

NJLA Personnel Administration Subcommittee (PAC) Minutes - April 15, 2024, at 2 p.m. via Zoom

Zoom meeting information:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84057318683?pwd=dk9ldTlqTUQ4ZTc4UUtjcjNHeUh0UT09>

Meeting ID: 840 5731 8683 / Passcode: 281067

+1 646 931 3860 OR +16469313860,,84057318683#,,,,*281067# (one-tap mobile)

+1 646 558 8656 OR +16465588656,,84057318683#,,,,*281067# (one-tap mobile)

Attendance: Yolanda Keahey, Heather Kristian, Nicole Poyer, Alfreda Richardson, Eric Schwarz, Jeff Trout. Guest: Angela Jones.

Planned absences: Katy White.

Start: 2:02 p.m.

1. Introductions.
2. Approval of minutes from March 18.
3. NJLA 2024 Conference: [Labor Unions in NJ Libraries program](#) will be held Friday, May 31 from 9 to 9:50 a.m.
 - a. Speakers -- each to get about 5-7 minutes to speak:
 - i. Allison Ryan, Adult Services Supervisor at the Montgomery Branch at Somerset County Library System of New Jersey, represented by OPEIU (Office and Professional Employees International Union) Local 32.
 - ii. Beth Zak-Cohen, Librarian, Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center at the Newark Public Library. President of AFSCME, Local 2298, Council 63.
 - iii. Amy Joyner, Treasurer Secretary of AFSCME COLT Local 1761, Council 63, representing library workers at Rutgers University.
 - iv. Moderator: Eric.
 - b. Schedule at <https://njlaconference.info/>
 - c. Possible items for the speakers to cover:
 - i. Name of union
 - ii. Dues amounts/percentages.
 - iii. How long have you represented the library workers?
 - iv. Whom you represent in the library and, if applicable, other areas of the organization?
 - v. Which library workers are not represented by the union?
 - vi. Benefits of the union. What would be different if there were no union?
 - vii. Challenges the union faces
 - viii. Can you explain the contract ratification process?
 - ix. Is your library civil service? How does this mesh with the union status?
4. Union membership survey being conducted by NJLA of library directors and academic library administrators only (part of a [larger survey](#) running from March 27-May 3). This

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replaces the survey that we had planned to send to all members. Two questions on the survey relate to unions:

- a. Is your library represented by one or more labor unions? (yes or no)
 - b. How is your union aligned? Four choices
 - i. We have a separate union (local) for our library, OR a contract that is not related to the pay or contract of employees outside the library.
 - ii. We have the same union (local) with our municipality/county/agency/organization, and our terms largely mirror those of employees outside the library.
 - iii. We have the same union (local) with our college/university/school, and our terms largely mirror those of employees outside the library.
 - iv. N/A
5. Civil Service membership.
- a. The NJ Civil Service Commission maintains a list of [Civil Service agencies by municipality](#).
 - b. Nicole has updated [the list on our website](#). She is working with a contact at the Civil Service Commission (CSC), who said that 21 libraries were missing from the CSC agencies by municipality list. The CSC contact, in turn, is working with the Secretary of State office. Nicole is also checking on academic agencies (colleges and universities) and whether they should be listed.
6. General discussion of library unions with a guest speaker from ALA-APA: Angela Jones, Chair of the ALA-APA SSLW Committee (ALA Allied Professional Association Standing Committee on the Salaries and Status of Library Workers). Angela is a senior program coordinator at [Northwestern University's Center for Civil Engagement](#).
- a. [ALA-APA Salaries and Status of Library Workers Committee to Host Two Webinars](#) - May 1 and May 8:
 - i. Empowering Library Workers: Navigating Unionization in Challenging Environments. May 1st, 2:30 – 4:00pm. Comments from the audience will not be recorded so that they can speak freely. Angela noted that comments from the audience will not be recorded so that people may speak freely.
 - ii. What Comes after Unionization: Effective Engagement with Library Workers will be held May 8th, 1:00pm-2:00pm. Angela said that this is an event for administrators/library leaders “focused on how they have approached working with a unionized workforce. There is a whole slew of rights that come with unionization. You are no longer an at-will employee no matter what state you are in.” She said that some library directors are happy about unionization because it streamlines communication.
 - b. ALA-APA: List/map of unions - to be released publicly in the next few months. Angela may be able to send a screenshot. The list has information on each union, including which workers are represented in each location and in some cases links to their contracts. She mentioned that some unions are “bifurcated,” often differentiating professional/degreed vs. non-professional/non-degreed staff.

