

Greater Los Angeles Area Mensa
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Meeting conducted electronically via Zoom
December 3rd, 2022

Area	Secretary	Delegate	Members-at-Large
Mid-City	vacant	vacant	[✓] Roy Ball
Coastal	[X:2] To Meni	vacant	[✓] Brian Madsen
SFV	vacant	[✓] Alan Stillson	[✓] Sam Moses
ELAC	[X:3] Ignacio González	[✓] Jonathan Elliott	[✓] Andrea Nolan
Hi-Desert	vacant	vacant	[✓] Madeline Walker
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 Albert Byrne, Nikki Frey, Jay Friedlander, Toni Hansen, Emmett Rahl, Chad Tew

Prior to this meeting, Gregory Williamson tendered his resignation, for work-related reasons, "from all volunteer positions with GLAAM."

At the conclusion of this meeting, as the result of three consecutive absences, Ignacio González's position on the Board was considered vacated.

I. Opening

A. Call to Order

- Meeting was called to order by Executive Vice Chair Jonathan Elliott at 11:03am.

B. Approval of Agenda

- Jordan Albert Byrne asked to add two items as New Business items B and C.
- Stillson moved to approve as amended, Moses seconded, and the amended agenda was approved without objection.

C. Approval of Previous Minutes

- Elliott recommended a wording correction in the draft minutes (one occurrence of "RG Treasurer" should have been "GLAAM Treasurer"), which Madsen agreed was a goof on his part, and which he promised to correct in the final revision.
- Elliott moved to approve with that amendment, Moses seconded, and the corrected minutes were approved without objection.

II. Reports

A. Executive Officers

1. Chair (vacant)

- Elliott noted Williamson's resignation.
- Elliott, acting as Chair, reported:
 - writing to Williamson, cc:ing RVC Kibler, thanking him for his service. "[I]n his short time as Chair, he brought us several new volunteers, impressed upon us the value of a Diversity Committee, actively engaged with all GLAAM volunteers to help get them and keep them on track, and provided us with a calm and rational leadership which we could all happily support."
 - "I am willing to complete the term as Chair if nominated and elected, but I am not so emotionally invested in it as to stand in the way of a qualified successor who has greater need for award points."
 - that he had received, and forwarded to the GLAAM CCs Mensa Connect community, samples of Emmett Rahl's past newsletters for consideration as we discuss his possible appointment as newsletter editor.

2. Executive Vice-Chair (Elliott)

- Elliott "amended the guidelines document as to the Board Members Handbook, the Bylaws Committee, the Archivist, the Chair and the MensaPhone. The Webmaster Guidelines were adjusted as to password protection."
- Elliott reported a phone call with RVC Kibler, asking his opinions about issues facing our chapter.
- Elliott: "Before he resigned as Chair, Gregory assigned jointly to Brian and myself, in our capacities as the two Vice Chairs of the chapter, the mission to expedite a solution to our tax status problem." Emails were exchanged, including Madsen, Kibler, and Oskey. Kibler was "very eager for our chapter to conclude this mission." Elliott concluded, "We are in agreement on what needs to be done. It's just a matter of finding someone who is willing and able to do it."

3. Administrative Vice-Chair (Madsen)

- Madsen reported also having a conversation with Kibler about matters facing GLAAM.

4. Secretary (Madsen)

- Madsen updated the website with the latest minutes and agenda.

5. Treasurer (Woo)

- Woo reported a total amount in our accounts of \$37,305.
- That amount includes an increase of \$5,476 due to recent registrations for the upcoming RG.
- Woo noted Elliott's comments about resolving our tax situation and agreed to "help in any way I can in [gathering] all the financial statements that we can submit to the IRS and the [California] Franchise Tax Board."

- Discussion ensued (primarily Elliott and Woo, also Moses and Madsen) about how to proceed getting this situation resolved.
- Madsen noted that he was "glad we're talking about this" but also wanted to continue with reports, and suggested adding an item of New Business to continue the discussion at that time. Instead, the group agreed to postpone the discussion, which continued immediately following this meeting (and therefore is not described in these minutes).

B. Area Reports

1. Mid-City (vacant): no report

2. Coastal (vacant)

- Walker: Meni was planning to help decorate a Rose Parade float [on December 30th].
- Ball: Moses was planning a Christmas party at his home on December 17th.

3. SFV

- Stillson planned no SFV Area events in December, but in January, planned a trip to the [Nethercutt Museum and Collection in Sylmar](#).

