

Executive Committee Meeting
ASOR Offices
Boston, Mass
12 September 2009
DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT: Tim Harrison, President, Eric M. Meyers, Past President, Tammi Schneider, Vice President for Membership, Morag Kersel, Co-Vice President for Programs, Jeffrey A. Blakely, Vice President for Publications, Jim Strange, Secretary, Sheldon Fox, Treasurer, Orlyn Nelson, Andy Vaughn, Executive Director, Oystein LaBianca, Vice President for CAP.

ABSENT: Joe Seger, P.E. MacAllister, Chairman, Michael Homan, Co-Vice President for Programs (not present—alternates with Morag Kersel), B.W. Ruffner.

1. Call to Order. 9:04 by Tim Harrison, President.
2. Approval of Minutes from the Fall Meeting (September 20, 2008). APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED (with typos corrected by the Secretary.) Item 15 should read as follows: “This would feed into a proposed Round Table at New Orleans, a Membership meeting, and a Town hall meeting for feedback from the Board.” The resolution should read “BE IT RESOLVED that the EC asks the president to move forward with this and to report back to the EC.”
3. Approval of Agenda. The Agenda was APPROVED by voice vote.
4. Treasurer’s Report--Sheldon Fox: Our investments at the end of the last fiscal year are down 18%, which is the average for entities with large endowments, though ours is small. The General Endowment fund needs \$335,000 in the corpus, and Harris fund needs \$105,000. Both were under their corpus at the end of the fiscal year. As of August the General Endowment is above the corpus. The Harris fund is still about \$10,000 below corpus. Memberships and subscriptions have declined about 15%. The good news is that we are doing better in this category so far this year. We are suffering from accounts receivable. This year we started with \$99,000 receivable. We went from writing off 15% to writing off 40%. We were fooled into setting too high a reserve last year. We have realized more income from the Annual Meeting that helped our bottom line. The increases came to \$22,000. The actual loss is \$44,343 without counting the investment losses. We will have a negative number to begin the year.
Andy adds that, if our accounts stay where they are, and if there are no new losses, then we should be at a manageable level at the end of the year. Andy passed out a hand-out that shows some impact on the budget of subscriptions, memberships, annual meeting, and donations. We can sustain another year like this, but we cannot sustain more. At the end of June subscriptions were well down, so ASOR has engaged in an aggressive campaign to bring back subscribers. As of today we have 1,269 individual memberships. Tim Harrison and Andy Vaughn had asked Jeff Blakely to send out a letter to life members, to those who paid \$1,000 in 1983, a sum which no longer pays for what they receive annually. On the other hand about 20 have not given anything so far. How do we compare in money paid for AM compared to other societies? We do not know precisely.

Sheldon Fox points out we are only two months into the new year. There are three large areas to pay attention to. (1) The Annual Meeting had a profit of \$27,000, which we want to keep up and expenses down. (2) We budgeted Membership and Subscriptions above journal production. We must grow in journal production. (3) Contributions we budgeted at \$75,000. We must also fund the NEH project. We posted need policies for non-profits. Record retention is straightforward. We must protect our exempt status, especially in entering into relationships with for-profit ventures.

BE IT RESOLVED that ASOR adopt the Document Retention policies and the joint venture policy as sent out. Tammi moved; Eric Meyers seconded. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Endowment law and spending policies: On June 30 Massachusetts passed a new endowment law called the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act. It permits endowments to spend prudently below the corpus of their investments. Auditors encourage us to have regular spending policies that do not affect the organizations with there are large fluctuations in endowments, but we should prudently spend out of the endowments on a regular basis. Our spending strategy was enacted yearly, but we took a conservative view not to spend. We need to reconsider this policy in the light of the new law. There is presumption of an “imprudent” policy if one spends 7% or more of the Trailing Average Balance. One uses twelve quarters to establish this TAB for the Platt, Harris, and ASOR endowment. Sheldon recommends that we spend less than what we hope to earn. We should adopt policies to disburse earnings on a quarterly basis at 3.5% of the endowment. They should earn 7.5% on average over time. With regard to the Platt Endowment he recommends 6% disbursement, as its endowment is built up. On the Harris fund he recommends 5% disbursement. Harris has a requirement that we reinvest 10% of the income into the corpus. That would provide about \$12,000 from the endowment to the operations. Platt would realize \$14,000 for fellowships in accordance with the new Massachusetts UPIMFA law.

BE IT RESOLVED that ASOR, in accordance with the new Massachusetts Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act, distribute quarterly the general endowment at 3.5% of the Trailing Average Balance calculated over the last twelve quarters, distribute 6% of the Trailing Average Balance of the Platt Endowment calculated over twelve quarters, and distribute 5% of the Trailing Average Balance of the Harris Fund calculated over the last twelve quarters for fiscal year 2010 subject to confirmation with legal counsel. Sheldon Fox moved; Sten LaBianca seconded. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Morag Kersel, Co-Vice President for Programs, reports that we have produced a new ASOR Program guide. This will be posted at the website. Hard copies will be available at the registration desk of the Annual Meeting. Andy notes that we are almost at the same level of registrations as this time last year. Our next deadline is Sept 30, which carries a price increase. Andy predicts that the big jump will occur Oct 1. Revenue is down from in comparison to last year, as this is not connected with 30 and 40 year anniversaries.

