

Greater Los Angeles Area Mensa
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Meeting conducted electronically via Zoom
March 4th, 2023

Area	Secretary	Delegate	Members-at-Large
Mid-City	vacant	vacant	[✓] Roy Ball
Coastal	[/] To Meni	vacant	[✓] Brian Madsen
SFV	vacant	[✓] Alan Stillson	[✓] Sam Moses
ELAC	vacant	[✓] Jonathan Elliott	[✓] Andrea Nolan
Hi-Desert	vacant	vacant	[/] Madeline Walker
Inland Empire	[✓] Wilbert Woo	[✓] Mark Carpenter	vacant

Key:

[✓] = present for entire meeting

[/] = present for portion

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

Guests: Jordan Albert Byrne, David Fenig, Nikki Frey, Jay Friedlander, Toni Hansen, Charles Lindenblatt, Chad Tew, June Woodruff

I. Opening

A. Call to Order

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

B. Approval of Agenda

- Stillson moved to approve, Moses seconded, and the agenda was approved without objection.

C. Approval of Previous Minutes

- Carpenter moved to approve, Moses seconded, and the minutes were approved without objection.

II. Reports

A. Executive Officers

1. Chair (Elliott)

- The recent Regional Gathering appears to have been a huge success. Elliott thanked Madeline and Doug Walker, Jay Friedlander, Jana Bickel, Randall Mills, Case Walker, June Woodruff, Valerie Spear, "and everyone else who worked to make this event such a triumph."
- The Annual Business Meeting was held at the RG. Elliott presented the state of the chapter. Woo presented a financial report. Madsen recorded in order to

prepare minutes. "One topic which we discussed was Brian's idea to continue board meetings on Zoom indefinitely, but then to meet for a physical lunch in a different area of GLAAM each month. It was also suggested that we should think again about seeing if we can organize a Mind Games[®] event within our chapter in some future year, probably in lieu of an RG although not necessarily."

- Elliott had exchanged emails with RVC Rachel Kibler, asking if the current practice at the national office which allows members to request either a printed or an electronic copy of the newsletter could be changed to request both. Her response was that all members have access to electronic issues at all times, implying that it's not necessary to change the national practice, since, if one's delivery preference is to get the printed newsletter, one always has access to both.
- In a conversation with national Communications Officer Robin Crawford at the RG, Elliott understood her to say to him that "all chapter members must receive the same content in their newsletters," regardless of whether they receive the newsletter in electronic or printed form, "and any additional content should be packaged as a separate supplemental publication which contains no overlap of content with the primary publication."
- Elliott reported that he was not given an opportunity to review the March newsletter before it went to press. "That was part of the deal and it didn't happen this month."

2. Executive Vice-Chair (Moses)

- "It was a very nice RG, well-attended, and if they'll have us I think we should go ahead and try to book for next year."

3. Administrative Vice-Chair (Madsen)

- Madsen checked our mailbox. The only item was a renewal notice for the mailbox itself. Madsen had communicated this to Woo, who had paid them for another three months, rather than for a full year.
- Madsen paid for another year of Zoom at a 30% discount, and Woo had already reimbursed him for that expense.

4. Secretary (Madsen)

- Updated the website with the latest approved minutes and agenda.

5. Treasurer (Woo)

- Woo shared a spreadsheet showing income and expenses for the period May 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023, attached to these minutes as [Feb 2023 I&E.xlsx](#).
- Not all expenses for the RG had been paid yet, but Woo stated that he didn't expect much additional expense. That meant that the RG made money this year, in part because attendance was higher than projected. Additionally, Woo expressed his appreciation for the hard-working volunteers who put the RG together.
- Woo gave his understanding that GLAAM owes a financial report to the national office on April 30th, which is the end of our fiscal year, and stated that he expected to meet that deadline.

- Elliott clarified that the report, which is due on April 30th, is based on the national organization's fiscal year, not GLAAM's, which runs from April 1st through March 31st.
- Woo agreed that that would be no problem, especially now that he has been generating financial reports monthly.

B. Area Reports

1. Mid-City: no report
2. Coastal
 - Meni had not yet joined the meeting. She had communicated to Elliott that she would join later. See her report below.
3. SFV
 - Stillson reported a planned trip to the Leonis Adobe Museum in Calabasas "followed by a very good seafood restaurant."
4. ELAC: no report
5. Hi-Desert: no report
6. Inland Empire
 - Carpenter stated a continued wariness regarding social gatherings because "I feel we're still at risk in a pandemic."
 - Woo stated an interest in starting something, and asked Madsen for help communicating with members of the IE Area. They agreed to continue that discussion outside of this meeting.

