



**Digital Commonwealth Board Meeting
Minutes
July 21, 2020**

10:06 meeting called to order by new President Justin Snow.

Present (via Zoom): Danielle Sangalang, Hans Bergmann, Jodi Goodman, Tegan Kehoe, Anton Smith, Justin Snow, Eben English, Sonia Pacheco, Evan Knight
Absent: Tiffeni Fontno, Rachel Jirka, Kate Boylan.

June Minutes ([link](#)): The June minutes were **approved** as presented.

Membership Report: Tegan reported that June saw a slight dip in membership, but this is the time of year that many institutions are late in tending to their bills. There are 171 active members at this time, down 4 from last year at this time. Membership reports were sent to Board separately.

Financials Report: Tegan said that problems with the financial software meant that no report is yet ready. She will send the report to Board members as soon as it is available.

DPLA: Danielle reported that the Board of DPLA did meet in June and devoted the meeting to discussing the DPLA Values Statement (written in February; see June Board Minutes for link to Statement).

Boston Public Library Report ([link](#)) Eben reported that new applications have now begun to come in and that the digitizing has restarted. Still no site visits because of the pandemic. The Anti-Slavery manuscripts will be transcribed by the end of the month. The Library continues to work on a statement detailing the criteria for identifying problematic content in the archive. A draft will be presented to the Board.

Conference Committee Report: Justin has stepped down as chair of the committee. Sarah Moazeni and Sonia Pacheco are now the co-chairs. The videos of the 2019 conference are now up on YouTube. The committee hopes to find an alternate host for them, one over which it has more control. The Committee continued discussion of the 2021 conference and again came to the conclusion that a virtual conference makes the most sense. The theme agreed on is "The Politics of Collections." (The Committee reported last month that it has already invited a keynote speaker, Ginny Steele, university librarian at UCLA, and she has agreed). The Committee recommends that there be a nominal fee for the conference virtual attendees. The Committee asks that the Board recommends panels and speakers that would make the conference less Massachusetts-centric since it, through Zoom, will be widely available. The tentative date for the conference is April 13, 2021, a Tuesday.

Membership Committee Report: Danielle reported that the Committee continues planning for two events – a Photo Dating workshop in September and a Digital Genealogy workshop in October. The Board **approved** an outlay of \$100 to supplement the Committee’s budget for the September workshop. The Committee also needs another \$250 for the October workshop. The Board looks forward to discussions between the chairs of Membership and Outreach and Education and President Snow to better understand the charges of the two committees.

Outreach and Education [link](#) Jodi reported on new members and new ideas for social media posts. The Committee discussed the CARES grant that we did not get and reported that Leah Niederstadt remains interested in working on the project envisioned there. The Committee continues to work on the Primary Source project, readying it for k-12 teachers for this Fall. The Committee continues to ask the Board to clarify the charge of the Committee since it is apparent that the Membership committee is also doing “outreach.”

Repository Committee Report: Eben reported that the Committee had begun the discussion of how to present the problematic content that exists on the Digital Commonwealth site. We certainly need a statement of values as well as a warning or opt-in at the item level. This important issue will be discussed further.

Advertising on Digital Commonwealth mailing lists: The Board **approved** a modest use of our lists for advertising by partners to our goals.

Black Lives Matter Statement ([link](#)): The Board discussed implications of our Black Lives Matter statement approved by the Board in June. Considerable discussion ensued about how to enact our goals. There was consensus that Digital Commonwealth should work with organization already attempting to work with groups underrepresenting in digital archives. The New England Archivists association, for example, is already working with such groups. Roving Archivists was also suggested, as was the Massachusetts Historical Association. We should work with what exists – and not “reinvent the wheel.” Coordination with the Digital Public Library of America was also suggested. The Board **agreed** to start with a Survey that Tegan will draft for the next Board meeting.

Next Meeting: **August 18, 2020**. 10-12am. (Zoom)
Meeting was adjourned at 11:43.

