

TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY  
2521 Riva Road, Suite L-7, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

MINUTES – Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, May 5, 2021

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by the President, Russell Leone, at 5:05 p.m., by a Zoom virtual meeting.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Beers, Benfer, Brininger, Carr, Córdoba, Cronin, Delph, Grimm, Heintz, Liakos, Ruddy, Snyder and Thumbtzen.

Also present were Ken Page, Jephtha Nguherimo, Amanda Menas and Debbie Lanham.

TAAAC's Mission & Vision were read by Richard Benfer.

**LAND  
ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The Land Acknowledgment was read by Jan Delph.

**ADOPTION OF ORDER  
OF BUSINESS**

Monarch Academy in Annapolis was added to the agenda under Directors' Discussion Items.

Upon a motion by Robin Beers, seconded by Betsy Brininger, the Order of Business was approved with flexibility.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon a motion by Jan Delph, seconded by Dyana Cronin, the Minutes of the April 6, 2021 meeting were approved.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

It was moved by Tami Thumbtzen, seconded by Dyana Cronin, to accept the April 2021 Financial Report for Audit. The motion was approved.

**GUESTS: MSEA 2020-2025  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

Several guests from the Maryland State Education Association were present to share the 2020-2025 Maryland State Education Association Strategic Plan. Guests included - President Cheryl Bost, Vice President Doug Prouty, Treasurer Joe Coughlin, Executive Director Sean Johnson, Field Manager Josh Ardison.

Joe Coughlin discussed the 7 grants that are found in the Grant Book. The Early Career Educator Grant which is designed to support local affiliates who are strategically developing unique programs to recruit and retain early career educators. This grant can be up to \$3,000. The Innovative Membership Grant which

assist local affiliates who develop innovative membership recruitment or strong retention programs. The Membership Grant which the base grant is a dollar per member with a minimum of \$1,000 a local. The amount is based on your membership count as of August 31. The Incentive Base Grant is on your net membership gain. The gain is measured each August 31 for the prior year multiplied by \$30. For TAAAC right now, the Base Grant is \$6,471.00 and \$5,070.00 for the Incentive Grant. He stated that TAAAC has done a really great job. The Professional Development and Training Grant which is to assist local affiliates with their various professional development and training needs. The request could include local officer or board of director training, local association rep. training, MSEA Leadership Conference, or any training offered through MSEA for professional learning. The Public Advocacy Grant which helps locals with various advocacy needs. Examples could be to enhance relationships with elected officials, build partnerships to encourage joint legislative advocacy, increase awareness of the MSEA Fund for Public Education so that we can increase contributions. The Regulatory Compliance Grant which is designed to help locals comply with federal, state and regulatory requirements. The requirement for this grant is to send into MSEA your 2020-21 local budget, the IRS Form 990, Form 1, and choose one of the following of the audit or summary of prior years' income and expenses for fiscal year ending August 31. He stated that TAAAC has not filled out and submitted the information for this grant and that is \$9,000.00 that is being left on the table at this time. The Special Request Grant which will provide assistance to locals that are not addressed in one of the other grants. It does not recur each year unless the local is facing a crisis. This is not a guaranteed grant, it is paid with unpaid grant money and paid on a first-come first-serve basis due no later than July 1. The last thing is the Local Association Technology Grant which can help require or replace desktops or laptops, printers, projectors or other technology related materials like software upgrades.

President Bost stated that the MSEA Board did make some budget adjustments that were approved in the interim of the 2-year budget. The Zoom account payments will continue for the

locals that started last year when we moved to virtual. Also, outfitting every local office, up to \$7,000.00, for tv screens, monitors and everything needed to hold virtual meetings. Locals will get one internet line. Also, \$1,000.00 per local to hold a Board Retreat which can be used this year or next year. She stated that the dues increase has reduced that was approved by the RA. In the October Virtual RA, we approved \$0 for FY21 and \$10 for FY22. The Board has decided that it will be \$5.00, not the \$10.00 for FY22.

