

Unirondack Board Meeting, November 25 2024

Present: David Pynchon, Kelly Jennings, Katie Myers, Douglas Taylor, Sujata Rege Konowitz, Emily Patka, Eliz Bashur, Lauren Hunt, Arson Allen, Mares, Lynne Theophanis, Cass, Kathleen Sheehy

This is a virtual meeting held on Zoom

Brief Check in

Approve of this agenda

Approve of past minutes

Vote in officers from October

1.) David P: Suggested adding new Board Member Onboarding process

2.) Current plan - Motion to nominate following members to following positions:

President, Douglas Taylor;

Vice-president, Kelly Jennings;

Treasurer, Emily Pakta;

Secretary, Kathleen Sheehy

Sujata motions, David P seconds

All in Favor?: Majority, **Motion Carries**

3.) Review and debrief from October Annual Members meeting

From Douglas: "From my email right after the Annual meeting, I shared: News from that meeting - the members elected the slate as proposed. (Welcome aboard!) and there was much discussion and angst about the deficit budget. A few of you were not present, Sujata and I have agreed to bring a sense of the meeting to you at our next meeting."

General tone from meeting: Anxiety around deficit in annual budget

Emily Patka: Understand that negative numbers make people nervous, but the numbers reflect intentional choices, and we are not worried because we understand that a deficit isn't sustainable and we have plans to remedy this deficit.

Douglas Taylor: Noticing an angst around, "Who are we as Unirondack?" Listening to this anxiety so that we can respond to it appropriately

Sujata K: Met with finance committee and was reassured

Kristen F: Latest members' meeting was intense but not the most contentious ever. Sometimes people judge the board's decisions without a firm grasp of the details. Members expressed

wanting more of a heads up if the Board is going to propose the largest deficit ever for the budget.

David P: Want to acknowledge as a group that Lauren took a lot of heat for the board's decision, which is not fair to Lauren. Eliz has also dealt with community members who are making their opinions known by raising their voices and getting angry. Board needs to take active roll.

Eliz: We still have a responsibility to hear this feedback and be as clear as we can to show people that we have camp's interest in mind.

Sujata K and Eliz and Katie: We could all benefit from making the budget more structured so that people can understand it better and board members can have a basis to understand the structure well enough to communicate it to community members.

Emily P: It's also ok for non board members and non-Treasurer board members to say, "I actually don't know about that. You can talk with Emily or Lauren though."

Cassandra B: Agreed with Emily P to reduce confusion and muddling of information

Douglas T: Suggestion from Andrew to pitch 3-year and 5-year budget forecast. Staffing component of budget is already 3-year and 5-year forecast, for example.

Ultimately the budget is not the problem, the communication about the budget is the problem

4.) Reports from staff

Executive Director (Lauren)

Accountant is set to start in May. Her estimate is right on what Lauren had budgeted.

Lauren will be doing W-2s at the end of this year and thank you letters to donors who made >\$200 donations.

Starting to prepare mid-year report for Spring instead of Winter because we don't have as much data in the Winter to work with

Camp Director (Kristen)

Updating our mailing list with everyone who has registered online

Organizing our photos

Doing these annual tasks for the last time and trying to see if this is the best way they can be done, and if not, creating a new process in the new Process Document

Needs a copyeditor for this 100-page document

Have a 5-person off-season team that uses Slack and it is working very well

Working on the website

Registration opened 9 days ago

Tier 4 registration (the most expensive tier) has the greatest number of registrants!

Camp Manager (Eliz)

Finalized the schedule for Spring

Lots of advertising this time of year

Putting together a tri-fold brochure

Want to put out more information this year compared to past years

Community members are asking more specifically for us to identify “what camp is and what camp isn’t”

Virtual campfire was attacked by racist and homophobic strangers who found our zoom info.

Lauren: “lesson was learned to not have an open zoom link in the future”

Kristen: “This was a unique thing that happened to camp but it isn’t a new thing online. Camp has received online hate before in comments and emails which we just delete. This was new though because we used to have non-registration zoom campfires over COVID and there weren’t any zoom bombing incidents.”

Happier things ahead!: Retreats, trips, youth camp planning all going well

Sam: Generator is now installed and ready to go

5.) Reports from Committees

Building and Grounds

Eliz: Kevin is still very much involved and we haven’t picked a representative yet. Sam has been involved with B&G. Hoping to get a meeting scheduled by the end of the year.

Community Engagement

Lynn: How we communicate with the Unirondack community is an important piece of our work and we should have a committee that meets monthly to discuss this work. **If you are interested in working on Community Engagement, email Lynn.**

DEI

Sujata: Originally intended to be on this committee and then went to Fundraising. Interested in adding another person to the DEI committee, or potentially folding it into the Community Engagement Committee.

Cassandra: DEI work is a big bite to take and does not want to be on a two-person committee because that is too small. Sujata also expressed not wanting to be one of two. Eliz expressed an interest in joining but isn’t available under after the new year.

David P: This relates to how we could adjust our onboarding to see where the most work needs to be done and assign board members accordingly

Finance

No updates. Lauren has create 3-year and 5-year plans on her to-do list

Fundraising

David P: sent out the report  Fundraising Committee Report--11/25 Meeting

Committee has been meeting every week for the last few months. This has been a good experience in working on fundraising and it is a change from how much COVID dominated previous year's board discussions.

Tom P has been consulting the Fundraising committee and it has been great to set up a good fundraising infrastructure.

Kelly J: Calendar fundraiser raised about \$6,000, which is pretty good especially for the first time we had done it. Want to do this on an annual basis. People did get confused and think we were selling a Unirondack Calendar, which actually could be a really cool thing.

Lynne: We should send thank-you notes to the people who donated art for the fundraiser.

Luke: Timeline for upcoming Fundraising events: Giving Tuesday is on December 3rd. Social media blasts and graphic designs for those posts by Eliz. Past Giving Tuesday monies raised around \$5,000 to \$10,000. Give people who are upset about the election the opportunity to put their dollars to Camp.

Potentially also target our highest donors with personal outreach.

Camp's 75th anniversary is coming up and we want to raise \$250K or more for that

For Spring: HACS campaign that targets past staff to raise \$7,500. Relatively successful with that. Want to continue this fundraiser each year and have pockets of get-togethers (New York, Boston, Albany, etc.)

Eliz: Think about hosting a pop-up dinner. Eliz will be hosting one in Pittsburgh

David P: We will be consolidating things in our database, needs data from a few people

Governance

Douglas T: Pick up new Board Member Orientation process

Working on searchable database

Kathleen to join governance committee

6.) Other business

We still need someone to be the Building and Grounds liaison

Is Jesse Ditkoff still on the board? Yes, but potentially no longer able to continue. TBD

We are a full Board

Will we have a winter 'town hall' on zoom?

Plan that after January

Next meeting: Saturday, January 11th in person, 10:00 am – pm in Albany

Fundraising Committee needs a block of time for a presentation and some working time.

Looking for board interaction

Executive Director Search

Kristen: needs 30 minutes to present report on Camp Dress Code re: trans campers

Kelly J: I will book the Schenectady space for our board meeting