C. Members-at-Large

1. Ball
 - Attended the RG and spoke highly of it.
 - Also attended Moses's birthday party "and had a good time there too."
2. Madsen
 - Attended the RG "and bought three of Richard Lederer's books, which of course I haven't read yet."
3. Moses
 - Attended the RG and also hosted "my secret mini birthday party which several Board members attended." Also expressed interest in hosting a July 4th party.
4. Nolan
 - Received her *L.A. Mentary* by February 23rd which was earlier than usual.
 - Had spoken with Walker to share ideas about future RGs and future picnics.
5. Walker
 - "I'm just very pleased" with how the RG turned out.

D. Committees

1. Awards Committee

- The tabulation of volunteer award points is typically scheduled to happen early in March. It hadn't happened yet, but would happen soon.

2. Diversity Committee

- Meni had not yet arrived. Her report occurred later. See below.

3. Elections Committee

- Four petitions were received for three two-year Member-at-Large positions, from Jonathan Elliott, Craig Lancaster, Samuel Moses, and Roy Ball.
- Two petitions were received for one one-year Member-at-Large position, from Toni Hansen and Perry Lanaro.
- This meant that we would need to hold an election for the first time since 2017. Fenig required guidance on how to run that election, which would be discussed later in the meeting.
- Additionally, Stillson, Madsen, and Nolan would continue as members of the Board for the second year of their two-year terms.

4. Finance Committee

- Moses asked if we had located old copies of tax filings. Elliott had visited the storage unit with Walker and had retrieved 12 boxes of old historical information, of which he had thus far cataloged three boxes and had found no such records.

5. Gifted Youth Committee

- Walker: "At the RG we had half a dozen kids, and they had a great time."
- See also Meni's report later in these minutes.

6. Regional Gathering Committee

- Friedlander:
 - thanked "everybody who helped out."
 - "We've had not one report of COVID from anybody that attended," which he said was notable because the most recent AG in Sparks, Nevada resulted in a number of COVID cases. "And I think that impacted the attendance in San Francisco."
 - "We need to update some A/V supplies. I'll be submitting a request for that probably next month."
 - Negotiations with the hotel for next year were underway, as were entertainment plans. "We may do a banquet, I don't know."
 - Marketing for next year's RG will begin shortly, including an early-bird price as part of an announcement in the June issue of *L.A. Mentary*.
 - Is willing to be named co-chair of the RG Committee along with Walker when the position comes up for appointment in May.

7. Scholarships Committee

- Chad Tew reported a successful conclusion to the scholarship process. "We submitted this year about 20 essays to go on to review by Region 9 for national

and regional awards, as well as three top candidates for the two GLAAM awards.”

- He also expressed concern about the use of essays as a basis for scholarship awards due to the impact of ChatGPT and similar AI platforms on the art of essay writing, but also acknowledged that that was a concern for Mensa as a whole rather than just for GLAAM. “I don’t know if Mensa is looking at that.”

8. Special Events Committee

- With the conclusion of the RG, Walker had begun to think about other events, such as Dodgers baseball, the Pantages Theater and so on, but had not made any firm plans. As discussed at our February meeting, a picnic was scheduled on May 21st.

9. Testing Committee

- Toni Hansen administered a testing session at the RG and had completed the requirements and had been confirmed as an official proctor.

E. Coordinators

1. Archivist

- Madsen stated that he was aware that he was responsible for updating the motions catalog, but wanted to wait to do that until after the tax situation is resolved.

2. Calendar Editor

- Stillson: “Everybody’s been very good about sending in their entries.”

3. Circulation Manager

- Stillson: Approximately half of our members are getting the newsletter electronically, half by mail. The printer has been working well.