Sean Johnson stated that it is an important acknowledgment of the 169 members that TAAAC has increased throughout this membership year. He stated that with the specifics that TAAAC has been under and to be coming through that not losing members but in fact gaining members, he wanted to thank TAAAC. Across the state, we have added 723 members, with that gain TAAAC is responsible for almost 25% of that growth. Thank you all for prioritizing the work of membership.

Josh Ardison stated TAAAC has had some amazing wins over this past year. As union leaders, we need to own those wins and have those conversations with potential members around those wins. MSEA has started their Early Enrollment. We can have potential members sign up to join the union and they will not have to pay dues until September 1. The eligibility for Early Enrollment in previous years was that if you were a member and dropped, you would be ineligible for early enrollment. There will be an exemption this year.

President Leone stated that yesterday an email went out to our potential members outlining the Early Enrollment.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

TAAAC Budget - Secretary-Treasurer Tami Thumbtzen reported that the TAAAC FY'22 Proposed Budget will be presented next week at the Representative Assembly. Another Virtual Hearing will be held on May 18 for anyone that would like to join. Hopefully, the budget will be adopted on June 9.

It was moved by Richard Benfer, seconded by Dyana Cronin, to support moving the FY'22 Proposed Budget to the Representative Assembly.

Jorge Córdoba stated that Item #6, Local Dues, is increasing from \$1,659,200 to \$1,766,400. For the last 3 years, we have had a surplus. The surplus FY'19 was \$231,300 and FY'20 was \$476,226. He stated that he does not think there is a need to increase the dues on our membership. It makes no sense to raise our dues when TAAAC produces a surplus year after year.

President Leone reminded the Board that we did not increase our local dues this year but collected \$1.00 for the TAAAC Foundation. The local dues will increase from \$272.00 to \$276.00 for the year. It will be a \$4.00 increase spread over the year. The NEA dues will increase by \$2.00 for teachers and the MSEA dues will increase \$5.00 for teachers.

Richard Benfer asked if our dues are still calculated by a formula?

The formula for calculating local dues is .00575 multiplied by Step 1 of the Bachelor's SPC on the Unit 1 Salary Scale.

Jorge Córdoba stated that it is his understanding that we only subscribe to The Capital. He stated that he gets The Capital and it is \$150.00 a year. It says we are going to raise from \$750.00 to \$868.00. We only gave The Capital \$150.00 so why are we raising Item #21 when we should be decreasing?

We will come back to this question.

Jorge Córdoba asked why Line Item #46, Equipment Replacement, is increased from \$7,500.00 to \$10,000? What equipment are we replacing?

Executive Director Page stated that there are concerns about the age of TAAAC's current copier.

President Leone stated that the Technology Grants are for converting office space to support hybrid meetings. It is not necessarily for replacing things like printers. The Technology Grant use will have to be reviewed.

Jorge Córdoba expressed his concern of Line Item #75 and

paying someone \$9,500 for Wordpress when probably we should expand this money for something more than Wordpress.

Richard Benler stated that the Webmaster is paid by the number of updates that are made so the line item is an estimate.

Debbie Lanham reported that Line Item #21 Newspapers, Magazines, Subscriptions is designated for newspapers and other subscriptions. The Capital is the only newspaper subscription. The cost of The Capital is \$374.84 a year due to the fact we have a printed paper along with multiple digital subscriptions. This line item also includes Compliance Posters, a Grammarly and a financial subscription.

Robin Beers asked if the Board discusses dues increases before the budget process?

President Leone stated that he brought it up last year to override the formula, but we don't have an official discussion every year because it is formula driven.

Maureen Liakos stated that before asking people to vote and presenting it to the RA, she felt that they should have every single line item that goes in and not just a summary. She stated that she would like people to have access to the 100 pages or more so that they can really get into the weeds and see what are in the line items.

President Leone clarified that the Representatives are getting a line by line budget and not just a summary of changes.

Kate Snyder stated that we have Budget Hearings. No one came to the Budget Hearing. The opportunities are there for people to give their input.

Executive Director Page stated that there are some legal challenges as an organization about full public access. It is not just our members that have access to our website.

It was moved by Dyana Cronin, seconded by Robin Beers, to call the question. The motion was approved.

