

Hearing Loss Association of America, California State Association

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 7, 2021

Approved 4.18.21

The HLAA-CA Board of Trustees (Board) meeting was called to order on March 7, 2021, at 12:04 pm, President Katie Wright presiding. Platform was Zoom.

Board members in attendance: Katie Wright, Toni Barrient, Tim Browning, Laura Gaeta, Alan Katsura, Heather Lehr, Nanci Linke-Ellis, Rich Osborne, Margaret Wallhagen, Jeffrey Chess (ex officio), Bob Zastrow (ex officio), Liz Lesan (ex officio)

Katie extended a welcome to new Board members Laura, Alan, and Rich and introduced all Board members. She thanked guest Lynne Kinsey for her nine years of service as a three-term Trustee. She acknowledged Gail Morrison, also recently retired from the Board after serving three terms.

The first order of business was election of officers:

Katie was reelected President for a second term. Nanci Linke-Ellis was elected Vice President. Jeff Chess was reelected Treasurer for a seventh term. Laura Gaeta was elected Secretary. Katie announced that for this meeting only, Liz would serve as secretary and take minutes.

Members approved the addition of three items to the previously distributed agenda: approving minutes from the October Board meeting, approving a budget prepared by the Treasurer, and hearing a report on the status of HLAA social media.

The next item was approval of minutes:

Previously distributed minutes from the Board meeting on October 25, 2020, were approved.

Action items from the October meeting were reviewed:

- Purchasing external microphones for local chapter leaders was determined to be unnecessary.
- Budgeting for a California members event at the HLAA2021, the San Diego convention, was dropped; because of the pandemic, the convention will be virtual this year.
- None of the proceeds from the Volleyball fundraiser organized by Kelsey Brandin were received by HLAA-CA.
 - Katie will check with Carla Beyer-Smolin in the HLAA office to confirm that all proceeds were kept by HLAA.
 - In response to a question about the future, Nanci offered that Kelsey was very likely to organize a similar fundraiser in the future, and that she should be asked to make HLAA-CA a beneficiary.

Hearing Loss Association of America, California State Association

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 7, 2021

Approved 4.18.21

Hearing Loss Association of America, California State Association

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 7, 2021

Approved 4.18.21

Katie gave the President's report:

She mentioned that, as she assumed the office, Zina Jawadi had suggested that fresh ideas, new leadership, and strong planning would move HLAA-CA in a positive direction. At the same time, HLAA has changed its model of the proper role for state associations.

Katie turned to Ann Thomas to give a PowerPoint presentation about the relationships between HLAA, state associations, and local chapters. Ann's primary points were:

- All parts of HLAA have the same mission: *"The mission of HLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support, and advocacy."*
- There are four interrelated parts to HLAA;
 - Hearing Loss Association of America is the parent organization and center of policy and activity.
 - State Chapter Coordinators are appointed by HLAA, report directly to HLAA, focus on chapter development.
 - State Associations Represent HLAA at the State level by providing information, education and advocacy statewide; advocate for needed State legislation that expands communication access; and support State Chapter Coordinators.
 - Local Chapters support members.
- HLAA-CA is out of sync with the HLAA model for State Associations. The existing HLAA-CA bylaws need to be changed to correct the situation.
- Specific, measurable goals are needed in order for HLAA-CA to effectively address its mission; some examples are:
 - Creating a modern, effective website.
 - Working to get HLAA-CA representation on State advisory boards.
 - Developing a handbook for Board members.
- Best practices for State Associations include holding executive committee meetings; defining job descriptions; setting yearly, measurable goals; conducting an annual review and planning for the year ahead.
- By aligning with HLAA's model and setting measurable, achievable goals, HLAA-CA can become a powerhouse—the voice of people with hearing loss in California

Meg congratulated Ann on a timely and informative presentation. Nanci remarked that recent successes should be acknowledged. First, the American Girl event at The Grove in Los Angeles: Joss Kendrick, an athletic doll with hearing loss was named Girl of the Year and local chapter

Hearing Loss Association of America, California State Association

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 7, 2021

Approved 4.18.21

members participated. Second, a Volleyball fundraiser for HLAA in Manhattan Beach featuring high profile athletes was organized by a local woman and was attended by HLAA-CA representatives.

