in the budget.

- Ball asked Williamson to explain “tabling”. Williamson explained this as going to some other event (say, Comic-Con) and setting up a table with a tablecloth and banner and t-shirts and other materials to give out explaining your group to that other event's attendees.
- At 1:00, Madsen moved to extend the meeting by 10 minutes, Ball seconded, Elliott voted against, and the motion was accepted (7/1/0).
- Because we were short on time, Williamson drew the budget discussion to a close, noting that his budget showed significantly more expense than income. He asked for comments between now and the next meeting to be sent to him by email. The budget would be discussed further at our next meeting.

#### IV. Unfinished Business

- There was no unfinished business.

#### V. New Business

##### A. Mail and mailboxes (Williamson)

- Williamson confirmed with the IRS that our tax-exempt status was revoked on Sept 15, 2021.
- If they notified us of this at the time, “we may have missed a communication from them.”
- No discussion took place on this point, although Williamson noted that in the past, when we met in person, someone brought mail to the meeting, which isn't happening now that we're meeting over Zoom.

##### B. Meeting formats and meeting expectations (Williamson)

- Williamson asked for a show of hands: once the pandemic is over and in-person meetings become more common, how do we feel about meeting in person vs. meeting over Zoom?
- No discussion took place, nor was the show of hands counted or recorded.

#### VI. Closing

##### A. Good of the Order

1. Walker referred to Madsen's earlier report that our \$1,000 scholarship became two \$600 scholarships, and expressed a preference for changing that back.
2. Madsen asked for permission to include this meeting's draft budget as an attachment to the meeting minutes. All were in agreement, as long as it's designated as a draft, so that it's clear that it's not complete.

##### B. Adjournment

- Elliott moved, Stillson seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:07pm.

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*Respectfully submitted,  
Brian Madsen, GLAAM Secretary*