

January 18, 2018 Board Meeting

6:30-8:30 PM

[110 Main St, Burlington](#)

Attendees:

Deena Frankel
Terry Cleveland
Lauren Bender
Partridge Boswell
Danielle Thierry
Rebecca Starks calling in by phone

Meeting called to order at 6:34 by Deena Frankel.

Minutes from December meeting approved by the full board. Rebecca and Danielle to post to website.

Budget

Terry sent current financials to everyone.

There are \$2200 of deposits in transit that are not in these financials, so that will make it so that we have a \$2200 net profit for 2017.

Deena: Was the budget for 2017 adjusted/reduced at all?

Terry: Cathy and I had gone over possible changes. Had upped MSR from \$3500 to \$4700. Book printing costs for anthology were reduced from \$1500 to \$700.

Partridge: Are we assuming that we're going to get another BCA grant yet? (**Terry:** Save this for budget discussion).

Deena: You've separated sustaining member donations into 2 separate categories. It sounds like there's going to be an adjustment in that, where a little bit of that money is going to go over to MSR income. Will you re-send the corrected budget by email for board approval?

Terry: Yes, will send. Balance sheet provided.

Deena: We have quite a bit of cash on hand. Is that normal? **Terry/Danielle:** Yes.

Deena: It will be interesting when we get into discussions, especially the digital project, to talk about whether this is the balance we've been carrying; we theoretically could fund our own project like the digital initiative.

Terry/Danielle: We have a savings account with enough to cover rent for a couple of months or for other needs.

Terry: I had assumed that we would get another BCA grant this year.

Danielle: The goal should be to go after more grants, but we don't have any definites.

Deena: Would rather see donations increased.

Terry: I did increase sustaining member donations \$200 above this year.

Partridge: Did sustaining donors increase this year? **Danielle:** They increased in October, but they may have gone down earlier in the year so we're not sure.

Terry will keep track of donations, sustaining donations, etc.

19 of 87 donors were full-year donors.

Terry: Split out the MSR manuscript reviews.

Deena: \$500 for book sales.

Anthology launch could be used as a drive to sign up sustaining members.

Events and food costs: One of the things that came out of the annual meeting was treating "free" differently. Could say "suggested donation x." Doing more of that would be great. People love to gather outside of workshops, share their work, etc.

Bumped up internet & utilities a bit because we don't know about Burlington Telecom.

Marketing: May want to do a lot of marketing around capital campaign for digital platform, etc. so let's keep it at the \$500.

Rebecca: We should decide about the level of Submittable that we need before it's up for renewal again. Group agrees. Danielle to look into date that we'll be up for renewal.

Terry: Service fees includes Submittable and PayPal. Need to up them back to this year's levels because we're keeping the feedback requests open.

It would be great to find another service at some point. Poets & Writers: Cancel subscription.

Square up: Terry to check it out.

Rebecca: Do we want to budget for a paid admin?

Group: No money at this point.

Deena: This is important and deserves its own discussion. Let's adopt the budget as we've gone through it, and have that discussion at a later date.

Deena proposes adopting with revisions discussed. Group agrees. Without objection, budget provisionally approved.

Programming (Partridge and Danielle):

We've had guest authors. Chard deNiord was a success. Gary Margolis is coming up next Monday, and then we have 3 scheduled with Joni Cole. Karin Gottshall will be doing a 3-part series in March. Baron Wormser will do a 3-part generative prose series in March. We'll start to book for April and May. Poetry now starts at 7 pm.

The open mic at the lamp shop is scheduled for Monday, March 12th. Danielle will put the people who missed out last time as definites. We can do the rest by lottery.

Informational new member workshop: Danielle to send out ideas for how to start these back up with board members going to different ones.

Deena: Let's reach out to new people individually to welcome them, tell them what we're about, etc.
Terry: Connect them to a new member meeting.

Let's discuss committee structure at the next meeting. Danielle will send a snapshot of the previous committee structure.

Deena: Impressive list of programs to highlight as we're promoting these.

Partridge: By pulling from farther afield, we're getting more exposure.

Strategic Planning:

Group makes a few edits/clarifications.

Partridge to start a mission statement for the board to work from and then we can discuss, test with people and get ideas, etc.

Deena asks the group what we thought of the session:

- **Terry:** Have board members spread out next time, with one board member at every table.
- **Danielle:** Great spirit. Mix of ages.
- **Terry:** If we do this again, we will have a different environment to start from.
- **Rebecca:** Helped to see how many people care about it; to see the unity even with the diversity. Could see everyone wanting to give more practical suggestions; to find ways to harness that energy before it floats away. **Danielle:** this makes forming committees important.
- **Partridge:** Great to hear so many voices, from different lengths of time in organization. Find a lot of commonality. Great vibe, would be nice to find a way to bottle it and keep people invested in coming forward in playing more of a role.
- **Lauren:** Really interesting to hear everyone's different perspectives.
- **Deena:** Nice to have some real positive forward-looking energy. Because it's not about strategy, but pushing to look far out there, people who want to know what the concrete plan is aren't satisfied; this approach felt like the right thing for this moment. Takeaway in terms of action: We have to get our foundation set in order to move forward. One piece is the digital platform. The second piece is to get basic systems in place with member lists, emails, support, and then an administrative person...

- **Rebecca:** What is our model? Defining workshops. Workshop leader: Support structure, committee, picking the right people.

(Terry needs Rosa's email address)

Board Vacancy:

Moved that we'll ask Michael Freed-Thall, provisional on checking the bylaws. Terry moves. Lauren seconds. No objectives. Deena to reach out to him.

Agenda for next month: Discuss/decide on lease.

Anthology

Danielle: Formative meeting, really pushing out to staff...actually asking people. O&A, through workshops, etc. Some kind of poster....September, reverse calendar, etc.

People have to want to have to want to do it. This won't happen unless you step forward to do this...remotivating people to do it. Bringing together the interested people, helping them understand what's involved, and then...

Mud Season

Rebecca: Could we do guest editors 6 times per year. 1-month commitment.

Deena: Is Erin now in the role of keeping things on track?

Lauren: She's doing a lot of this now.

Partridge: Not sure if we have the network yet. If they were able to do it remotely...

Rebecca: The person would have to be running the editing workshops, meeting with the staff, etc.

Lauren: Should we try putting out a call for the editor-in-chief....

Rebecca: Maybe we need to look around the community and look for someone.

Deena: Maybe bringing back past editors as guest editors?

Lauren would like to be finished by April 2018.

Danielle and Rebecca are going to run an editing workshop. Can talk about ideas with staff on how to handle Lauren's departure.

Wrap-up:

Deena: Thinking about making things easier for board members by doing every other month meetings by phone. Doing February by phone would be good for weather reasons. Scheduling 2-hour meeting. Everybody is okay with that.

Deena had a meeting with Vermont Design Works to ask them to assess our digital platform and needs. It looks like we're in much better shape with what we've got than thought, and it may be a smaller cost. May be more in the \$5K-\$10K.

Deena: Anthology. Designed a follow-up survey with the 3 top names from focus group process and the other choice is the Best Of.

Next meeting Feb 15 by phone.