Jeff presented the Treasurer's report and budget.

He reviewed and explained the various categories used and. Because the newsletter ceased operation at the end of 2020, it was listed separately on the report. For the year 2020, the beginning balance was \$27,963.07. Income was \$824.27 plus \$9,383.20 for the newsletter, totaling \$10,207.47. Expenses were \$2,365.28 plus \$11,917.91 for the newsletter, totaling \$14,283.19. Balance at the end of the year was \$23,887.35, reflecting a deficit of \$4, 075.72. The ending balance on December 31, 2020, was \$23,887.35.

Before presenting the budget, Jeff pointed out that there have been significant changes in the financial situation for 2021, and that past performance does not indicate future performance. Due to the pandemic which reduced Board fundraising opportunities and outreach expenses, as well as the discontinuation of the newsletter, he emphasized that the actual 2021 numbers for income and expenses could vary widely from the proposed budget. Questions and discussion regarding where various expenses fit into categories and potential future revenue and expenditures followed. Jeff requested that Board members update him with information impacting the budget as it becomes available.

Motions to accept Treasurer's report and 2021 budget were approved by the Board.

Four recent expense items were discussed:

- Whether to retain or discontinue the HLAA-CA PO Box in San Jose; Laura will look into options and report at the next Board meeting.
- Whether to retain or discontinue Google Doodle; this will be referred to the Finance committee.
- Reimbursing Heather \$149 for Canva, which is and will be used heavily on the new website. A motion to make this reimbursement was approved by the Board.
- Reimbursing Katie \$50 for a short-term upgrade to the Zoom account to accommodate the large registration for the California meeting on locked hearing aids. A motion to make this reimbursement was approved by the Board.

Committee chairs gave their reports:

Social Media

Diane Gross, social media coordinator for HLAA-CA, gave her report. Regarding the

Hearing Loss Association of America, California State Association

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 7, 2021

Approved 4.18.21

Chapter's Facebook presence, traffic is down, but this is consistent with what has happened on other sites. Laura mentioned that younger adults tend to be more active on Instagram and suggested looking into other platforms. Rich mentioned another organization supporting people with hearing loss which has a much more active Facebook page. Diane was asked to investigate alternatives and report back to the board at a future meeting.

Newsletter

Liz reported that the Winter, 2020-2021, edition was the final quarterly issue of *The Hearing Loss Californian*. Print costs and the loss of advertisers were the primary reasons. The option remains open to print a Special Edition such as for the CAA conference. Some content originally published in the newsletter will be posted on the new website. Most contributors have agreed to continue supporting HLAA-CA on the website and some advertisers have expressed an interest.

Website

Heather reported that the website blog will effectively become the HLAA-CA newsletter. She explained that the site opening is a process; functionality will be limited at first and will expand as each addition is tested and added. Tim mentioned that a beta site for committee members will come first. This will be followed by a soft launch for Board members to exercise the site, and then full public access by replacing the existing website.

Heather mentioned the need for a revenue stream and talked about possibilities for support from advertisers. She suggested the possibility of each Board member taking responsibility for building a relationship with one company and becoming its liaison. To the suggestion that HLAA-CA have an advertising manager, Heather explained that attempts to find a volunteer have been unsuccessful; this is an alternative idea.

Discussion included ideas for reaching out to chapters and individuals for help, a comment that advertising revenue would likely be taxable (Unrelated Business Income Tax/UBIT) and require extra reporting, that someone would need to coordinate potential advertiser contacts in order to avoid confusion and duplication, and the suggestion that HLAA-CA sponsor a Tech Expo to bring in revenue.