4. ELAC

- Elliott inquired at the Sierra Madre public library if they have a community room that we might use for testing and/or Board meetings. They do, but it only holds ten people and is only available for two hours at a time, which makes it less than ideal for either purpose. Elliott encouraged everyone to ask in their areas about spaces where such activities can be held.
- Elliott noted that this meeting was González's third consecutive absence from Board meetings, and that if he didn't appear before the end of this meeting, he would be considered to have resigned.

5. Hi-Desert (vacant): no report

6. Inland Empire: no report

C. Members-at-Large

1. Ball

- As we look for public spaces in which to hold our Board meetings and our testing sessions, we need to be aware of rules in those spaces, which may require that anyone from the public may attend, and may prohibit the collection of funds.

2. Madsen

- registered for the RG.

3. Moses

- is hosting a Christmas party at his home on the 17th.
- hadn't been added as a Member-at-Large on the national office's list of local group officers.

- Elliott planned to report membership changes during the coming week.

"I will make sure that national knows."

4. Nolan

- reported "how successful Jana is with her Sizzler meetings and her Horseless Carriage meetings, [which are] very well attended."

5. Walker: no report

D. Committees

1. Diversity Committee

- Elliott noted the loss of the Chair of the committee. Elliott would like to keep the committee, but it would need a new Chair. He was considering either González or Meni, but neither was at this meeting, so he didn't know if they would be available to accept that appointment.

2. Elections Committee

- Friedlander noted Williamson's resignation and reiterated requirements for filling that position. The LocSec position may be filled two weeks after this meeting, which typically means holding an election at the January meeting but could be held sooner if the Board wishes to do so, and the Member-at-Large seat may be filled at the February meeting, following sufficient announcement of the vacancy.
- Elliott asked for "whoever does the January newsletter" to make sure that an announcement is posted that the Member-at-Large vacancy exists. Frey asked if noting the vacancy on the list of volunteer positions was sufficient. Elliott responded, "I feel that it is not sufficient notice and thank you for asking that important question. I think we need something to really jump out." Ball asked if that would be covered in Elliott's LocSec column, and if that would be sufficient notice. Elliott added, "That might be and I certainly intend to do that, [but] anything further that the editorial staff can put in to make it nice and obvious [would be best. It would be] better to have more notices than too few."

3. Finance Committee Chair Oskey submitted a written report, which is attached to these minutes as [GLAAM Finance Committee Chair Report -DEC 22.pdf](#).

- The report was not read in full, but was screen-shared, with the understanding that it would be posted as an attachment to these minutes.
- It was noted during the meeting that one statement in the report, "Jonathan has been placed in charge of the chapter's nonprofit status," is inaccurate. That responsibility was given to Elliott and Madsen jointly, not to Elliott solely.

See Williamson's written LocSec report, attached to November's minutes, where, under the heading "Tax Exemption Status", he wrote, "I am asking the Executive Vice Chair and the Administrative Vice Chair to work on this to make sure it is done."

4. Gifted Youth Committee

- Walker reported a number of events for youth, both past and future, largely the

result of plans organized by Meni:

- a "swashbuckling tall ship which sailed from San Pedro for a couple hours, with probably about 15 kids having a great time. That was November 19th."
- "On December 30th they are going to decorate a Rose Parade Float in Pasadena."
- Also in December, a trip to the Petersen Automotive Museum.
- In February, a portion of the RG [devoted to Kids Track].
- Additional events planned for March, May, July, September, and November.
- "I am very excited about what we're doing into the future."

5. Membership Committee

- Elliott noted that we had no Membership Committee Chair at the moment, also that he and Madsen had discussed ideas for possible future plans for such a committee, including reviving a committee structure that has worked successfully in the past. However, such plans remained a lower priority than other, more immediate tasks, especially resolving our tax-exempt status.

6. Regional Gathering Committee

- Walker and Friedlander both reported a number of speakers and entertainers planned to present at the RG.
- Friedlander additionally reported:
 - that he would have advertisements for the RG for the upcoming newsletter,
 - that Case Walker has joined the RG committee as the RG Webmaster, and
 - that he was planning a tour/meeting at the new hotel to allow committee and Board members a chance to see it.

7. Scholarships Committee

- Chair Tew reported that "judging is really starting to get to the period where I need a committee." Also that Williamson "had promised that he had some people in his pocket that could help man that committee, but I'm a little uncertain about how that's going to work now [that Williamson has resigned]." Tew asked for advice on building up that committee to get those essays evaluated.
 - Elliott asked Tew to send him an email outlining what he needs.
 - Elliott also asked Madsen to put Tew in contact with past Scholarships Chair Diane Takenaka. Madsen sent Takenaka's contact information to Tew during the meeting.

