



Audit and Finance Committee

Minutes of June 27, 2025, Committee Meeting

The Audit and Finance Committee met via zoom on June 27, 2025. The meeting was convened by Carlton Wilson, committee chair. Members present were John Adams, Tina McIntyre, Walter Lanier, President Whitehead, and Executive Director Sylvia Cyrus. Pamela Gray and Kenzie Cisse of SB & Company were also in attendance.

The committee reviewed December 2024 audit results and May 2025 financial statements, with auditors presenting findings and confirming an unmodified opinion on the organization's financial health despite some concerns about financial viability. The organization reported positive financial performance with a significant profit increase, through discussions centered around budget challenges and the need to identify new revenue streams while maintaining proper financial controls. The conversation ended with plans to review budgets and explore alternative approaches to achieve financial stability, with emphasis placed on board engagement and strategic planning for future events.

Tina McIntyre reported that the Association is performing well financially, with a \$174,000 profit compared to a \$80,000 loss in the same period last year. She noted that membership and contributions are trending higher than the previous year, and revenue has significantly increased. Tina explained that the cash balance has increased due to pulling down funds from grants, but this was recorded as a liability rather than revenue. She advised monitoring cash carefully to ensure it can cover upcoming expenses. Tina suggested that the board consider identifying new revenue streams and reviewing whether current programs still make sense in 2025. She also mentioned that the conference registration has opened and is expected to increase revenue.

Pamela Gray, the auditor, presented the findings of the audit of December 31, 2024, financial statements and the uniform guidance audit required due to the level of Federal grants received. She noted that the organization is planning to issue an unmodified or clean opinion on the financial statements and identified areas of focus, including bank reconciliations, receivables, revenue recognition, and financial viability. Tina and Sylvia Cyrus discussed the organization's efforts to address the two-year decrease in net assets and the profitability of conferences, while Tina reported a year-to-date profit of \$174,000 driven by a grant from the Mellon Foundation. All present expressed awareness of the financial situation and emphasized the importance of increasing membership and registration for the Atlanta Conference to improve financial stability.

The conversation also focused on the organization's overall financial position and financial controls, with John Adams highlighting the Association's substantial net assets of over half a million dollars and emphasizing the need for governance to address financial viability. Regarding the auditor's questions about financial controls, Sylvia confirmed that the Constitution and Bylaws were updated last year, and the organizational chart was also updated. Pamela maintained that there are no concerns about the organization's status but stressed the importance of ongoing financial monitoring. Sylvia discussed the organization's efforts to adapt to the current political climate, noting increased collaboration among like-minded nonprofits and opportunities for funding, while also mentioning the success of their upcoming conference. The presentation concluded with Pamela

explaining the organization's control environment assessment, which was deemed effective, and mentioned that a governance letter would be included in the presentation.

Sylvia discussed challenges with funding major events, particularly the luncheon and conference, noting difficulties in securing sponsorships and meeting budget targets. She emphasized the need for a comprehensive review of event planning processes and suggested involving the board more in shaping major fundraisers. Tina was tasked with providing a report on event planning, and Sylvia highlighted the importance of video and marketing in promoting the conference. The group also discussed the need to reshape the focus of the board on fundraising activities and improve collaboration between committees.

Sylvia and Tina discussed the financial performance of various publications, including books and journals, noting discrepancies in revenue and expenses that require further investigation. They also reviewed the upcoming conference, with Tina suggesting a need to restructure it to attract a broader audience beyond academia and reduce its length. It was noted that the conference's balance between academic and general appeal is an ongoing challenge, but ASALH has a unique position as a more accessible academic conference.

The Committee discussed the Association's budget challenges, with President Whitehead expressing concerns about setting unrealistic revenue projections that consistently fall short. Tina explained that while the Association traditionally aims for a zero-balance budget, we could consider a non-zero balance approach and noted that conference revenue has varied significantly over the years. Sylvia emphasized the need to understand and manage their tight expenses, suggesting that examining their spending priorities could help improve revenue generation. The discussion concluded with an agreement to review the draft budget and consider alternative approaches to achieve financial stability.

The Committee agreed to prioritize budget planning in August, with Carlton Wilson committing to organizing a smaller committee to focus on budget issues before the September conference. They also discussed the importance of securing local support for the conference in 2027 and the need for more effective board engagement and commitment.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlton Wilson

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