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She said that her committee knows about five unionized libraries in New Jersey, among 193 nationwide: Rutgers University Library system, Paterson, Newark, Camden, Princeton. There are many more in New Jersey. These include but are not limited to Somerset County, Cherry Hill, Rowan University, Jersey City Public Library, Cape May County Library, Englewood Public Library.

- c. When Angela worked at the Skokie Public Library in Illinois, she helped to organize a successful union campaign, which resulted in a “phenomenal contract” with raises of 9 percent to 20 percent and internal hiring preferences. Some of her experiences in organizing at Skokie:
 - i. When I was at SEIU 73 at my last library we did want 100% participation. We were at a high of 80%.
 - ii. Union organizing is a lot of work. As examples, she gave up every Sunday for a year and a half to work with the organizing committee and her son thought that the “SEIU” she was talking about on the phone was a friend.
 - iii. A small number of employees did not contribute dues, including someone who received a \$5 per hour raise. Angela pointed out that that person had not received a raise for 15 years and was finally getting it only because of the union contract.
 - iv. Some people who immigrated from the former USSR were scared and thought of the union as Communist.
 - v. Some administrators will do everything they can, legally, to make workers uncomfortable about being in a union.
- d. The ALA-APA is the only branch of ALA that solely advocates for library workers. It is pro-union, pro-worker rights, and pro-living wage.
- e. The ALA Conference this year in San Diego will have a panel on unions. Here are the details from the [conference website](#):
 - i. Solidarity Forever: Stories of Success from Unions Across the Nation
 - ii. Sunday, June 30, 2024 2:30pm – 3:30pm Pacific Location: Marriott Marquis, Grand Ballroom Section 02
 - iii. Popular narratives about library unions often focus on the difficulties and struggle that can come along with organizing and transitioning libraries into unionized workplaces. This, however, is only half the story. In recent years, library workers across the country have experienced dramatic success through collective action. In this festive session, be inspired by stories of triumph from librarians and library workers across the nation.
- f. Jeff, who is a principal library assistant at Cape May County Library, is running for president of the AFSCME local this year because he and others are dissatisfied with the union leadership, which as an example lost a battle to keep nursing home workers in the union. The union represents about 50 percent of people who work for the county.
- g. Heather noted that Pennsauken Public Library is the first of several that she has worked at that is not unionized. At Cherry Hill Public Library, there were two

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separate unions at the library, and her union also represented supermarket workers. She also had to wait two years before joining the union because she worked too few hours to qualify. At Rowan University, there are five or six unions. The paraprofessional staff is part of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), and professional and administrative staff are members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

