



AAMC Executive Board

Jamie Heinz, President
Brenda Ballou, 1st Vice President
Vacant, 2nd Vice President
Melissa Jacobsen, Immediate Past President
Dani Snider, Secretary
April Trickey, Treasurer
Jamie Newman, Communications Director
Beth McEwen, Education Director
Portland Highbaugh, Alaska Municipal League

**AAMC Executive Board Special Meeting
October 13, 2021, 3:00 p.m. – Held via Zoom**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

President Heinz called the meeting of the Executive Board of the Alaska Association of Municipal Clerks (AAMC) to order at 3:00 p.m.

Members Present			Members Absent
Jaime Heinz	Dani Snider	Melissa Jacobsen	Vacant Seat
Brenda Ballou	Portland Highbaugh*	Beth McEwen	
Jamie Newman	April Trickey		

**P. Highbaugh attended in listening-only mode. She offered her comments via chat.*

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M. Jacobsen, seconded by **B. Ballou**, moved to approve the agenda.

President Heinz called for objection to the motion to approve the agenda; no members objected.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2021 Annual Conference and COVID Mitigation Measures

President Heinz reported that the Alaska Municipal League (AML) produced its mitigation protocols for the conference, but she became nervous when COVID numbers across the state kept climbing. She stressed the importance of getting mitigation measures out to members in plenty of time before the conference. **J. Newman** spoke to her concerns about holding the conference while the medical community continues to cry for help. She expressed that she is struggling with the decision. **President Heinz** commented that numbers may rise following local elections.

B. McEwen joined at the meeting 3:05 p.m.

J. Newman stated there is probably no chance of cancelling the AAMC conference at this point and that everyone will have to make a personal decision regarding attendance. She asked whether AML's mitigation plan would automatically extend to the AAMC. **President Heinz** stated that

her understanding is that the AAMC may pick and choose its protocols, and AML will offer support. She reported that AML will be offering some sessions virtually, but she is afraid that will not be an option for AAMC; she alluded to the added cost for providing a virtual option.

J. Newman stated she is trying to envision vendor speed dating with social distancing and other protocols in place. She asked President Heinz whether she is still planning to hold the VIP dinner. She mentioned that the Alaska Municipal Attorneys Association (AMAA) cancelled its VIP dinner. **President Heinz** stated that she is concerned about cancelling the speed dating event because of how the cancellation may affect vendors. She questioned whether refunds will have to be issued or whether vendors would still want to participate in the conference if that event was canceled. **P. Highbaugh** stated that October 15 is the hotel's deadline for AAMC to withdraw or significantly reduce its conference.

A. Trickey questioned whether social distancing would be possible during the conference. She indicated that people will have to accept the risks should they decide to attend. She stated that everyone will have to eat, so people will still be patronizing restaurants and such. **M. Jacobsen** acknowledged and agreed with Trickey's comments. **A. Trickey** asked President Heinz whether she was planning to provide any meals to attendees. **President Heinz** stated that she recommends following AML's protocols regarding food. **M. Jacobsen** asked how many people have registered so far; **President Heinz** replied that she did not have that number yet.

B. Ballou asked whether it would be prudent and possible for the Board to consider not holding an in-person conference and instead arrange for a virtual conference at a later date. She stated that she is getting the sense that it is not smart to move forward with an in-person conference. **J. Newman** asked about the vibes in other municipalities concerning COVID. She stated that she keeps thinking about the cries from healthcare workers. **B. Ballou** stated that the IIMC delivered PD courses virtually, so she wondered whether that would be a possibility for the AAMC. **B. McEwen** stated that she is currently in Anchorage. She stated that those who travel to Anchorage should be aware that they will have to stay longer if they are exposed to COVID during their stay. She stated that there is not much time to make a decision, and she could go either way. She stated that she would not want to cause more burden on the medical systems. **M. Jacobsen** commented that City Managers just held a successful conference in Portland using similar protocols.

P. Highbaugh stated that there are currently 56 people registered for the AAMC conference.

A. Trickey stated that in Fairbanks no one is shutting down, and everyone is out doing things. She stated that she plans to be in Anchorage the week of the conference whether the conference happens or not. She stated that attendance will depend on personal comfort levels, and she acknowledged the seriousness of COVID. She stated that she does not believe the AAMC is asking people to take risks of which they are not already aware. She stated she believes more people are being cautious and are wearing masks. She stated that she has no problem with holding an in-person conference. **J. Newman** stated that she has never been so torn, and she expressed some agreement with A. Trickey's comments. She questioned whether it was normal to have only about 56 people registered at this stage. She asked what number of attendees would allow AAMC to break even for the conference. **A. Trickey** replied that 80 is the projected number.

J. Newman questioned whether AAMC would be responsible for compliance with mask-wearing

at the conference. **D. Snider** spoke about the passage of the mask mandate ordinance in Anchorage and stated that although Mayor Bronson will veto the ordinance, there appears to be enough votes on the Anchorage Assembly to override the veto, thus causing the mask mandate to (most likely) be in place during the conference. **A. Trickey** read from the Conference Acknowledgement of Risks and Release of Liability produced by the AML. She stated that if people sign it, they will be held to it. **D. Snider** stated that if a mask mandate is in place city-wide, she believes it would be up to the hotel to enforce. **J. Newman** expressed concern with being in crowded areas at the conference. **A. Trickey** and **President Heinz** shared their personal experiences with travel during the pandemic.

