NASSCED Board Meeting
Conducted Virtually
Wednesday, January 18, 2023

NOTE: Items are presented in the order they appeared on the meeting agenda, which is not necessarily the order in which they were discussed.

I. Call to Order

II. Minutes

Secretary Laura Droms recorded the attendance for this Board meeting, which is presented at the beginning of these minutes. The following Board members were present:

- Region 2 – Roberta Bittel, NY (Past President)
- Region 3 – Roger Mize, SC
- Region 5 – Gary Clark, IL (President)
- Region 6 – Mary Hahn, NM
- Region 7 – Sandi Kurland, CA
- Region 8 – Laura Droms, GA (Secretary/Webmaster)

Absent:

- Region 1 – Flora Sapsin, NH (Vice President)
- Region 4 – Ben Schanck, WY
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- Les Anderson, Treasurer

Also in attendance as this was a joint meeting with NA4SA:
Lou Miller & Tom Heethuis
Dan Gassel (Helms Briscoe)

III. New Business

A. **Helms Briscoe- Presentation by Lou Miller**

Lou met Dan Gassel from Helms Briscoe via Terri Johnson. After meeting him, he felt this was a critical move to help both groups.

Challenges: Both organizations got burned in Boston 2022. Hotel and contract issues distracted both organizations from the true purpose of their programming. The San Francisco hotel became a disaster due to the contract signing and development. THere is also a sharply decreasing interest in hosting for members because it is becoming much more complicated and costly.

Future Goal: Focus on our own programs and control expenses from getting out of hand and work together to be stronger.

Possible Solutions:

1. Bring on Helms Briscoe (HB). HB is a hotel selection broker which would remove the challenge of hosts searching and obtaining hotel info.
2. Establish a collaborative process to maximize bargaining power and make it ONE application to host for both organizations. Simplify the process.

3. Return to a traditional bid timeline. Simplified bids would be in 2 ½ years in advance and decision made 2 years out.
4. Create a Joint Hosting Committee to work with HB & both organizations.

Benefits:

1. Hosts can focus on organizing local activities & not on hotel issues
2. Give both organizations more time to focus on program development rather than triaging hotel issues
3. It's FREE!! There is no cost to NASSCED or NA4SA.
4. HB has much greater bargaining power because the represent many potential clients.

Overview of the numbers:

1. In Boston we had 95% room usage at over 500 room nights. In San Francisco we are locked in at 70% attrition being 403 rooms.

How do we make it happen?

1. Formally establish 2024 will be in Memphis ASAP. Traci Spain is the only applicant. We cannot wait until June or we will lose options for hotels.
2. Establish a joint NASSCED-NA4SA Hosting Committee in late January or early February to begin seeking proposals for Memphis so we can have a hotel secured by June and get back on the right timeline.
3. Joint Committee finalizes and distributes hosting application by the end of February so we can have bids in June and be prepared to select for '25 in December.

What can we gain?

1. Simplify the process to attract more hosts
2. Take the heavy lifting off the plates of the boards at no cost to the organizations
3. Allow both organizations a chance to focus on our own programs without distraction
4. Increase our bargaining power by joining forces AND HB who will be a repeat customer for these hotels.

B. **Helms Briscoe- Presentation by Dan Gassel**

1. Dan has over 20 years experience working with hotels. They are grateful for Terri and her recommendation.
2. On the front end, they work to ensure there is an RFP that fits the needs of the client and reduces the risk of exposure for the client.
3. HB is your free, unpaid administrative assistant. 🙂
4. There are 900 HB agents in North America & 300 additional around the world.
5. They don't represent a certain brand, but what is best for the client.

C. Questions:

1. Q: Roberta- Would Dan & Wendy be our contacts or would we change agents based on region?
   A: Dan- It would always be them. Their first contacts are CBV contacts and then contact an HB agent from that area for insider info. (The agents support each other instead of working in competition.)

2. Q: Roberta- Should we just ask you for the best rate in a state instead of picking a city?

A: Dan- We actually have a great network of 3 years of back data that we can access for that. It's not uncommon for them to source multiple cities for comparison. So if Traci didn't care strongly about Memphis, they can show how Memphis stacks up against Nashville or Knoxville.

Roberta commented that this is a no-brainer because it is free, but we need to work on the application and ideas for the RFP.

Lou stated that the joint committee is the avenue for that and can work as a team to make sure one group isn't driving the other–it is teamwork. Lou said that NA4SA will be moving forward with HB and they are requesting that we join them.

Gary said we cannot give a decision tonight, but we will be addressing it with our board at our Charleston meeting so we can give our final decision.

Lou clarified the 2 contracts situation for Dan and explained that NA4SA signs the room block contract and meals/meeting rooms. NASSCED just handles meals/meeting space for their own day. Dan said he would send out a single RFP, but would do two contracts on the backend.

Dan encouraged us to look at the summary findings from the hotels that Lou sent out. Tab 2 gives full proposals side-by-side.

Lou asked for the latest date we can give him info for the RFP so that we can approve in June. Dan said once he has the RFP, the hotel community will only get 2-3 days to reply. He only needs 3-4 days to pull it together. He said mid-April would be fine.

Roberta asked if we could write kickbacks/rebates into the contract and he said yes, but only upfront.

IV. Adjournment

Meeting ended at 7:04pm