

**Burlington Writers Workshop
Meeting of the Board of Directors**

Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2017 at 6 p.m.

Place: 1061 Pine Street, Burlington, VT

Board of Directors Attendees:

Partridge Boswell

Terry Cleveland

Deena Frankel

Rebecca Starks

Danielle Thierry

Board of Directors Not Present:

Lauren Bender

- 1) October 21, 2017 Board Minutes approved
- 2) Rebecca will post the Minutes online. Danielle will show her how.
- 3) Annual Meeting review:
 - Rebecca will review Lauren's notes for Annual Meeting and post; we will link to it in the Opps & Announcements.
 - Reflections on the survey: let's accumulate an email thread with suggestions, to record these now—what strengths and weaknesses do we observe on the survey and annual meeting? Danielle will re-send her email about meeting so that others can chime in.
 - Next year: Split out into Info session and Annual meeting that is a celebration?
 - Open Mic review: went well, great variety, good, diverse work; why not a bigger crowd? Could we encourage people to bring friends? On rsvp click button: can bring a guest. Do more promotion. Combine Storytelling VT? Would this work for BCA? Or tag onto Monday night poetry?
 - Partridge will ask Meg Reynolds if BWW could have joint open mic with Lit Club. (For BCA purposes, this would work if the BWW 'hosts' the Lit Club.)
- 4) MSR:
 - We need a nonfiction editor, poetry co-editor, fiction editor: Deena will send the link on BWW for the call for new editors.
 - Could we relieve pressure on Lauren, rely more on Erin?
 - People need to feel ownership of whatever part they are doing.
 - Question for Lauren: are submissions still coming in?

- Should we apply for the Whiting Award this year? Not realistic at this point, and we need to focus on making the journal viable and sustainable at present. But would like to pay contributors if possible.
- If necessary, we can put MSR submissions on hiatus: “reading period closed while we catch up”.
- We will wait to hear feedback from this week’s MSR meetings before making any decisions.
- Rebecca will check with Lauren: where do the inquiries about volunteering for the journal stand?
- Will meet or have call in December making MSR the priority

5) Budget Follow-up:

- Submittable renews in June. Can we reduce Submittable cost for MSR? Rebecca will look into alternatives to Submittable: Tell it Slant? Danielle will look into cheaper alternative Submittable plans. Deena: Could we build Submittable capacity into platform? Ideally we could have a capital campaign to raise funds to build out own platform (\$25-50K).
- Terry will make changes to budget format for December meeting: 1) separating out sustaining members to show what our fundraising looks like; 2) moving Mailchimp and GoDaddy into internet expenses rather than marketing; 3) breaking retreats out of Event and Food Cost.
- Terry will look for ways to reduce Event & Food Cost budget line.
- Danielle will follow up on cost of insurance.
- Lease ends in March—Danielle will contact the landlord.
- Can we get grants to cover retreat? How can we have more retreats and stay within budget?

6) Fundraising:

- Should make a plug for donations at Annual Meeting.
- Bring in other people for fundraising: Fundraising Committee.
- Need to fundraise in December! Deena will send out a letter.
- Danielle will look into 10% joint donation possibilities. Writing Inside VT? COTS? Youth writing program? Might be better for short-term calls.
- Will we do MSR manuscript reviews? Rebecca will email Lauren about contacting staff (editors and consulting editors) about doing manuscripts. Find out how many people are willing to take on. For fiction, should we ask for the first 10 pages to decide if we want to do the review?

7) Transition follow-up:

- Paypal: Terry asked for business account, but they said no, have to have personal info. Need to transfer: Deena willing to give her info. Terry will let her know what she needs in order to set up an account by Dec. 1. Is there a different system that takes less money? Danielle will look back at the emails to see what that name was.
- Workload: Deena notes we could pay an admin person half time.

- Intern? Danielle had an intern in 2016 and she worked out well, but we would have to manage and do the work around that.
 - Danielle will share a spreadsheet of the duties of organizer, so we can see how it could be divided up.
 - Emphasis on committees: chartering and investing people with pieces. A membership committee.
 - Danielle: trying to remove middleman between things and give people access to tools & support in order to spread out work and responsibility and ownership (e.g. instruction manual for removing files given to workshop leaders, instructions/access for Meetup given to Mindy so she can own job of space manager and post about open space times on Meetup).
- Platform: Rose is leading an effort to imagine a platform that we own that works for us online. Will give a description of functionality and come back to the board with a recommendation. Is there something online? She may put out survey. Ideally she will pull in people with an open call to be supplemented with individual representational recruitment (e.g., MSR, Montpelier, Middlebury).
 - Communication guidelines:
 - Contact form emails: Danielle will reply unless she feels she needs input from others. She will bcc the other board members.
 - Board member emails: If need action or reply, include it in subject line, e.g. “rsvp needed by X time, timely response needed.”
 - Danielle will reply to Tammy about panel for Vermont Writers organization.

8) Strategic Planning: Session will be Jan. 6 at the space.

- Deena clarified the approach: 10% what is the pain motivating change, 90% on what is possible (even more than probable); then strategies for how to get to the big picture. Need a clear mission statement. What world would we like to create? Will not address the practical part of things or provide a set of action steps.
- How expand the group? Invite particular people who have been very invested in the BWW, including past board members and people who have volunteered in several capacities. A list was generated. Deena will send out invites. Partridge requested that we ask the facilitator: what would be optimal number? Can she provide questions we could send to workshop leaders to hand out in workshops, so people who come are representatives of more than just themselves?
- Can we fit everyone? Conference room? Deena will ask GMP if we could use their innovation space.

9) Board Meetings: need to have once a month, or at least a call. Meetings should be announced ahead of time and at least a portion be open to members. Will post times. Will go into private, executive session if discussing personnel. Proposed:

Every 3rd Thursday meet downtown at the space at 6:30. Deena will send out a Doodle poll for a December meeting or call time.

- 10) Bylaws: Will revisit after strategic planning.
- 11) Scheduling: can we change poetry night from Monday night, to avoid conflict with the Lit Club readings? Or better to move to 6pm, so people can head over after? Will need to check with workshop leaders. Danielle will check with Rosa on trying a 6 pm start on the 4th Monday of each month. We want to at least keep that Monday poetry workshop, as Rosa is a terrific leader and can't do Wed/Thurs (and reading series is on Tues so that would be a conflict).
- 12) Question from a few members about why MSR EIC is on the board. We should articulate reasons: connects MSR to the BWW in several ways; provides the EIC with an understanding of responsibility for budget and fundraising; someone with such a large role working with a large number of volunteers and a substantial portion of the budget should be integrated into the decision-making of the BWW. Could instead report to the board but not be a member. Downside: we want the MSR EIC to be a fully invested BWW member, and being on the board encourages that.
- 13) Point Rebecca forgot to bring up: do we have a plan for removing old books from the space (other than a handful of each)? Terry has said she could store many of them. Rebecca could loan long-term some poetry and fiction guides if they will not disappear; as well as a sample of journals. Danielle could also loan long-term some writing craft books. Would be nice to have this change by January 1. Lauren has since proposed offering a back issue of MSR to whoever responds to social media prompts, and Erin would be happy to mail those out.
- 14) Next meeting a phone call December 16, 10am-11am.