

21 October 2023
Minutes of MSSA Officers

SSSR annual meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah

Officers Attending:

Ryan Cragun (Treasurer), Jana Riess (President), Rick Phillips (Board Member), Christine Cusack (communications chair) Johannah Palomo (Student Board Member), Spencer Greenhalgh (Secretary), Levi Sands (Student Board Member), Thomas Murphy (President-Elect), Scott Vance (Board Member), David Heap (Board Member-elect), Nancy Ross (future President)

Officers Absent: Cristina Rosetti (Board Member)

1. Welcome and introductions (Jana Riess, president)

12:37 meeting began, and Jana distributed an agenda (built into these minutes).

2. Treasurer report (Ryan Cragun, treasurer)

12:38: Ryan reported that we have “okay funds” right now

- We’re at about \$62,000 invested and \$2,000 in a checking account
- Because of the market being down, our funds are a bit down
- Most of our funds right now are going toward honoraria for JMSSA authors
 - o This makes sense given that the major donation that has made up our bank account is to start the JMSSA

12:39: Ryan took questions

- Gary Shepherd asked whether any of our funds are going toward graduate student papers
 - o Ryan noted that the graduate student paper fund award has been rolled in to the general MSSA funds
- Gordon Shepherd asked a clarifying question about grants and other money going to grad students
 - o William Campbell talked about some of his work that’s been supported through the Shepherds’ funds
- David Knowlton called attention to William’s work coming from anthropology

3. Membership and website report (Spencer Greenhalgh, secretary)

12:43: Spencer reported that membership is about 50 dues-paying members

- He has removed a number of people from the MSSA mailing list
- He also encouraged people to promote themselves through the MSSA newsletter

- Christine jumped in to also share that she'd be happy to share information through social media work

4. Report on one-day conference at UVU on April 14, 2023, and plans for April 2024 (Nancy Ross, incoming president-elect)

12:45: Nancy reported on the first Juanita Brooks conference and a one-day MSSA conference

- She also shared that the plan is to do the same next year
- Last year's conference had about 20 MSSA people and 6-7 people
- Save the date: April 18th, but looking to be confirmed
 - Expect a CFP in early 2024
 - Jana asked whether there would be a field trip like last year's trip to Mountain Meadows
 - Nancy suggests that there will likely be a visit to Short Creek organized by Cristina Rosetti and some Short Creek folks
 - John Hoffmann noted that the agenda lists UVU, but it will be held at UTU
- Jana asked where SSSR will go to next year: people determined it would be in Pittsburgh

5. Journal of the Mormon Social Science Association update on issue 2, website, etc. (Rick Phillips, journal editor and at-large board member)

12:48: Rick introduced the journal and emphasized the importance of keeping our own control over the journal

- He noted that we're going to put out a call for the second volume of the journal
- Rick and Spencer talked about some of the design changes that will be taking place because of some back-end changes
- Gary asked whether the website changes are going to change the timeframe for the journal
 - Rick noted that the website isn't getting in the way; we're publishing articles as they come in, we just need more people to publish
 - We're working on volunteer level.
- Rick mentioned the advantage of having Jana as a subject matter expert and copy editor—and that Jana works at a discount
- Spencer noted that the Salt Lake Tribune has covered at least two publications
- Ryan Cragun shared some website analytics from the past 90 days;
 - David Stewart's article: 544 hits
 - Spencer Greenhalgh's article: 164 hits

6. Discussion on obtaining liability insurance for MSSA officers and board members (David Heap, at-large board member)

12:57: David Heap mentioned that on other boards he's on, he has D&O insurance and that he's generally not comfortable serving on boards where this isn't the case

He did some initial research and found that a premium would likely be between \$500 and \$1,000 annually for \$1,000,000 coverage for the MSSA Board.

David Knowlton noted that because MSSA has a fund and is soliciting donations, that makes us a target.

Carrie questioned whether the money was necessary given that MSSA doesn't keep physical offices. Christine asked what kind of liability might be in place; Ryan shared his perspective as former SSSR secretary that an organization with an endowment could conceivably be sued for things that happened at our conferences or if an officer did something untoward. Ryan noted that when we were a smaller organization, this wasn't as much of a concern, but this has become more of an issue after the larger donations that we've received.

Scott asked whether we need a full \$1,000,000 of coverage given our relatively small footprint. David said that he wasn't an expert but that based on conversations he's had, \$1,000,000 is recommended by some as the minimum amount.

7. Passing the torch to new MSSA officers

- Outgoing MSSA Officers:

- o Jana Riess, President (10/21–10/23)
- o Thomas Murphy, President-Elect (10/21–10/23)
- o Rick Phillips, Past President (10/21–10/23)
- o Ryan Cragun, Treasurer (10/21–10/23)
- o Christine Cusack, Communications (10/21–10/23)
- o At-large board members: Amy Hoyt, Nancy Ross (10/21–10/23)

- Officers after this meeting, October 2023:

13:03—incoming officers for the organization introduced themselves

13:05—David Heap requested deferral of his becoming an official member until the insurance question is taken care of; this was accepted by the body

13:07—Jana officially passed the presidency on to Tom. She bequeathed an “angel and a beehive” keychain to Tom in reference to Armand Mauss, and in reference to the MHA’s passing along of a seer stone when they pass the presidency along.

- Thomas Murphy, President (through 10/25)
- o Nancy Ross, President-Elect (through 10/25)
- o Jana Riess, Past President (through 10/25)
- o Ryan Cragun, Treasurer (through 10/25)
- o Spencer Greenhalgh, Secretary (through 10/25)
- o Christine Cusack, Communications (through 10/25)
- o Rick Phillips, At-large board member (through 10/25)
- o Cristina Rosetti, At-large board member (through 10/25)
- o David Heap, At-large board member (through 10/25)
- o Scott Vance, At-large board member (through 10/25)
- o Johannah Palomo, At-large student board member (through 10/25)
- o Levi Sands, At-large student board member (through 10/25)

8. Adjournment

13:09 Barbara Jones Brown at Signature Books invited us to visit their booth and to talk to them about publishing with them

13:09 Jana adjourned the meeting

13:10 Tom applauded Jana’s service as president