4. Historian

- Elliott visited our storage unit with Walker on February 11th and retrieved 12 boxes of historical records, three of which he found to contain “Board minutes, Executive Committee minutes, agendas, Treasurer reports, sign-in sheets, and other meeting exhibits and correspondence from as far back as 1967.” Also: “I have not come across any old tax returns yet from any era, which doesn’t surprise me.”
 - Discussion ensued between Elliott, Moses, and Madsen regarding filing of recent tax returns. Moses stated again that he was hoping to find old copies of tax fillings to use as a guide. Madsen noted that “Rachel [Kibler] wanted us to have our tax exempt status resolved by March, and it’s March,” and also that we had made great progress in the recent past by holding weekly meetings to discuss progress, and asked if it would be appropriate to start holding those again in order to facilitate further progress toward that goal. The question of whether there were old returns was discussed, with Moses wanting to wait until we knew that they weren’t going to be found, and with Elliott and Madsen recommending that we proceed without them. Assuming that we

proceed without them, Madsen offered to help find answers to questions that Moses might have, if any. Moses agreed to provide a first draft for Elliott and Madsen to discuss and offered to have it ready "two weeks from now." Madsen agreed to follow up with him at that time.

5. *L.A. Mentary*

- Frey conducted a poll asking random people how they felt about expanding the electronic newsletter beyond 16 pages. Survey respondents agreed with her own position on the question.
- Frey spoke at length "about things that are holding up the newsletter." Most of them had been discussed at our previous Board meeting, so will not be repeated here. She concluded: "We can't have this nitpicking. We can't have it. It's got to stop. And all I can say is it's going to stop. The next person who nitpicks me, we are going to the ombudsman. If the local ombudsman cannot or will not be involved, perhaps there is a conflict of interest. Then we are going to the National Ombudsman. This is driving me crazy and it's holding up the newsletter. And it will no longer be tolerated. You know, I have rights. Just because I'm not on the Board doesn't mean I have no rights. I have rights."
- Frey responded to Elliott's report that Robin Crawford had told him that different versions of the newsletter should not have overlapping content. "It should be obvious that makes no sense. Obviously there has to be overlapping content – there has to be a calendar, there has to be election information – so I emailed Robin, and she emailed back, that perhaps there was a misunderstanding, but she never said that. I sent the emails to the Board members, [in which] Robin tells us that about half the areas have two versions of the newsletter, and Robin said, 'Of course there's overlapping content, there has to be.' That's what she said in her email that I forwarded to all you guys."
- Frey: "Also another point, I asked the San Diego editor – that's the only one I know of that has two different versions – was there any problem? And she emailed me back saying that she's been doing the two different versions for about a year and she's had no complaints."

6. To Meni's reports

- Elliott had received communication from Meni that she would be joining us partway through the meeting. Upon her arrival at this point, he circled back to reports from her that would otherwise have occurred previously in this meeting.
- Gifted Youth had had a snow trip planned in Big Bear which was canceled due to bad weather, which she hoped to reschedule as weather permits. The next Gifted Youth activity was with SpaceX in May.
- In Coastal, she was planning a "rail to the mission" event, but needed to pay for train tickets and mission entrance ahead of time in order to get a group discount, so she was going to work with Elliott and others to arrange for that payment in time to take the trip in April. She also regretted missing the deadline for submitting an election petition, in response to which, Elliott explained that she could be appointed at the May Board meeting.
- For Diversity Committee, she reported that she would begin "a social media campaign to reach out to younger people and people in various diverse

communities." Also that she was working with L.A. Unified, "helping to create a mental pathway for eligible students in our school district." She reported contacting school district leaders who have been "very supportive," and that "that's another project that I'll be working on throughout this year."

7. SIGHT

- Madsen read a report from Arlette Chew: "No activity this past month, but we did get a request for housing for two women coming from Kentucky in May. Nothing arranged yet."

8. SIGs

- Nolan: "I do attend some of them, not all of them, but some of them, and they're very well attended, and people are very enthusiastic. [Jana Bickel] does a super job, and I want to be sure that you guys know that."

9. Webmaster

- Elliott: "Work is progressing nicely on the new homepage. It should be done by the end of term."
- Madsen asked if we were ready to put password protection back in place for sensitive areas of the website. Madsen and Elliott agreed to continue that discussion outside of this meeting.

10. Young Ms

- As the position had been vacant for a number of years, Elliott wondered aloud if there was value in keeping the position on the agenda.
- Meni responded: "As they transition out of Gifted Youth, [our kids] need to have somewhere to go and groups to be with, so I think it's important to keep [Young Ms] in place, even if we have no one [to fill the position] yet."

