

LAA-APLAC Sub-Committee Report July 18, 2016 via Skype

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Peter Bailey provided the sub-committee with a copy of the Ontario Public Library Association's (OPLA) by-law that explains how OPLA is incorporated as division of the Ontario Library Association (OLA). As the OLA configuration is a long-standing model that mirrors the proposed changes to the Library Association of Alberta (LAA) and the various associations in Alberta, it provided a useful template from which the sub-committee addressed the idea of the Alberta Public Library Administrators Council (APLAC) becoming the Public Library division of LAA.

The following is a synopsis of the discussion that took place.

How does it work?

Individuals purchase a membership in the provincial association. Based on their work place, they automatically become a member of the appropriate division. So if someone works in a public library they would automatically become a member of the Public Library division of the provincial organization.

NOTE: This process negates the question of whether or not we would get buy-in from large libraries such as EPL or CPL since anyone working for them who purchases a membership will automatically become a member of the Public Library division. However, the question of whether or not we would continue to have institutional memberships still needs to be researched by the committee.

The Chair of the division would have seat with a voice and vote on the board of the provincial association.

Due to the population of the province, OPLA divides the province into geographically-based regional sections and has a representative from each region who sits on the OPLA council, an elected body. This elected body conducts the affairs of OPLA in the same way that OLA conducts theirs.

Given the informal nature of APLAC at this time, we would not necessarily adopt these types of governance processes in the event that our group decides to change our mandate/mission to be a representative body for Public Libraries in Alberta.

What about finances?

The sub-committee is unaware of how finances are managed in the OLA-OPLA relationship but a likely scenario for us would be LAA holding all the funds accrued from memberships and the various divisions would submit expense claims for ordinary expenses (meeting expenses, etc.) and submit project proposals for large scale expenses. This would mean that APLAC would no longer need to maintain a bank account of its own. With respect to the Pages conferences, since we simply hold the funds for the organization that puts on the conference a discussion as to how that would work would need to take place with that organization.

What would be different?

As Peter's original document to APLAC indicated, the group would no longer be limited to administrators only. The potential loss of the collegiality and accessing our peers as "brain-trust" for administration related issues could be off-set in various ways; mainly by maintaining the APLAC list-serv as being of use solely for administrators. The sub-committee members indicated that a great deal of the value in APLAC for them is the list-serv which enables us to discuss issues unique to our positions.

What would we do as the provincial representation for Public Libraries?

If APLAC decided to become the provincial public library division for LAA, the focus would shift from issues directly related to administration to broader issues related to public libraries, *of all sizes*, both provincially and federally. As an example the OPLA provides this statement in its by-law:

The object of the Division is to foster and encourage the expansion and improvement of public library service for all the people in the Province of Ontario through:

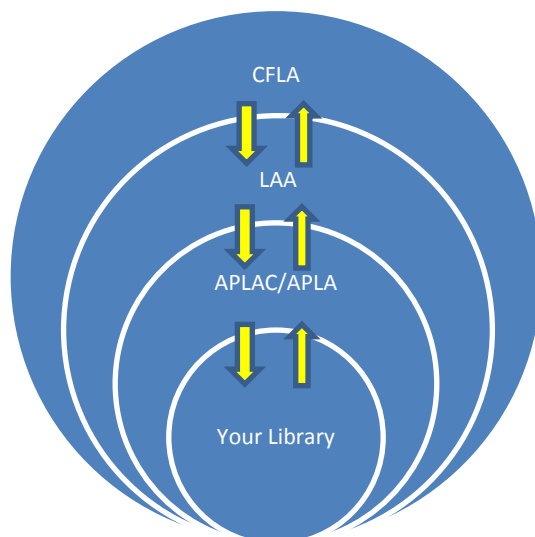
- *providing programs for the professional development of public library workers in Ontario,*
- *encouraging the establishment of training programs, standards and certification for public library workers,*
- *interpreting public library needs to all levels of government,*
- *developing regular channels of communication between the Division and other groups concerned with public library service in Ontario, and*
- *providing opportunities for public library workers to discuss problems and exchange ideas with other sectors.*

Why would we change our current format?

As the Public Library division, we would have the opportunity to have direct input into the workings of LAA and through LAA, input into issues concerning public libraries at the national level. This would also enable us to have access to the issues discussed at the national level through LAA's access to the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA).

CFLA currently does not provide memberships for individuals, only for organizations. As such, the only way to have access to the national conversation about issues relating to public libraries is through an organization. While LAA has always been an accessible organization, open to listening to all of its members, as the Public Libraries division of LAA, APLAC would have direct representation with voting rights on the LAA executive.

We would have voice at both the provincial and federal levels should we choose to evolve into a different type of organization.



What are some of the challenges?

After discussing several issues, the members of the sub-committee really only identified one challenge during our meeting, that of losing the opportunity to develop relationships with other administrators who understand

the roles we all play. As noted above, there would still be opportunities for administrators to connect with each other in regards to administrative issues. In fact, there wouldn't be anything to preclude administrators from still meeting separately as a sub-division.

Of course, the general membership of APLAC might have other concerns in regards to this proposal. As such, this sub-committee would undertake to research responses to those concerns.

The advantage of being able to consider this proposition at this time means that we can organize the association in any way we choose. In fact, given the large number of potential members, it's possible that there would only be one large open meeting/year with sub-divisions based on either geography or interest which would meet as those sub-divisions choose. Again, this is simply a suggestion as to how such an organization would be organized.

What would we call ourselves?

Anything we want. We only put this in to lighten things up. Alberta Public Libraries Association would make us APLA (which is already taken by the Atlantic Provinces Library Association) or Public Libraries Association of Alberta (PLAA) or Public Libraries Council of Alberta (PLCA)?

Next Step

The current members of APLAC can consider the information provided in this document and decide whether or not to make a decision at this time or request the sub-committee to gather more information as needed.

In the event that APLAC does choose to become the representative organization for public libraries in Alberta, the sub-or another sub-committee would then put together a sample structure for the members to discuss.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maureen Curry, Mary Zazelenchuk, and Allison Stewart