8. Special Events Committee

- Walker reported no news for the time being, as her work with the RG and Gifted Youth is taking priority.

9. Testing Committee

- Elliott noted that we had no Testing Coordinator, but we did have a candidate, Douglas Marriott, who had set up a testing session on December 17th in Walnut.
- Walker reminded that, for the RG, we would need someone to do testing, as we do every year.
 - Later in the meeting, Toni Hansen offered that she is a proctor-in-training and so can provide testing at the RG. Angie Mattson would be there to supervise.

E. Coordinators

1. Calendar Editor

- Stillson noted that December holidays accelerate newsletter preparation, requiring items like the calendar and puzzles to be ready sooner than usual.

2. Circulation Manager

- Stillson: "An idea that we're looking at is maybe keeping a newsletter that is longer and more complete and in better depth for the online version and a shortened version for the printed version." So we'd have "two different newsletters, one for printing, and one for online distribution."
 - As Elliott noted, we had an agenda item under New Business to discuss this.

3. Data Officer

- Madsen provided Elliott with a GLAAM membership list at his request.

4. Historian

- Elliott "[amended] the history section of the GLAAM website with an annual chronology of major events and developments happening in each calendar year." Madsen provided some feedback to that chronology. Elliott invited "all members to contribute recollections or photographs for the chronology and to offer any advice on how certain of the more delicate passages should be phrased, although I feel pretty strongly that we did a pretty good job with it."
- Elliott continued: "With this project finally being complete, I'm envisioning that we no longer need the position of Historian after the end of the present Board term, and that any updates these records can be managed by the Awards Committee as part of their normal annual processes, except that at some point, we need someone to scan all the remaining newsletters so that we can get them posted on the website permanently and no longer need to rely on anyone to maintain and properly bequeath a physical set."

5. *L.A. Mentary*

- Frey: "I talked to the printer, finally got ahold of him yesterday, and he gave me some different pricing for a 16-page newsletter. We're gonna have to reduce the cost because we just don't have the money. We can have a 16-page mailed newsletter and then a regular larger version online. It's also been suggested we

have just the regular size newsletter bimonthly. I don't know if that's a good idea, but I guess we can discuss that later.”

6. Ombudsman

- Friedlander's name was mentioned in Rachel Kibler's email regarding GLAAM's tax-exempt status. Friedlander noted that Alma Munro is no longer a member of Mensa, but she had told him that all of her GLAAM financial information had been passed to Woo, “so there's nothing remaining to be gained from Alma at this point.” Also, Craig Lancaster is “still very cooperative with the RG Committee and I am sure he would provide whatever help is needed just by asking him directly.”

7. SIGHT

- Madsen read a written report from Arlette Chew:

We had a fairly active period this month:

- A 17-year-old youth from Hamburg, Germany, planning a gap year abroad before starting college, is hoping to find housing and a paid internship. National Mensa discourages offering housing to those under 18, so I gave him information on hostels and an intentional community in Illinois where a friend lives. David Ilan is willing to show him around if he ends up in LA, but it sounds unlikely he'll come here without an internship.
- A student from Singapore, doing an exchange year in Philadelphia, was looking for a home host from 11/22-11/28. David offered housing from the 25-28 (after his daughter returns to college), but he didn't hear back from her.
- A member from North Carolina is coming to visit her 101-year-old sister in Pasadena Dec. 1-7. She just wanted a contact person here in case questions arose, so I offered whatever info she might need.

That's it, but it was more than usual!

8. SIGs

- Elliott noted reports of three SIGs in the December newsletter.
- Elliott's historical chronology noted 15 different GLAAM SIGs appearing as early as August 1965, which was more than we currently had. “It might be interesting [and] fun to get some of those resurrected again.”

9. Webmaster

- Elliott reported a number of changes to the website, including: updated webmaster guidelines; scholarship content; plans to retire old information about

past activities such as movie screenings; the historical chronology; the upcoming testing session in Walnut; the recently approved GLAAM budget; the addition of Case Walker as RG Webmaster and the removal of Gregory Williamson from all positions on the Contacts list; and a number of photos added to the Hall of Fame.

10. Archivist, Awards Committee, Open Forum, Public Relations, Social Media, and Young Ms all offered no report.

III. Special Orders

A. Filling Vacancies on the Board

- No nominations were offered.

B. Filling of Vacant Committee Chair Positions

- No nominations were offered.