- h. Yolanda noted that there are two unions at Jersey City Public Library, split along the professional/paraprofessional lines, and that a restructuring doubled the number of non-union administrators, which resulted in a smaller number of unionized employees. Angela noted that the Skokie Public Library union organizing made a point to include all library workers in one union for all 120 union-eligible workers.
 - i. Jeff discussed the U.S. Supreme Court's [2018 Janus v. AFSCME decision](#). The court ruled that [non-union government workers cannot be required to pay union fees as a condition of working in public service](#). Five years earlier, Slate published an article focusing on New Jersey: [Chris Christie on How He Broke the Unions](#). Angela noted that the Janus decision came out of an Illinois challenge.
 - j. The ALA-APA SSLW Committee is working with an organization that supports elections to library boards of people who will support library workers.
7. PAC name and mission (functions). DISCUSSION POSTPONED. (See current mission [here](#).)
- a. New name to better reflect mission: "Subcommittee on Library Work and Workers"
 - b. New proposed functions:
 - i. To educate members of the association on employment and libraries in New Jersey, in general and specific to types of libraries (such as academic/special/public/school, small vs. large libraries).
 - ii. To educate members on labor unions in libraries and civil service status in libraries.
 - iii. To educate workers and libraries on common benefits and rights in New Jersey and in library environments. These include but are not limited to pensions and retirement benefits, sick leave, salaries, asking about citizenship and/or salary history on job applications, and overtime pay.
 - iv. To gather, publish, and distribute data relating to the improvement of salary and working conditions of library personnel in New Jersey.
 - v. To recommend to the Executive Board programs relating to the improvement of salary and working conditions.
 - vi. To provide assistance to members seeking information relating to working practices.
8. Annual salary guide
- a. [2024 Salary Guide](#).

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- b. The salary guide has existed since at least 1989. The [March 1989 issue of New Jersey Libraries](#) includes “minimum starting public library salary recommendations” for “certified staff” and “staff” for both 1989 and 1990. There is no explanation about how the figures were derived. However, we can compare “(Junior) Librarian” to “Librarian” in the current guide.
 - i. (Junior) Librarian, 1989, \$22,000 (This amount in March 1989 has the same [buying power](#) as \$55,480 in January 2024.)
 - ii. (Junior) Librarian, 1990, \$24,200 (This amount in March 1990 has the same [buying power](#) as \$57,993 in January 2024). Also, the amount is a 10% unadjusted increase from the previous year.
 - iii. Librarian, 2024, \$62,395.
 - c. Future guides, including meeting goals of collecting salary data from libraries; and having more granularity in terms of regions and funding mechanisms within NJ, beginning vs. experienced personnel, and job titles. Can we use databases and/or other previously untapped statistics?
 - d. We may want to conduct a survey at some point in the future about salaries. One question to ask is whether a library meets or uses the NJLA salary recommendations.
9. News from NJLA Executive Board/Executive Director/Assistant Director
10. Informational items:
- a. The [PAC](#) is a subcommittee of NJLA’s [Member Services Committee](#). Background from [NJLA Code for Committees](#):
 - b. Collaboration tools: [shared folder in Google Drive](#) (under Shared Drives). If you are on this subcommittee, you should see it under your Shared Drives in the Google Drive associated with your email address (if any). Alicia Gough at NJLA (agough@njla.org) can help any individual member with this.
11. Future meetings - Meetings are set for Mondays, each at one hour by Zoom (same Zoom information as for this meeting) – [iCalendar \(.ics\) file](#):
- i. May 20, 2024 02:00 PM (third Monday)
 - ii. Jun 17, 2024 02:00 PM (third Monday)

End: 3:08 p.m.

Committee members:

- Eric Schwarz, Chair, Clarence Dillon Public Library, eschwarz@dillonlibrary.org
- Alfreda Richardson, Vice Chair, Rutgers University, alfredar@libraries.rutgers.edu
- Melissa Brisbin, Livingston Public Library, melissa.brisbin@livingston.bccls.org
- Ellen Callanan, Sussex County Library, callanan@sussexcountylibrary.org

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- Tony Joachim (Chair, Member Services Committee), William Paterson University, joachima1@wpunj.edu
- Yolanda Keahey, Jersey City Public Library, ykeahey@yahoo.com
- Heather Kristian (Co-Chair, Member Services Committee), Pennsauken Free Public Library, heather.kristian@gmail.com
- Nicole Poyer (subcommittee intern), Somerset County Library System of New Jersey, npoyer@sclibnj.org.
- Lorraine Ruiz, Kenilworth Public Library, lruiz@lmxac.org
- Jeff Trout, Cape May County Library, jefft@cmclibrary.org
- Katy White, NJLA liaison, kwhite@njla.org.