Katie thanked Alan for work on the existing website while Tim and Heather concentrate on the new site

Hearing Loss Association of America, California State Association

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 7, 2021

Approved 4.18.21

Outreach:

Toni reported on the recent statewide meeting regarding legislation on locked hearing aids. Turnout was high and the presentation by Heather Olivares, an analyst with the California Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology & Hearing Aid Dispensers Board was very well received. Because registration for this meeting was larger than the upper limit on the Board's Zoom plan (99), a motion to preapprove reimbursement for temporary upgrades for future statewide meetings where similar participation was anticipated was approved by the Board.

There have also been successful online collaborations with HLAA to present topics of national interest to a wider audience.

State Coordinators

Toni explained that beginning in June, 2020, she and Katie began holding Chapter Leader meetings on Zoom. At first, meetings were weekly and much of the discussion was around using virtual technology. As leaders became more confident and gained experience, the meetings were less frequent (now monthly) and the discussion moved to other topics such as this month's focus on State and Federal taxes.

Bob mentioned that before the pandemic, he was able to attend meetings at several NorCal chapters. With the stay-at-home orders, he has had infrequent contact with chapters in his area. He reported that the startup group in Roseville is quite active. In response to questions about the Napa Chapter and its delinquent tax status, he said that he had made a number of unsuccessful attempts to reach the chapter president.

A short discussion followed about ways that individual Board members might help with support for struggling chapters by reaching out to people they know in the area.

Liz congratulated the State Coordinators on the impressive support given to chapters with the virtual meetings and Katie thanked Toni and Bob for their efforts.

Bylaws

Katie said that, pursuant to a request from HLAA, the wording in HLAA-CA bylaws needed to be changed. Because it is the parent organization, state and local chapters were asked to remove references to "national" HLAA. She updated and distributed proposed updates ahead of this meeting. The Board approved a motion to make the changes to HLAA-CA bylaws.

Hearing Loss Association of America, California State Association

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 7, 2021

Approved 4.18.21

Discussion about whether Board members should be Trustees or Directors, the size of the Board, and the number of officers followed. A formal committee will be named to work on rewriting the bylaws.

New Business was introduced:

Katie asked members to approve sending a letter of support for AB435, Hearing Aids: Locked Programming Software: Notice, which would require licensed audiologists and hearing aid dispensers to notify purchasers in writing that their aids could only be serviced or programmed at specific facilities or locations. She will prepare and send the letter in the name of HLAA-CA.

Katie then opened a discussion on Board focus areas and strategic planning. She acknowledged and thanked Ann for her help in putting together a chart showing multiple focus area categories: Development, Fundraising, Advocacy, External Communications, Education and Outreach, Organization Partnerships Industry Partnerships, and Chapter Support. Several specific actions were listed under each area, some of which were underway (e.g., launching the new website), some of which need to be addressed quickly (revising bylaws, supporting AB435), and some which can be addressed when other projects finish and members are able to devote time to new tasks.

Katie pointed out that this chart was a starting point, that the Board is comprised of only nine people, and that categories and actions would need to be fluid as decisions are made about what to prioritize and how to proceed. She welcomed input, and after a lively discussion, she asked Board members to consider how much time they could devote to HLAA-CA and to identify others who would be effective members of committees or volunteers on projects.

The next item of business was committee assignments. The following is a summary:

- Development – Katie (lead)
 - Bylaws subcommittee – Liz (lead); Heather, Katie
- External Communications
 - Database subcommittee – Toni (lead); Rich
 - Website subcommittee – Heather (lead); Tim, Alan, Katie, Toni, Diane, Liz
- Internal Communications – Laura (lead); Tim, Rich
- Advocacy
 - AB435 subcommittee – Toni (lead); Rich, Alan
 - Organization Partnerships – Nanci (lead)

Members agreed to meet again on Sunday, April 18, 2021, noon. The meeting was adjourned at 3:35pm.

Hearing Loss Association of America, California State Association

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 7, 2021

Approved 4.18.21

Liz Lesan