The motion on the table is to support the Budget moving forward to the Representative Assembly. The vote: 9-Yes, 3-No. The Board is in support of the Budget moving forward.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Logo Refresh - Amanda Menas stated that we are looking to update the TAAAC logo. She created a Focus Group form so that we can get more information about what people are looking for as a logo.

Facebook and Social Media - Amanda Menas reported that we now have presence on all the major platforms. We are posting regularly across all 3 platforms; Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Ms. Menas stated that there have been conversations on bringing back the private Facebook page. She stated that her recommendation is that we do bring the private page back. It is not necessarily the best place for organizing but is a very good place for mobilizing. However, changing from what has seemed to have happened in the past, it is not a place that she recommends asking questions of TAAAC. It would be a place where members can engage with each other but TAAAC staff will not be checking this regularly. She stated that her recommendation is that the Board of Directors take turns to moderate the page. We are still working on the rules that will be brought to the moderators.

## **ACTION ITEMS CONTINUED**

Juneteenth Sponsorship & Participation - President Leone reported that he sent a packet out that outlines this organization. They are planning the first ever Juneteenth Celebration. He recommended that the Board sponsor this in the form of a \$1,000 patronage. This will allow us to put our logo on their materials to show that our sponsorship is there. He stated that they are planning a parade in Annapolis on Saturday, June 19, 2021, at 12:00 p.m. and he would like this group to think about participating.

It was moved by Jill Grimm, seconded by Jorge Córdoba, to support a \$1,000 donation for the sponsorship. The motion was approved.

Annapolis Pride Sponsorship & Participation - President Leone stated that Annapolis Pride is planning their parade and celebration on October 30, 2021. He stated that he would like to propose a \$1,000 sponsorship which will include our entry into the parade and provide us with a table at their festival.

It was moved by Kate Snyder, seconded by Elizabeth Ruddy, to support the \$1,000 patronage amount, participate in the parade and the festival. The motion was approved.

Bylaws - President Leone presented 3 Bylaw Amendments to the Board for consideration to move this to the Bylaws Committee as Board supported Bylaw Amendments. He reviewed the 3 ways to make an amendment to a Bylaw.

#### ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 7. The Association shall not deny membership on the basis of an individual's race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or physical disability.

Rationale: This language supports our social justice work and is more inclusive of all members of the LGBTQ+ community. In June 2020 the Supreme Court ruled in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Under the proposed Equality Act this decision would apply beyond employment but to education, housing and health care.

It was moved by Robin Beers, seconded by Betsy Brininger, that the Board support moving Bylaw Amendment in Article III - Membership, Section 7 to the Bylaws Committee. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### ARTICLE VII BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 7. ~~Seven~~ **Eight** members shall constitute a quorum.

Rationale: The board with officers is now fourteen members. The existing bylaws quorum doesn't require a majority of board members present. Raising the quorum to eight would make

attendance one more than half the board.

It was moved by Robin Beers, seconded by Tami Thumbtzen, to support moving Bylaw Amendment in Article VII - Board of Directors, Section 7 to the Bylaws Committee. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### ARTICLE VI - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 5. The Secretary-Treasurer shall ~~receive~~ **review** all funds of the Association and ~~shall deposit them in the name of the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County, Incorporated, in such bank or banks as the Board of Directors shall select.~~ He/she shall ~~disburse these funds according to the budget, provided that no bills shall be paid except upon written order of the President and Executive Director~~ **review records kept by the TAAAC Financial Manager in accordance with the standards provided by the auditors and expenses being paid by the TAAAC Financial Manager.** He/she ~~shall keep a separate record of the various funds of the Association and shall be bonded by the Association in such amount as the Board of Directors shall determine.~~ The Secretary-Treasurer will review and sign off on **Representative Assembly and Board of Director meeting** minutes prior to their approval.

**He/she shall record the minutes of the TAAAC Executive Team meeting and present them to the Board of Directors after reviewal by the President.**

Rationale: Past practice of TAAAC for 20+ years is not reflected here. The language conflicts with policy and job description of the Financial Manager. (Debbie Lanham took the position in 2001; Harriet Larsen held the position—Fiscal & Administrative Aide—prior.)

Allison Heintz proposed that “He/She” be changed to “They.”