11. Data Officer, Membership Committee, Ombudsman, Open Forum, Public Relations, and Social Media all offered no report.

III. Special Orders

A. Filling of Vacant Board Positions

- No nominations were offered.

B. Filling of Vacant Committee Chair Positions

- No nominations were offered.

C. Filling of Vacant Coordinator Positions

- No nominations were offered.

D. Election Ballot Counting

- Elliott and Fenig summarized the questions that needed answers:
 - How should ballots be collected and how and when and where should they be counted?
 - Would we allow electronic voting by email, or should we instead continue past practice of requiring voting on paper, submitted by mail?

- Would we count ballots over Zoom, or in person, and if in person, where? And in either case, when?
- Discussion ensued, all of which was in general agreement that we should conduct a vote by paper ballot to ensure confidentiality and to provide a paper trail, that we should conduct ballot counting in person rather than over Zoom, and that we should allow Fenig to choose the date, time, and place of the ballot counting.
- Frey and Fenig discussed briefly the amount of newsletter space that would be required to publish a ballot with voting instructions.

IV. Unfinished Business

A. Emphasizing schedule-driven obligations in the Volunteer Guidelines

- The agenda includes Madsen's proposed text to be added to the Guidelines.
- Madsen called this "extra text that I want to add to the responsibilities of the AVC and the Finance Committee" to make sure that we don't forget to file our taxes in the future, along with other things that we need to be aware of that happen on an annual basis.
- Elliott expressed agreement with adding responsibilities to the AVC, but asked if the Finance Committee guidelines didn't already include mention of tax filings. Madsen gave his understanding that they did not, and that he wanted to see this text added precisely because it was missing from the guidelines.
- Moses expressed agreement that guidelines should include an awareness of tax filings for more positions than just the Treasurer. "If everybody's aware of it, you're more likely to have it done." Madsen concurred.
- Moses asked about the wording that printed financial statements should happen "periodically", noting that our bylaws require them twice a year. There was general agreement with making that change.
- Woo asked if the financial report to national (mentioned previously in these minutes) should be included. Madsen and Elliott agreed that that was a good suggestion.
- Elliott moved "that the language included in Unfinished Business item A be added to the volunteer guidelines, with the amendments of changing 'periodic' to 'semi-annual' and of including a reference to the annual financial report due to the national office." Madsen seconded. Elliott asked for further objection or discussion, heard none, and declared the motion approved.

B. Color online edition of the GLAAM newsletter (Ball)

- The motion under discussion: "The GLAAM newsletter editor will continue to produce a color online edition of the GLAAM newsletter from which the printed edition will be excerpted."
- Thirty-five minutes of discussion ensued, during which Ball moved three separate times to extend the meeting by ten minutes. Stillson seconded the first motion, and Moses seconded the second and third motions.
- The questions at issue:
 - Is the printed version or is the electronic version considered to be GLAAM's official publication?
 - Should the content of the printed and electronic publications be identical?

- If they are to be different, is one excerpted from the other, or is one a supplement to the other?
- In the end, Stillson offered the motion as printed in the agenda. Elliott moved to amend the language by removing the words "continue to", asserting that this hadn't been done in the past, and Ball accepted that modification.
- Elliott called for a vote "on the motion that the GLAAM newsletter editor will produce a color online edition of the GLAAM newsletter from which the printed edition will be excerpted." Ball, Carpenter, Meni, Moses, and Stillson voted in favor. Elliott, Madsen, and Woo voted against. Nolan abstained. Walker had left the meeting before this point. The motion carried (5/3/1).
- Ball and Frey expressed their understanding that this vote meant that the online newsletter could include more content than the printed version. Ball stated that that was the intent of his choice of words.

V. New Business

A. Pre-printing approval of the GLAAM newsletter (Ball)

- Ball recommended, due to the shortness of time, to carry this forward until the following month.

VI. Closing

A. Good of the Order

- Ball and Carpenter thanked Elliott for his dedicated work. Carpenter added, "I'm sure we don't understand the totality of the pressure that you may be under."
- Meni "wanted to thank everyone for a fabulous RG. It was my first one and thank you to everyone who helped to make it a great event for all participants. I had a wonderful time getting actually to meet many of you in person. I look forward to the next one."

B. Adjournment

- Moses moved, Ball seconded, and Elliott declared the meeting adjourned at 1:26pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Brian Madsen, GLAAM Secretary*