C. Filling of Vacant Coordinator Positions

1. Emmett Rahl as *L.A. Mentary* Editor

- Elliott: "In accordance with the wishes and intent of my predecessor, the Chair now presents to the Board for your consideration Emmett Rahl, here present, for the position of newsletter editor."
- Ball expressed his desire to see Nikki Frey continue as editor.
- Stillson asked to hear from Rahl and from Hansen as to why they wanted to take over as editor.
- Rahl introduced himself and indicated that he had been speaking with Williamson over the past five months about this position, that he has "done a monthly newsletter for my running club for 17 years" and also "a weekly newsletter for another group for two years." He stated that he and Williamson had discussed a number of challenges facing the newsletter, including escalating costs, and encouraging submissions. He was also aware that Hansen was interested in working with him in partnership to produce the newsletter as a team.
- Elliott asked Hansen if she had anything to add. She said, "Right before Nikki started, I had volunteered to help with the newsletter. And I talked to Gregory and Emmett. I had been the layout editor for GLAAM for three and a half years, so this isn't new to me. My opinion is that the newsletter should contain news for GLAAM and not be a personal pulpit. I would like to see it get back to that."
- Elliott, making clear that he was speaking as a Board member and not as the acting Chair, expressed mixed feeling about this appointment. On the one hand, he said he recognizes that this has been "a tumultuous time for our chapter", with a number of people recently resigning or being removed from positions, and there is something to be said for encouraging consistency and experience. On the other hand, he expressed a feeling that he has had for a while, since before the pandemic, that we rely too much on longtime volunteers and don't do enough to find new people to volunteer and contribute.
- Moses expressed his desire to see Nikki Frey continue as editor.

- Madsen asked Rahl to speak about his availability. Rahl had said (outside of the meeting) that he would be away for the holidays. Considering that the newsletter needs to be done by the week before the end of the month in normal months, but even sooner now that the winter holidays are upon us, Madsen wondered if it made more sense to let Frey continue one more month and then ask Rahl to take over after that. Would Rahl be able to meet that schedule in December, given his holiday plans, or would he prefer to take over the newsletter after the holidays are over?
- Rahl said that he would have his laptop with him and would have time to work on this, but would also be dealing with both a 12-hour time difference and a learning curve. Hansen could work with him and with Stillson to meet the printer deadline, but in the end, Rahl agreed that it might be less stressful to take over after the holidays, when he's back in our time zone again.
- Madsen recommended that we "let Nikki do this for one more month," with the understanding "that she is going to hand the reins over to Emmett so that he is doing the issue from then on," starting with the February issue.
- Elliott asked that if Frey does the January newsletter, he wanted to be included in the draft review process. "I want a chance to see the issue before it goes to press and make sure that there's nothing that anyone's going to have any problem with."
- Frey and Ball both suggested that we wait to make an editor decision until a new LocSec is elected at the January meeting.
- Elliott pointed out that RVC Kibler "prefers to see a change in the editor spot [and] is supportive of Emmett taking over that spot." This led to another lengthy discussion (Stillson, Moses, Ball, Elliott) about the propriety of Kibler having a say in this matter.
- Elliott summarized that "I hear everybody saying the same thing," that Frey should continue with the newsletter for one more month, and that we should revisit the question at the next Board meeting.
- This discussion lasted a full 25 minutes.

2. Douglas Marriott as Testing Coordinator

- Moses nominated Marriott.
- Elliott asked for other nominations, and also asked for objections to the appointment. Hearing none, he declared Marriott appointed.

IV. Unfinished Business

- There was no unfinished business.

V. New Business

A. Publication Trends (Stillson)

- Elliott read from the agenda that Stillson asked for an opportunity "to consider reduced size and frequency of the printed version of *L.A. Mentary*, starting with the Feb. 2023 issue."
- Elliott asked for specifics, stating that he would have preferred specific dollar amounts so that we could know what it is we're considering.

