

Minutes of SOLE Executive Board meeting

June 15, 2020

The meeting, held via Zoom, was called to order by Katharine Abraham at 2:02 pm. Those in attendance were Board members Katharine Abraham (President), Martha Bailey (Board member), Dan Black (ex officio Board member representing NORC), Charlie Brown (Board member), Kevin Lang (Vice-President and JOLE Editor), Robert Moffitt (President-Elect), Uta Schoenberg (Board member), and Chris Taber (Board member); guests Lisa Kahn, Thomas Lemieux, and Claudia Olivetti; Maggie Newman; and Danielle Staudt.

Katharine Abraham gave an update on SOLE's financial status. As of the end of calendar year 2019, SOLE had reserves on hand of \$133,944. The University of Chicago Press reports that SOLE can expect payments for fiscal year 2020 totaling \$79,420. Katharine estimates that expenses during calendar year 2020 will total somewhat under \$70,000. This means that, barring unexpected developments, SOLE should end calendar year 2020 with close to \$145,000 in reserve.

Maggie Newman, SOLE's long time Executive Director, and Danielle Staudt, the Executive Director of the Population Association of America (PAA), have been meeting to prepare for the handoff of the management of SOLE's activities from Maggie to the PAA. Danielle will become the SOLE Executive Director effective July 1. All has been going smoothly. As part of the transition process, PAA staff have been working with the current SOLE President, President-Elect and Vice-President on the design of a new logo and website, choice of a submission system for the annual meetings and other projects. Meeting participants were invited to provide input regarding the beta version of the new website.

The Board previously had agreed that SOLE should incorporate as a 501(c)(3) organization in order to be able to accept tax deductible charitable contributions. Katharine reported that lawyers have been hired to help with this process. The Board reviewed draft articles of incorporation prepared by the lawyers and made several suggestions regarding modifications to the language. Katharine reported that a new set of Bylaws will need to be drafted and put before the membership for ratification. Katharine said that she hoped that these tasks can be completed by the end of 2020.

Robert Moffitt provided an update on plans for the 2020 joint meeting with the European Association of Labour Economists (EALE) and the Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) that had been scheduled for June 25-27 in Berlin. Because of the COVID-19 crisis, the meeting will be virtual rather than in-person. EALE had arranged the planned in-person meeting. This included signing a contract with the meeting hotel. After it became clear that it was not feasible to hold the meeting in person, the hotel nonetheless attempted to hold EALE to the contract and demanded a substantial payment. EALE was forced to hire a lawyer to negotiate with the hotel, but in the end was able to secure a release from the contract on the basis that the hotel could not provide facilities suitable for holding the meeting in the legally mandated socially distanced manner. About 500 of the roughly 700 people scheduled to present papers at the in-person meeting will present during the virtual meeting. EALE has hired an IT firm to manage the virtual meeting.

The final item on the agenda was a discussion of the plans for upcoming meetings. The 2021 meeting is scheduled to be held in Philadelphia on May 14-15, 2021. If the meeting is held virtually rather than in person, SOLE may owe cancellation penalties to the hotel. Danielle pointed out that these would be considerably smaller if the decision to cancel is made at least six months in advance of the planned meeting date. The Board agreed to reconvene in October to discuss the plans for the 2021 meeting.

The Board decided to take no action for now on the 2022 meeting.

Katharine noted that the Board ordinarily would be making a decision about the location for the 2023 meeting around this time. After some discussion, the Board agreed to go ahead with soliciting bids from hotels for the 2023 meeting. In addition to the normal considerations that always apply in evaluating hotel contracts, the Board agreed that it will want to pay particular attention to the cancellation penalties included in the contract.

Before adjourning, the meeting participants offered their thanks to outgoing Board members Charlie Brown and Martha Bailey, outgoing President Katharine Abraham, and most especially outgoing Executive Director Maggie Newman.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 pm.