

AR-AER
Annual Business Meeting Minutes
September 17-18, 2020

I. Call to Order:

A. President Whitney Musick called the meeting to order at 2:45 PM, September 17 2020 at the AR AER annual virtual conference.

B. Attendees included:

- Current Board Members: Whitney Musick, Chelsea Williams, Sandee Pinkstaff, Eric Yarberry, Stephanie Smith, Debbie Darrough, Everett Elam, Teresa Golden, Tamera McNabb, Michele Smith, Lori Cole, Alisha Kindrick, Latasha Mays, Tiffany Moore, Marieda Priest
- Members of AR Chapter of AER
- Other annual conference attendees who were not AR-AER members
- Absent Board Members:

II. Award Presentation

- **Milestone Membership:**
 - **Janis Voetberg: 10 years**
 - **Debbie Adams: 15 years**
 - **Lori Cole: 15 years**
 - **Jo Ellen Croft: 30 years**
- Bill Tomlin Award: Bryson Jones, recipient
- Arkansas Distinguished Advocate award: No Recipient
- Joyce Ogburn Memorial Award: No Recipient
- APH Wall of Tribute: No Recipient

III. Board Elections: Latasha Mays

- Codes were emailed and Google Forms were submitted for electing new members for this virtual conference.
- A call for nominations for the secretary position took place. There were no nominations.
- Bill Bevers moved to close nominations. Sharon Niemczyk seconded the motion. It passed unanimously with no abstentions.

- A call for nominations for the treasurer position took place. There were no nominations.
- Bill Bevers moved to close nominations for the treasurer position. Latasha Mays seconded the motion. It passed unanimously with no abstentions.

- Nominations for board members took place.

- Tamera McNabb moved that the nominations be closed. Sandee Pinkstaff seconded the motion. It passed unanimously with no abstentions.

**Meeting was adjourned and reconvened the next day at 9:45 AM.

IV. Reading of the Minutes:

- A motion to accept the minutes from the September 20, 2019, meeting as presented was made by Bill Bevers and seconded by Sharon Niemczyk.
- The motion was approved by unanimous vote with no abstentions.

V. Treasurer's Report:

- Current balance as of September 17, 2020: \$19,832.48
- Previous balance as of January 1, 2019:, \$11,507.03
- A motion to accept the treasurer's report as submitted was made by Latasha Mays and seconded by Tiffany Moore. The motion was unanimously approved.

VI. Committee Reports:

- Awards Committee: Everett Elam reported.

o Awards were awarded, September 17, 2020, at this conference.

- Conference Committee: Chair: Sandee Pinkstaff, Members: Stephanie Smith, Chelsea Williams, Eric Yarberry, and Whitney Musick.

A huge "thank you" goes out to this year's conference committee! Whitney Musick, Stephanie Smith, Chelsea Williams, and Eric Yarberry each brought their knowledge and skill in a mighty way. In April, when it became evident that the conference must shift to a virtual platform, they showed that ARKANSAS-AER leadership has what it takes and saved the association thousands of dollars by handling the programming themselves. They spent tireless hours in groundwork and preparation leading up to this great day.

- Social/Fundraising Committee - Chair: Michele Smith, Members: Tiffany Moore, Lori Cole, Alisha Kindrick, Everett Elam, Debbie Darrough, and Leonard Ogburn

The major accomplishments of the Fundraising Committee for 2019-2020 were the raffle/silent auction held at our Annual Fall Conference and the online t-shirt sale held during the pandemic. We raised approximately \$3,200 with the raffle and silent auction and \$1,287.50 with the online t-shirt sale from sales/donations. Our current fundraiser is an online mask sale, make sure to purchase your mask today to protect yourself and others as well as to support AR-AER.

The major accomplishment of the Social Committee for 2019-2020 was the Social held at the AR-AER Fall Conference. The theme was Mexican and fun was had by all while we visited with friends and colleagues and waited to see who won the prizes including the Grand Prize of an Opal and Diamond Ring. Due to Social Distancing a Spring Social was not held this past year.

- Membership Committee: Chair: Teresa Golden, Member: Chelsea Williams

o Recognition for long-term members were provided at this conference.

Much was discussed on how to drive up membership. We sent emails to past attendees of our conferences who were not current members to encourage new membership. We also sent out emails to past members. We discussed ways to get other professionals involved. Before, we decided to go virtual for our conference, we had planned to have a membership table. We also discussed trying to get a booth at upcoming CEC conference to show what AER membership could provide to special educators.

Members received access to many virtual CEC and virtual classes for free.

We were investigating ways to encourage OTs and other professionals to become involved. All AER members were encouraged to share emails about membership to others who work with students with visual needs.

A power point was created to include for conference that told about benefits of becoming a member.

We contacted international to commemorate AER membership milestones and will mail certificates out after the conference.

- Media Committee: Stephanie Smith and Whitney Musick. (No report)

- Nominations Committee: Chair: Latasha Mays

The nominations committee has been reaching out to AR-AER members about the need for board members. The committee has also been reaching out to non-members to become AR-AER members in order to be nominated for the board. The committee has been able to recruit the following AR-AER members to be nominated as board members: Calvin Churchwell (COMS/LVT/Technology) and LaTasha Age with DSB. Pam Ashley Williams (ASBVI teacher) was recruited to become an AR-AER member in order to be nominated for the board.

2021 Board:

President: Whitney Musick

President Elect: Chelsea Williams

Past President: Sandee Pinkstaff

Secretary: Eric Yarberry

Treasurer: Stephanie Smith

Members-at-Large:

2019-2021:

Lori Cole

Alisha Kindrick

Latasha Mays

Tiffany Moore

Marieda Priest

2020-2022:

LaTasha Age
Pam Ashley-Williams
Calvin Churchwell
Christie Dixon
Darwin Moore

- Political Action Committee- Chair: Tiffany Moore, Members: Christie Dixon, Everett Elam
Throughout 2020, the Arkansas AER Political Action Committee (PAC) was involved as it relates to two areas in our state.

1) Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association (ASBOA) denied accommodations to students who were blind and/or braille users. The PAC composed a letter to ASBOA to relay the importance and legality of accommodations, as well as Arkansas AER's desire to work with them to ensure the competition is equitable for all competitors. All board members signed and the letter was mailed to ASBOA.

2) The shortage of qualified TSVIs at ASBVI, as well as the state of Arkansas was initially presented in a board meeting and then addressed by the PAC. The PAC drafted a letter to the director of Arkansas DESE-SPED Director regarding a potential strategy and resource (benefits mgmt system) to resolve the shortage.

- Professional Development Committee: Chair: Tamera McNabb, Members: Debbie Darrough and Calvin Churchwell

This year has been an eventful and challenging year. On June 17, 2020 we held two virtual trainings hosted by Nanopac, with Vince Cianfrone and Calvin Churchwell presenting. These trainings provided information and training for Blindness and Low Vision technology, and participants were able to receive ACVREP credit.

Throughout the year, we brainstormed and discussed ideas for professional development possibilities and how we could help with the Fundraising Social, but COVID put a damper on those activities. Debbie has been in contact with Michael Eiseman about scheduling another training on the math program he presented at last year's AR-AER Conference. Hopefully this can be scheduled next spring.

VII. Old Business: None

VIII. New Business: None

IX. Date of next AR-AER meeting:

- The next meeting of AR-AER as a whole will be at the 2021 AR AER conference.

X. Date of next AR-AER Board meeting:

- To be determined.

XI. Adjourned

Respectfully submitted by AR AER Secretary, Eric Yarberry