- Frey responded that “the previous cost was much less; it's kind of irrelevant now exactly what it was.” She then listed some dollar amounts for the current printer. “I talked to the printer and a 16-page newsletter would be \$960 a month, including taking it to the post office. That's 65% of what we're paying for the 32-page issue.”
- Frey also suggested that publishing bimonthly would be another option for cost-saving.
 - Elliott recalled that this discussion has come up before, “and the result is always the same,” that publishing bimonthly impedes timely communication with our members. “We've gotta keep it monthly, right? Two months is just too far out to plan stuff. ”
- Madsen wanted to know why Frey was dealing with the printer and raising concerns about escalating costs. Madsen asserted that those are the Circulation Manager's responsibility.
 - Frey responded that Stillson “had talked to the printer but did not get specific prices. We needed specific prices. And that is why I called the printer.”
 - Ball: “You can say she's an agent under Alan because she and Alan are constantly in contact. You could say Alan has delegated the job of research to Nikki. Nikki's not taking any action, she's just collecting information and putting it to the board.”
 - In the end, Elliott called an end to that discussion, noting that “Brian makes an important parliamentary point. It is true that one of the issues that we had with Joshua Dresser – and there were others – is that he took it upon himself to have contact directly with the printing service. Going forward, let's please run all that information through Alan, if we could, and let Nikki focus on the content and layout issues.”
- Woo pointed out, hearkening back to Elliott's original point, that this discussion is reacting to an unspecified concern about rising prices without a specific target to aim at. “We as a board never sat down and said, ‘Okay, based on the new circumstances, we set a budget for our newsletter at X dollars.’ And so now we're talking about cutting costs. But we never sat down from the top-level view and said how much money do we want to spend for the newsletter. Without that, we're going to continue to have this problem.” Costs have risen, in other words, but what cost does our budget allow, and what cost increase can we tolerate? “We as a board never addressed that.”
- Other possible changes to our process were discussed. Among them:
 - Going fully electronic.
 - Elliott observed that if we're going to do that, he'd like to see the pages arranged in landscape orientation, which he finds easier to read.
 - From Jay Friedlander: “What I would propose would be doing a newsletter printout every six months, doing it for the shorter 16 pages, [and] doing a full newsletter online every month. And in the alternate six months, when we're not sending out a print newsletter, mail out a one page calendar in an envelope with a stamp. How much cheaper would that be? And you'd still get the calendar information out, you could accomplish all of these things together, if you chose to.”
- Additional discussion about the pros and cons of sending out a shortened printed

newsletter and a longer electronic one ensued.

- Ball moved to extend the meeting. Elliott voted against. The motion carried and the meeting was extended.
- Elliott closed the discussion by encouraging continued discussion electronically between now and our next meeting. "There are [still] a lot of options to consider. I would like to see more thoughts from people on the different options. And insofar as we can get any specific dollar figures in any of those different scenarios, including as to what we are currently doing, so we get a specific comparison, then I think that would help."
- No decisions were reached. The discussion was carried forward to continue next month.
- This discussion lasted a full 27 minutes.

B. Ting Mobile (Albert Byrne)

- Jordan had left the meeting by this point. His request from the agenda was clear enough to allow us to continue in his absence. He was asking for someone to act as the point of contact for a Ting Mobile account to be used as a mobile platform for use by the Social Media Coordinator.
- Some discussion about MensaPhone ensued. Elliott and Madsen both clarified that MensaPhone has been retired (see Minutes from last March), and that this was not taking the place of MensaPhone. This phone fills an entirely different need.
- Madsen suggested Woo as the person to take responsibility for the Ting Mobile account, since he would be paying the bills anyhow. The Social Media Coordinator would retain possession of the phone itself, and would return it to Woo or to her successor once she no longer holds the position.
- Woo agreed to be that person.

C. PayPal account owner (Albert Byrne)

- Jordan had asked a similar question about PayPal. In order to set up a PayPal account, PayPal requires personal identifying information about someone who is responsible for that account. Who, Jordan asked in essence, should that person be?
- Madsen suggested that there were questions about this that we couldn't answer without Jordan present. Reportedly, PayPal hasn't been working for us, but Square has been working, and has been what we're using, apparently successfully. If that's true, do we really need to continue setting up a PayPal account? Madsen expressed his opinion that we couldn't really answer that without Jordan present.
- Friedlander suggested our need for a PayPal account assumes the use of PayPal buttons on our RG website, which we haven't successfully implemented thus far, and also that Case Walker may have had more experience setting those up than any of the rest of us did, but since Square was meeting our needs, "If it ain't broke, I wouldn't try to fix it."
- The Board decided to carry this forward as Unfinished Business to give Jordan a chance to speak to this if he has other thoughts.

VI. Closing

A. Good of the Order

1. Ball reminded the Board that we had decided at our last meeting to transfer one of the mailbox keys (currently held by Elliott and Woo) to Madsen so that he could check the

contents of the mailbox every so often. (See Good of the Order in last month's minutes.)

- Elliott and Madsen had not seen each other in person, so hadn't had a chance to make that exchange.
 - Woo volunteered to send his key to Madsen, to which Madsen agreed.
2. Stillson congratulated Elliott "on doing such a superb job of taking over these last couple of months at a difficult time and keeping GLAAM with its head above water. Thanks to Jonathan. You've done great."

B. Adjournment

- Moses moved, Woo seconded, and Elliott declared the meeting adjourned at 1:09pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Brian Madsen, GLAAM Secretary*