

# **NESEA Board Meeting Conference Call Martha's Vineyard Retreat May 20, 2017**

## **Participating**

Michael Bruss  
Martine Dion  
Jenna Ide  
Phil Kaplan  
Jennifer Marrapese  
Rob Meyers  
Fortunat Mueller  
Rick Renner  
Ben Southworth  
Damainique Bruce (non-voting Board member)  
Miriam Aylward  
Devan Folts  
Lauren Brust Moss

## **Not Participating**

John Skipper  
Saheel Chandrani  
Paul Eldrenkamp

Meeting brought to order at 8:29 a.m.

Retreat recap. General enthusiasm for the development and fundraising conversations. Capacity campaign as described by Marc resonated with the group. Rob expressed enthusiasm about getting the fundraising appeal message fleshed out. Devan and Jennifer expressed the thought that the board is uniquely positioned to make this fundraising goal a reality. Staff will provide a campaign outline and timeline for the capacity campaign during July BOD call.

**Rick moved and Rob seconded that we accept the minutes from February, March and April, 2017. Motion carried unanimously.**

Jennifer shared the Fortunat's letter asking people to become Lifetime Members. Michael was the first Lifetime Member to sign on for this membership drive. Jennifer appealed to other board members to think about who else we could approach.

Valley Gives day was a huge success. Exercise in cultivation. In addition to the online event we had a reception/tour of the Kern Center, the Living Building Challenge building at Hampshire. Kate Goldstein scholarship winner Christina McPike spoke about her

experience in Denmark last year. Kate's parents offered a \$4000 match. We met the match through our fundraising efforts and won an additional \$4000 raffle prize from the Community Foundation of Western MA, so we're at over \$13,000. Byggmeister had 5 employees contribute! Mary Quigley, wife and son all donated. Plan Bygg was the Bottom Lines group with the most donors.

Pro Tours continue to do well. We've streamlined the sponsor ask which frees up Miriam to do more programmatic work. We have the data to check the relationship between Pro Tour attendance and membership. Pro Tours average 60 attendees. Miriam shared the next several Pro Tours. First-ever tour in PA is coming up ... DER of brownstone with home built Powerwall storage system. Hoping to do one in NYC but haven't gotten any applications yet. Martine, Lauren, Ben all discussed strategies for getting Pro Tours in NYC. Jennifer suggested that we be strategic about getting the RFP out to the geographic regions we want to attract.

Jennifer – Vermont State Employees Credit Union (VSECU) issues green loans to contractors. Sun Common is their biggest customer. Right now the Credit Union is looking to expand throughout the northeast. We are working with them to use NESEA membership as one criterion for their Field of Membership so that they can offer loans throughout the Northeast, not just to VT residents or employees. Loans are very low risk. VSECU board approved the vote to expand their field of membership. Katie meeting with them to see about a partnership and revenue stream. Last year they initiated 300 loans within Vermont. Contractor will need to be a NESEA member and the customer will have to be a member so often we'll get two new members from one loan application. Katie Schendel, Membership Manager feels that this will be a good partnership that won't tax the staff unduly.

Flo has secured the first sponsorship for Emerging Professionals from Michael Gimbrere. Came in through a BE the Future sponsor. He donated \$5000 to grow EP programs.

BuildingEnergy NYC sponsorships: \$15000 from NYSERDA. Skipper says \$25,000 from ConEd. Danish Clean tech between \$5000-\$7500. ½ of sponsorship goal for BENYC if they all come through.

Financials – Revenues are under budget but our expenses are under as well. We've managed them sufficiently well. Looks like we'll end the year with surplus of \$6000. WE had budgeted for deficit of \$30,000. So we are significantly better than what we'd anticipated.

BuildingEnergy Boston – Miriam shared that with Beth's departure, roles for Boston have changed. Miriam is Program Director, overseeing content curation for both conferences but has a manager (Susan Farber) who is handling many of the logistics (catering, AV, CEUs, speaker coordination and more). Based on feedback and the simplicity of the BE NYC conference, we've been changing the model for Boston. Vision is to eliminate the free trade show pass option. Increase the number of people whose

registration we can sponsor. We will curate a TS floor of 60-100 tables, and move from a 3 day to a 2 day conference. Hotels prefer fewer days. Vision for the conference, per co-chair Andrew Webster, is 1972 Disney World: With your admission ticket, you can access everything. NESEA night is part of that. Most sessions will be recorded so that attendees will have access. You can buy day 1, day 2 or both days but those are the only options.

Looked at different venues; Park Plaza – teeny session rooms. Quote was interesting. Westin. LOVED IT! Proposed giving us a 3 level stacked wing. Tradeshow floor, session rooms, ballroom. Great proposal. 2019. Not 2018. Rob really like it. Eric Zimmerman thinks we should stick with Seaport for 2018. Start with the changes at the Seaport. General discussion ensued about structuring the trade show floor.

### **Jennifer concluded the ED Report**

#### **9:40 Presentation of the FY18 Budget for Approval**

Jennifer inherited budget template when she came to NESEA. Difficult to use and change. Gina and Miriam streamlined it this year. New and improved more simplified version. Allowed staff to pull it together very quickly and accurately to allow them to focus on programs.