Hans Bergmann
Secretary

Digital Commonwealth Board Meeting
Minutes
June 16, 2020
(original Minutes contain links to reports; this copy does not)
[return to top](#)

10:02 meeting called to order by Danielle Sangalang

Present (via Zoom): Danielle Sangalang, Hans Bergmann, Jodi Goodman, Tegan Kehoe, Anton Smith, Justin Snow, Eben English, Tiffeni Fontno, Sonia Pacheco, Kate Boylan, Rachel Jirka.

*Danielle asked for a moment of silence for George Floyd and all the victims of racial violence.

Introductions: The members of the Board introduced themselves and welcomed new members Sonia Pacheco and Rachel Jirka.

May Minutes The May minutes were **approved** after striking the mention of one organization's budget issues.

Financials Report: Tegan reports that the month of May was (obviously) not a good predictor. If need be, we can dip into our surpluses. Our financial situation is sound.

Membership Report: May saw a dip in membership, but, again, May was not a good predictor. We still have unpaid dues.

DPLA: Danielle reports that the Board of DPLA did not meet last month and the next meeting is June 26th. She calls the attention of the Board to the DPLA Values Statement (written in February).

Boston Public Library Report. No applications, no site visits (for obvious reasons). Hosted was Tichnor Brothers Postcard Collection (1,162 items)* and harvested was National Archives at Boston - Tallulah Morgan v. James W. Hennigan Case File (1,166 items)

Conference Committee Report: The Committee discussed the possible format for the 2021 conference and came to the conclusion that planning for a virtual conference made the most sense. The theme agreed on is "Politics of Collections." The Committee has already invited a keynote speaker, Ginny Steele, university librarian at UCLA, and she has agreed.

The Committee also points out to the Board that the videos of the presentations at the 2020 virtual Conference need to have a home on a site that Digital Commonwealth controls. This is important because our presentations and conferences will likely be virtual for the foreseeable future. The Committee will report again on this in July.

Outreach and Education: Jodi reported on new members and new ideas for social media posts.

Membership Committee Report: We were not awarded a CARES Act grant. We did achieve getting organized enough to make future grant applications somewhat easier to do.

Repository Committee Report: Eben reported that the Committee had begun the discussion of how to present the problematic content that exists on the Digital Commonwealth site. We certainly need a statement of values as well as a warning or opt-in at the item level. This important issue will be discussed further.

Black Lives Matter Statement: The Board discussed the Black Lives Matter statement drawn up by a subgroup of the Board. The Board **approved** the Statement unanimously discussed whether to sign the statement individually. The Board decided to e-mail the statement to all Digital Commonwealth members and to post it on all social media platform. Glynda will e-mail it, and Danielle, as President, will ask the Outreach and Education Committee to post it on our social media.

Glynda's Proposed Conference Contract: was **approved** by the Board and will be offered to Glynda.

2020-2021 Budget: Tegan said the proposed budget was based on cautious expectations. She noted that the year ahead will have variables that are hard to predict. Justin asked for explanation of the Professional Fees line item. The Board **approved** the Budget

Plan of Service: The Plan of Service for the next year needs to be approved by the membership, but the Board forwarded it with its **approval**.

DPLA Values Statement: Danielle noted that the DPLA asked for comments on its values statement. The Board has nothing to add.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:02.[return](#)

Hans Bergmann
Secretary

[return to top](#)

Boston Public Library Update June 17, 2020 - July 21, 2020

[return to top](#)

Applications received

1. Somerset PL
2. Springfield College
3. Cambridge PL
4. Holyoke PL

Site visits completed

1. None

Digital Services Report

Bound Material Collections added to Internet Archive

1. Millicent Library

Repository and Portal Report

Collections added to Portal

Hosted:

- Boston Public Library - Boston Pictorial Archive (Collection of Distinction) (310 items)*
- Boston Public Library – Norman B. Leventhal Map Center Collection (12 items)*

** items added to existing collection*

Harvested:

n/a

Repository and Portal Development

- Curator:
 - Update items via Curator API
 - Update underlying Rails dependency to Rails 6.* ● blacklight-gallery
 - Update for compatibility with Rails 6.* ● commonwealth-vlr-engine:
 - Ongoing work to update for compatibility with Rails 6.* and Blacklight 7.*

Other Mentions

Collaborative Services Report

Reopening of physical locations

- We had an initial launch for curbside holds-pick only at the Central Library and 4 branches beginning on June 22. We added an additional 5 branches on July 6, and 6 more branches on July 13, and 2 on July 20. Additional locations will be evaluated going forward.