It was moved by Kate Snyder, seconded by Allison Heintz, to support moving Bylaw Amendment in Article VI - Duties of Officers, Section 5 to the Bylaws Committee. The motion was approved unanimously.



**DISCUSSION ITEMS  
CONTINUED**

County Budget as Presented by County Executive Pittman - President Leone reported that the County Executive Budget puts forth a step, 1% COLA, and \$8 million to address gaps and back steps. That \$8 million does not just apply to TAAAC.

Negotiations - Executive Director Page stated that for the real detailed information, all the Board of Directors have access to the Bargaining Binder. The most important thing is the most difficult space we are in right now. Based on the Bargaining Survey, the members want to resolve the experience credit and back steps. We need to find a way to thread the needle where TAAAC gets the appropriate percentage amount of that \$8 million because we are the largest employee group. Other groups had the frozen steps, but nobody else has had to deal with what the restructure did in terms of sending so many people in different directions.

Executive Director Page presented the breakdown of where we are in terms of final lists of proposals amongst both teams. The actual proposals are in the digital Bargaining Binder.

End of Year Activities - President Leone reported that the end of the year is coming but we are not quite out of the Pandemic yet. Also, keep in mind that many of our employees are still on accommodations through June 30.

Kate Snyder reported that ideas are floating around to do an in-person end of the year celebration. It was talked about breaking up the county and 100% outside. We need to be aware of optics and the ones on accommodations. We would like to have ideas.

Dyana Cronin asked could we survey the members of how many wants to come together.

Elizabeth Ruddy suggested that we focus our efforts more on next year to get our membership together.

Richard Benfer suggested possibly putting together some kind of video that we can share with members.

EdSummer (Organizing Campaign) - President Leone reported that we have a program called Education Summer that we are applying for grants through NEA.

Executive Director Page reported that when he came in 2019, he began to get together with the other urban Executive Directors. One of the things we began was to file our grants together. We are happy to report that we have \$75,000 for a Safe and Just Schools Grant. Essentially, all of this will turn into organizing.

Executive Director Page reported that with the EdSummer Grant, we expect to have between \$10,000 - \$20,000 for this summer to do organizing. We also will be able to hire an additional organizer for a short period of time for \$10,000. We are going to have to get input on how we hire and select activists. More information will be coming.

BOD Retreat - President Leone reported that we will not have everybody there. We are still developing the agenda. It will be held June 22 - 24, 2021.

#### **UNISERV UPDATE**

Mark Mench gave an update on the Recovery Services issue for the Special Education teachers and the related service providers.

#### **DIRECTORS DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Monarch Academy in Annapolis - Jorge Córdoba reported that there has been a series of problems at Monarch Academy. The community left that school because it is a failure. Somebody decided at the Board of Education that in order to have the school full of kids they were to send every ESOL newcomer to that school no matter what school they would be at in Annapolis. Somebody decided to use taxpayers' money to finance a school that is failing and is pushing minority students to a school that is failing. He stated that he knows that this is not related to teachers, but he wants to move that this Association asks the Board of Education why this is happening with Monarch Academy Annapolis.

President Leone asked whether the UniServ Directors can investigate this further.

Jorge Córdoba stated that as long as this happens, he will retire the motion.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

It was moved by Tami Thumbtzen, seconded by Betsy Brininger, to move into Executive Session at 7:48 p.m.

It was moved by Dyana Cronin, seconded by Jan Delph, to rise out of Executive Session at 8:10 p.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

It was announced that the August 4, 2021 BOD meeting will be held at Kate Snyder's house at 10:00 a.m.

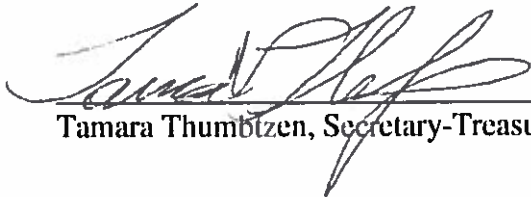
Next Board Meeting will be June 2, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Kate Snyder, seconded by Emmanuelle Carr, to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tamara Thumbtzen, Secretary-Treasurer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Russell Leone, President

Minutes approved BOD meeting June 2, 2021  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)