



Actions of the AASLH Council

The Council of the American Association for State and Local History met on May 1 and July 1, 2020, using Zoom. AASLH Chair John Fleming led the Council's meetings, and Council took the following actions:

May 1, 2020 Meeting

1. Discussed potential budget scenarios for finishing the fiscal year (July 1-June 30) and for the coming fiscal year with regard to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. President & CEO John Dichtl reported on declining revenues, due to cancelled workshops and memberships, and that office had applied for a federal Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan.
2. Reviewed options for the annual meeting and discussed communications with the conference hotel in Las Vegas about holding the event during the coronavirus pandemic. Agreed to survey conference panelists and exhibitors about their plans to attend in September.
3. Reviewed the staff's and History Leadership Institute (HLI) Advisory Committee's plans for AASLH to offer an online HLI course that this year would serve as a partial replacement for the cancelled June 2020 in-person seminar, but in future years it would be offered in addition to the seminar.
4. Discussed AASLH's role in responding to the COVID-19 crisis, from sharing information and convening conversations, to helping with national advocacy efforts to increase funding for history organizations. Agreed to proceed with a Critical Issues Forum this summer or as part of the annual meeting.

July 1, 2020 Meeting

1. Approved the minutes from the May 1, 2020 Council Meeting.
2. In Executive Session, discussed the annual review of AASLH President & CEO John Dichtl.
3. Accepted the Independent Auditors' Report for Years Ended June 30, 2019 and 2018. The report was prepared by Edmondson, Betzler & Dame, Certified Public Accountants, Brentwood, Tennessee, and accepted and referred by the AASLH Audit Committee on January 30, 2020. The auditors did not identify any deficiencies or weaknesses.
4. Accepted financial reports from the Finance Committee, including the Financial Dashboard (3/31/2020), Statement of Financial Position, Summary Statement of Activities, and the Report on Investments, as well as minutes from the Finance Committee (6/11/2020) and the Investment Committee (6/3/2020). Staff are projecting a surplus for the current fiscal year.

5. Reviewed and approved the proposed FY2021 budget, with revenue of \$1,551,300 and expenses of \$1,543,446. This budget is approximately 20 percent smaller than the FY2020 budget, due to the expected economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Expenditures on staffing have been reduced 15% compared to the previous year. Council agreed to consider a revised budget with regard to staffing in December, when the office has a better idea of how the annual meeting turned out and how the pandemic has affected programs, membership, and operations.
6. Discussed ways to make the online Annual Meeting as open as possible to the greatest number of people, from within the membership and beyond.
7. Discussed the critical issues facing the field, from the coronavirus to widespread protests against systemic racism and calls to remove monuments. Reviewed the resources that AASLH has provided and will be providing—such as webinars, articles, and Technical Leaflets—to help history practitioners deal with these challenging issues.
8. Reviewed plans from Program Committee task force and the staff for a six-day online Annual Meeting spread across two weeks in late September. There will be several plenary/keynote events, 15 live sessions, and 30 pre-recorded sessions, as well as an online exhibit hall. Concurred that the Critical Issues Forum during the meeting should focus on where the field and successful history institutions will be in two to three years.
9. Set the Meeting of the Membership, also known as the Annual Business Meeting, which usually takes place at the AASLH annual conference, for September 23, 2020. Members will be notified in August of this online meeting.
10. Set the next meeting of Council for September 22, 2020.
11. Reviewed reports from the organization's many committees, task forces, and working groups.
12. Expressed gratitude to the AASLH staff for its exemplary work throughout the coronavirus crisis.