Digital Collections (this was provided by Tom Blake)

- The initial batch of handwritten Anti-slavery Manuscripts that were uploaded to Zooniverse for crowdsourced transcription has been completed.
- The project launched on January 23rd, 2018 (National Handwriting Day). 11,742 handwritten letters were presented for volunteers to transcribe collaboratively. 881 days later, 22,447 different volunteers completed the project.
- It's worth noting that the project was completed the weekend of Juneteenth – thanks in part to a call for participation that went out from the Associates of the Boston Public Library and was subsequently amplified by Mentalfloss and Lifehacker.
- We had ~500 more waiting in the wings that we just uploaded but based on the recent pace of transcription, the expectation is that those will be done by the end of the month.
- Next steps are to review/approve transcription lines based on consensus score so we can upload into Digital Commonwealth. The goal is to enable full text searching and line-level highlighting of search terms of page images.

Lynda.com

- We have reupped our subscription to Lynda.com for the next year.

e-Collections

- Added over 2,000 new and additional copies of in demand titles related to Black Lives Matter and Antiracism, including titles for all ages (kids and adults). Many titles have been added using the cost per circ model so they are always available without a wait.
- We have seen over a 500% increase in checkouts and holds on the most popular titles appearing on multiple library and published lists.)[return to top](#)
- [return to top](#)

Outreach & Education - July 2020 committee report:

[return to top](#)

CARES Act grant:

- Grant application was unsuccessful.
- L. Niederstadt and Membership Committee remain interested in pursuing events outlined in the application; committee co-chairs and L. Niederstadt to meet this month to discuss.
- Committee members had questions about separation of duties between Membership and O&E, co-chairs can discuss as part of broader conversation around events.

BLM statement:

- O&E to consider how to pursue items with committee's remit:
 - Continue to highlight diverse collections through social media.
 - Direct outreach to organizations to digitize new collections?
 - Tie into Primary Source project.

Education Subcommittee:

- Seek to have primary source content live by start of 2020/2021 school year (Sep)?
- Request feedback on draft from K-12 educators?
- Subcommittee members to meet again this month to assess progress, work on standardizing pages.

Social Media and Blog posts:

- E. English created a Google Analytics report to track monthly top viewed items on DC; M. Amory to field recurring blog/social media post highlighting status.
- Blog post: Digitizing Morgan v. Hennigan.

[return to top](#)

STATEMENT FROM DIGITAL COMMONWEALTH BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON BLACK LIVES MATTER ([return](#))

June 16, 2020

The Digital Commonwealth Board of Directors condemns racial oppression and police violence. As a nonprofit membership-based organization of over 200 cultural institutions, our materials collectively witness documented histories of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The study of history can be an effective tool against racism and can support better understanding of the experience of Black people. However, archives are not neutral; they are created by people and reflect the power structures that those people are influenced by and participate in. We must choose what our non-neutrality means.

In this moment, we specifically affirm that Black lives matter and that we support efforts to dismantle oppression and injustice. In the coming year we will:

- Collaborate with our Council of Members to create actionable, measurable, and sustainable plans to make explicit and tangible our commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion of marginalized communities and identities.
- Expand our outreach to organizations and communities that document and collect materials about the experiences of people of color.
- Increase our efforts to highlight existing collections related to racial oppression and resistance.
- Provide updates on the progress of this work at least quarterly.

Digital Commonwealth's Board of Directors is aligned with recent statements from our partners, which include links to additional resources.

- Boston Public Library: [Reflections on this week.](#)
- Digital Public Library of America: [A Statement from the DPLA Board of Directors | DPLA.](#)

Digital Commonwealth Board of Directors:

Danielle Sangalang, President

Justin Snow, Vice President

Tegan Kehoe, Treasurer

Hans Bergmann

Kate Boylan

Eben English

Tiffeni Fontno

Jodi Goodman

Rachel Jirka

Evan Knight

Sonia Pacheco

Anton Smith

[\(return\)](#)