BE IT RESOLVED that the new Program Committee Guidelines be adopted by ASOR. This is a motion and second from a standing committee. There was considerable discussion noting streamlined procedures and clear practices. It was expressed that it would be valuable for all committees adopt such procedures. Morag urged all the post to the new ASOR blog, since it is available. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Sten LaBianca reports that CAP is up to date. Sten has been stream-lining the forms. Sten will put up on the web Word templates for applicants to fill out. The electronic format from last year was very difficult. Eric asks that, if CAP goes all electronic, that archives be saved. CAP needs guidelines like Morag and will develop them. Sten has established a CAP Standards Committee to establish what the standards are and to make them available to the memberships. The deadline for applications is Oct 15.

7. The President moved the Archive Report up, because Eric Meyers had an airplane to catch. So far we have unrolled large photographic prints of Palestine from 1875 and placed them in Mylar sheets. We have also scanned them at 600 dpi for future publication. Eric showed the original *Firman* or Permission from the Sultan of Constantinople granting the American Oriental Society permission to be founded.

8. Jeff Blakely for COP—Jeff reported that the next issue of *BASOR* is at printer. The Dec issue of *NEA* must come out in December because of issues billing institutions. *JCS* had one late issue, but the next issue is at the printer. We should have a clean record in January. Bethany Walker's Annual is next and should appear by the Annual Meeting. Suzanne Richard's Archaeological Reports series contribution should appear next. There are discussions about the content of the *Annual* in the future so that there is an inner logic. We will now have JSTOR data on how our journals are being accessed. Since JSTOR is now posting our materials, a few established museums have balked at posting old photographs at 300 dpi or posting them at all, though they grant permission to publish the photo in the paper issue. It was agreed that Tim Harrison will write to publishers appearing to them to allow posting of 300 dpi photos. Electronic publication has engaged us in discussion for years. We agree generally that it is a good idea, but it requires planning for implementation. Andy reports the basic cost is about the same for the providers contacted. The U of California press will begin publishing all their journals electronically. Andy reports that it will cost about \$5,000 for each journal to post two years of back issues and subscriptions online or in print. We can then offer subscriptions electronically or in print media. The production costs for each journal are about the same. We will save in postage. It was suggested that Tdammi Schneider as Vice President for Membership send out an email about annual membership increases. It was suggested that we put an article in the October Newsletter to this effect. Oxford U. encyclopedia is on an Oxford U. Press burner with electronic issues. Ben porter resigned from NEA board. Ann suggested Robert Schick, and COP voted this appointment unanimously.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Executive Committee affirm the appointment of Robert Schick as an Assistant Editor of NEA. This comes as a motion and second. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. Creation of new Regional Committees. Such as Syria, Anatolia, etc. Regional Committees for Iran and Palestine have been proposed. The President solicits feedback. It was noted that there is a research center for Palestine (PARC) that is a member of CAAORC.

BE IT RESOLVED that the EC charge CAP to revisit and formulate guidelines that would govern the formation of regional committees. Tammi Schneider moved; Sheldon Fox seconded the motion. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. Tammi Schneider's Membership Report was distributed, but she had to leave. Most of her report was covered in other parts of this agenda.

11. Development Report—Andy Vaughn. Andy reminded the EC that P.E. MacAllister has sent a letter about the Legacy Circle to the Trustees. A brochure on the topic was included. The floor is \$2,500, but this is an immense help to ASOR. All other items in the ED have been covered.

12. For the foreseeable future the Dorot Foundation will not be giving us fellowship monies. Kress Foundation will re-evaluate all fellowships and asks us to help raise money to match their contributions.

13. President's Report—Tim Harrison. The Media and ASOR's outreach has engaged us for many years. There was a conference at Duke on archaeology and the media partially sponsored by ASOR. One suggestion was that ASOR deal more directly with the media. The President plans to appoint an ad hoc. Committee with Eric Cline and Robert Cargill as co-chairs to consider what specific kinds of things ASOR can do to coordinate with the media. For example, we could create digital resources to teach about archaeology. Some think we need to combat sensationalism proactively. This Committee will continue from now to June 30, 2010, subject to renewal.

The Strategic Planning Process: Tim Harrison announced a Strategic Planning Task Force. Continued data gathering has been going on for a year. He convened the task force with P.E. MacAllister attending by conference phone. They met for nearly nine hours at the BU conference center. The President felt it was extremely productive. They engaged in a visioning exercise, programs, operations, etc. It was the first time all had met together. Over the next two weeks Tim will produce a working document to circulate among the group as a beginning to produce a working document in one month. This would be made public in advance of the. At the Annual Meeting will have a Town hall-like meeting, Tim will host a round table, go through the document for feedback, and seek comments from the Trustees and EC members. The task force will meet again to work through the document in order to produce a Planning Document before the spring Board Meeting, which will consider it and vote upon it.

There being no old business or new business, Jeff Blakely moved that we adjourn. The President declared adjournment at 3:15 pm.

Respectfully,

James F. Strange, Secretary