B. McEwen suggested that the Board consider modifying the schedule by 10 minutes for every break so that everyone is not in the corridors at the same time as other affiliate groups. **President Heinz** stated that she continues to come back to the AAMC's mission; she spoke to balancing what is owed to AAMC members and the responsibility to the medical community. **J. Newman** stated that she keeps coming back to, "What would Dr. Zink say?"

D. Snider asked President Heinz what she needs the Board to decide immediately. **President Heinz** stated that she needs a decision on 1) whether to hold conference either virtually, in-person, or both; and 2) what protocols will be in place if the conference is held in person. She stated that she understands that providing proof of vaccination or negative test will be done through an app, and she reviewed the AML's conference protocols. She spoke about the setup at the IIMC conference that she and B. Ballou attended earlier in the year.

A. Trickey suggested that AAMC attendees be divided into small groups and be asked to sit with the same group throughout the entire conference, similarly to how things are done on cruise ships. She stated that would help limit exposure, and although it sounds cliquish, it may be appropriate for this conference. **President Heinz** offered support for the idea. **B. McEwen** stated that the grouping of attendees could be done purposefully in that a good cross-section of clerks with varying experience and regions throughout Alaska could be grouped together. **J. Newman** was supportive of the idea. She stated that she prefers to network with clerks whose municipalities are similar to hers because they have the most in common. **B. McEwen** agreed.

B. Ballou stated that it sounds like everyone is trying to find creative ways to make an in-person conference happen. She reminded the group that that is the first thing that should be decided.

M. Jacobsen, seconded by **B. Ballou**, moved that the AAMC hold an in-person conference and implement AML's Acknowledgement of Risks and Release of Liability.

M. Jacobsen empathized with the conflict some board members are feeling but stated that ultimately the choice to attend is upon each person. **B. Ballou** spoke about being thoughtful with the decision as Alaska has the worst COVID numbers in the country. She stated that all aspects should be considered when making the decision.

M. Jacobsen, seconded by **D. Snider**, moved to amend the main motion by adding that AAMC would cap attendance at a maximum of 80 participants at the conference and academy.

A. Trickey provided a summary of all the funds AAMC has received so far from registrations and vendors. **President Heinz** stated that she is leaning towards not having a President's reception. **B. Ballou**, in regard to the numbers provided by A. Trickey, asked how the numbers compare with breaking even for the conference. **A. Trickey** replied that was not part of what she had reported; she stated she just wanted the Board to know the amounts while it considered its decision.

B. McEwen asked whether there is a cancellation option for vendors since protocols will apply not only to attendees but vendors as well. She spoke in favor of allowing for vendor refunds if they decided to pull out. **President Heinz** stated that there is a cancellation deadline for members, and she could review the policies to see if there is anything similar for vendors. **J. Newman** stated that everyone knows there is a pandemic, and things change rapidly. She stated that she is not too concerned about refunds.

President Heinz asked whether there was any objection to issuing refunds to vendors. She indicated that cases may have to be brought before the Board on an individual basis. **B. McEwen** pointed out that during conference planning, mitigation policies were not in place. She indicated that there should be a grace period for cancellations due to the late-breaking requirements. She stated that she will soon have to leave the meeting because of another obligation. **A. Trickey** cautioned members about believing that 80 attendees would cause AAMC to break even. She explained that the number was based on pricing from previous years, so there is no guarantee that the AAMC will break even with 80 attendees.

President Heinz called for objection to the motion to amend the main motion by adding that AAMC would cap attendance at a maximum of 80 participants at the conference and academy; no members objected.

B. McEwen left the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

J. Newman suggested sending the information out to attendees with a grace period specified. She stated she believes the current cancellation policy only allows for certain reasons. **B. Ballou** read the AAMC cancellation policy; she stated that the deadline is November 2, and there are no reasons for cancellation outlined. **M. Jacobsen** stated that the AAMC should get the measures sent out to the entire membership soon, not to only those who have registered. **President Heinz** stated that she will probably copy the one produced by the AML. **B. Ballou** commented that some members may be waiting to see mitigation measures before registering.

Members briefly discussed the current environment in Anchorage, and some members spoke to how things are within their respective areas. **J. Newman** read portions of an article that spoke about the COVID situation statewide.

President Heinz called for objection to the motion that the AAMC hold an in-person conference and implement AML's Acknowledgement of Risks and Release of Liability and cap attendance at a maximum of 80 participants at the conference and academy; no members objected.

President Heinz asked whether the group should take action on creating groups or cohorts for the conference. **M. Jacobsen** stated that she likes the idea, but it could be discussed later. She stated that she will have to leave the meeting early. **D. Snider** stated that she also likes the idea and would prefer that the AAMC select the groups. No members objected to discussing the issue later.

P. Highbaugh asked about the President's reception. **President Heinz** replied that she would have to consult with the committee before she could provide an answer.

M. Jacobsen left the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

President Heinz asked whether any member objected to moving forward with the banquet. No members objected. **B. Ballou** stated she supports President Heinz's request to speak with the committee before deciding on the President's reception.

4. COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

J. Newman thanked everyone for their input and considerations concerning the decisions made.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, **President Heinz** declared the meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

Transcribed by: D. Snider