

Approved by MS, EC, JY, AR, AC, MLH, ED, MB, VP, KP
Reviewed by (absent or admin): JG

Northwest Editors Guild Minutes for Board Meeting on October 14, 2019

Place: SPU (Bertona 5): 107 W Bertona Street, Seattle, WA 98119

Attendees

- Board Members: Alicia Ramos, Alison Cantrell, Betsy Berger, Elaine Duncan, Erin Cusick, Jessyca Yoppolo, Karen Parkin, Matt Bennett, Michael Schuler, Valerie Paquin
- Absent: MariLou Harveland, Sue Cook
- Admin: Jen Grogan
- Other attendees: Tori Smith (for beginning only), Andrew (prospective board member), Lynn (prospective board member), Amy (prospective board member), Kris (prospective member in Portland, OR), Laura (prospective board member in Milwaukie, OR)

Preliminaries

- Elaine called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm.
- Welcome prospective board members; introductions
- Welcome back, Jen!
- **The Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.**

Current Action Items

- **Red Pencil update**
 - **Budget:**
 - More sponsorship dollars were secured this year.
 - Costs for the after party were higher; this event resulted in a loss of revenue, which was anticipated.
 - **Attendance:**
 - Members made up a higher proportion of registrants than in previous years.
 - Nonmember numbers were lower.
 - Fewer affiliate registrants, perhaps because outreach to affiliates was lower.
 - **Conference review in process:**
 - Prepare documentation for future conference committees; set foundation to work with going forward.
 - Board members are invited to review post-conference materials to discuss next steps and planning for the next conference. Meeting in late October or early November.
 - Example topics for review:
 - The event space
 - Whether to work with an event planner (was Free Range this year)
 - The audience and goal of the conference (e.g., what's special about this conference?)
 - Scheduling tasks
 - How to sustain volunteers
- **Admin updates**
 - Active membership has surpassed 400 (405 active members as of 10/09/2019).
- **Outreach updates**
 - Emerald City Writers conference coming up: all volunteer slots filled except Saturday morning.
- **Board recruitment updates**
 - Several prospective members are in attendance this evening.
 - Elaine plans to host future happy hours.
 - At the conference, the intention of a volunteer lunch meeting was misconstrued and attracted current volunteers, not prospective volunteers.
- **QuickBooks update and summary**
 - **Recommended level of service** costs \$70/month.
 - Some benefits:
 - Categorize expenses by committee, program, and location.
 - Automate 1099s for contractors (sent to both recipient—who can provide sensitive data in a secure format—and IRS).
 - Prepares the Guild for more extensive eventual IRS filings.
 - Automatically imports bank transactions.
 - The extra cost equates to about two billable hours, but the tasks would take more than two hours per month if done manually.
 - QuickBooks is an industry standard.
 - The cheaper option offers expense and revenue tracking only, no budgeting; categorizing of expenses would be manual (via separate spreadsheet).
 - Elaine reflected on the history of the treasurer's role and how Michael has improved procedures and established a system to be used by future treasurers.
 - **Proposal:** Michael's recommendation is to test the system; future treasurers would need to learn QuickBooks, but it would be relatively straightforward.
 - Michael explained that ideally the treasurer role would be more strategic, spending less time entering data and running reports.
 - Jen offered to spend time learning QuickBooks to help support the treasurer role. This idea will be discussed further.
 - Val asked about purchasing a license rather than the online version, which may be more affordable in the long term. Michael explained that the online version offers greater accessibility and transferability (between users and computers), and automated updates.
 - **Evaluation process** for testing period:
 - Michael will create documentation for future treasurers.
 - He suggests extending the testing period into the new board cycle; re-evaluate in June 2020 with the new treasurer.
 - It would be difficult for individual board members to log in with this recommended version of QuickBooks (requires two-step verification), but

board members agreed that monthly budget reports would be sufficient for committees.

- **VOTE:** Board members unanimously agreed to the proposal extend the QuickBooks evaluation period through June 2020.

Discussion

- **Revisions to the [handbook](#)** will be made at the end of the year. **ACTION:** Let Elaine and Erin know if you want to add anything or make changes.
- **Annual retreat** will be held in mid-January.
 - **ACTION:** Dates to consider: January 11, 12, 18, or 19. Let Elaine or Erin know if you have schedule conflicts.
 - Potential venues: SPU, Hugo House; Andrew recommended a place in Laurelhurst with a park-like setting.
 - The venue should have desks, possibly a kitchen facility; important to consider price.
- **Revisit discussion from last board meeting** re: board member engagement and 2020 board
 - **Increasing board member engagement:** How can we make board involvement more accessible than it has been?
 - Geographic challenges have often been prohibitive. Consider switching to Zoom for meetings?
 - The board will conduct a trial meeting online in December; Jen will cancel SPU venue.
 - If we move to online meetings, we may lose a sense of camaraderie.
 - Pursue other opportunities to meet in person for socialization and camaraderie.
 - Perhaps use Slack for organizing data; organized by channel (e.g., Outreach). Use this in addition to in-person meetings.
 - Other challenges: This year, board members' full-time jobs, health concerns, and other obligations have presented challenges.
 - **Member meetings:** Karen proposed thinking outside the box. What about reducing the number of member meetings and increasing regional gatherings?
 - Board members suggested
 - Increasing networking events.
 - Holding the potluck only in non-conference years.
 - Evaluating who we are servicing.
 - Jessyca pointed out that smaller groups may find coordinating formal meetings to be intimidating and that they lack the resources that the greater Guild has (e.g., programming, budget)
 - Alison said she will help support member meetings in Portland and that Portland area members are interested in more professional development opportunities.
 - Having the ability to serve members outside of the Seattle core is an important strategy for the Guild, giving us an opportunity to rebalance our efforts.
 - Number of people who view recorded member meetings on YouTube: about 80.
 - Matt observed that fewer member meetings may result in fewer new members.
 - Alternating north and south meeting venues has proved beneficial.
 - Will we continue using PNA and Southside Commons? Jen will book January and March venues.
 - Matt said that scaling back would make sense if we didn't have bandwidth to support the meetings, but they're currently doable with a few volunteers and may not be if we back off from holding the meetings regularly.
 - **Guild priorities and goals:** Perhaps our strategy should be to rein in our priorities, such as member meetings.
 - We can measure what works and reevaluate strategic plan tactics, which comprised our greatest hopes and dreams. Valerie reminded us that it's OK that we didn't achieve everything we'd hoped to this year.
 - **End-of-year evaluation:** At the December meeting, we'll evaluate what has and hasn't worked and what's been accomplished this year.
 - **Recruiting volunteers:** Alison will resend email to the board regarding volunteers for committees; she can help write up descriptions and requests. Outline job responsibilities (checklist), highlight remote volunteer opportunities. These volunteer roles may lead to prospective board members.
 - Jen can post volunteer roles on the Guild job board.
 - Message for the listserv: Is there anyone who would like to record member meetings for the remainder of this year and into the next year?
 - We can also establish a required number of volunteers in order to achieve specific goals.

Closing Items and Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.