Deficit reflected here is (\$8000) for the year. Interesting to note that Pro Tours and the magazine operate at deficits after overhead allocation. Program Development is always a loss, but this year it is bigger because of the staff time needed for video development at the conference.

Board members inquired whether it was okay that a program like Pro Tours operates at a loss after overhead. Staff opined that it's a program that serves the mission rather than makes money. We have budgeted to keep barrier to entry low, because it is a program that leads to further NESEA involvement ("the gateway drug") If we get to point where we are running Pro Tours further away (PA, DE, NJ, Buffalo) maybe we get a consultant. Don't want to leave to volunteers because it is branded and accredited.

Board members questioned whether we are still too reliant upon BuildingEnergy Boston for revenue. One board member also pointed out that fundraising comes out negative at the end of the year per the proposed budget – we should understand why.

One board member inquired whether we track ratio of admin/overhead expenses to gross income. Per Jennifer, we don't strive to have it be a certain number or ratio. Per Fortunat – ratio should not increase as the top line increases.

After reviewing the budget overview, Jennifer drilled down into specific programs/expense categories: Admin/OH, Program Development, Emerging Professionals, Boston etc. General discussion ensued about saving credit card fees. Agreed that staff would explore offering people the opportunity to pay their own cc fee

when paying. Board noted that budget for Staff Development is light (\$1000), and weren't happy about reducing 401(K) match from 3% to 1%. Miriam explained that we have a paid time off policy, health insurance, 401k, family leave, 11 paid holidays, 4 weeks paid time off, emergency leave (1 month at 80%), and that we would attempt to compensate for lower 401(K) match by closing office for a few extra days around July 4.

BE Boston – Utilities are constrained in their ability to sponsor conferences so sponsor budgets need to be met through more, smaller donors. JM needs help from board on contacts with utilities to prove to the utilities that sponsorships contribute to kWh reductions. Martine, Jenna and John agreed to help with this process.

Audio Visual (AV) was high last year. This year should be lower because we'll have fewer days at the conference.

General conversation ensued regarding the credits and costs thereof.

Devan partially responsible for curating tradeshow floor. Supervising Zach.

### **Pro Tours**

Miriam continued the budget conversation with Pro Tours. Said that the average sponsorship is 700. Series sponsorship is the way we can increase revenue. Staff recently added an insurance rider to allow beer to be served.

### **BENYC**

Made \$63,000, budgeting to net \$80,000 in FY18. Board members discussed the pricing of the NYC conference and whether it is too high in light of all the competing events.

### **BEBL**

Planning a one-day unconference in September.

### **Membership**

There may be potential for more revenue than reflected in budget, especially with the VSECU deal - Katie is typically cautious in her budgeting.

**Magazine** – Budget 9000 for revenue share – higher than last year because our publisher, Naylor, has been selling more ads. Flo is managing editor. We received 40 proposals for Fall 2017 and accepted 10. We are recommending blog post or proposing to host a Pro Tour for the content that we reject.

### **Emerging Professionals**

Miriam noted that this is now a program! Discussion about how to increase the revenue.

### **Program Development**

Hoping to sell video in 2018, and we will continue to receive a small amount of residual income from Master's series. No longer actively developing those courses.

Yestermorrow also wants to develop an online platform. NESEA will partner with them and cross promote each others' offerings.

### **Fundraising**

Budgeted \$75,000 for unrestricted donations. This year we'll end the year at 30,000 in unrestricted donations.

### **Admin/Overhead**

All staff are being paid within their salary ranges. Budgeted 1.5% cost of living increase for most staff; a little bit more for those at the bottom of their ranges. Zach to get a bonus for selling out Boston and NYC tradeshow floor.

**Fortunat made a motion to approve the budget subject to increase donations in Fundraising to \$130,000. Board charges the Finance committee with proposing a mechanism to track the operating reserve. Michael seconded. Approved unanimously.**

Development committee will work with Devan to make a plan for the Capacity Campaign. Could be a campaign for multiple audiences

Conversation about the annual budget concluded.

Discussion re: the differences between the work of the Governance Committee and Nominating Committee. JM: Nominating is about leadership development and identifying BOD candidates, on-boarding and off-boarding. Governance is how board operates and how we assess our own performance. Board members indicated that there is some overlap. The outreach to candidates and finding the candidates relates to development in a way because we are asking them to contribute time and/or money to NESEA.

Governance Committee: Per RR will make some recommendations re: streamlining governance policy and bylaws before end of year.

MD expressed the idea that the nominating committee would come up with a list of work for mentors/buddies in on-boarding process. On-boarding guideline or checklist. General discussion ensued about the need for this process to be codified. Board agreed that we should approach Bruce Coldham to video his history of NESEA governance for future board members.

### **Board Champions Strategic Plan Updates**

1. Ben and Lauren – Technology and Content Curation - Fortunat pointed out that the board champions jobs were not to do the work necessarily but to help staff understand those priorities. Metric for the written process of content curation for all programs is binary; do we have a process or not? When will this happen?

Rate the content curation process 1 to 10. Ask Eli “how do we measure whether video is successful or not?”

2. Commercial and Institutional - Rick – Deepen NESEA focus on C and I –Talked with Katie on May 11<sup>th</sup>. NESEA has already done a lot with C and I. Ongoing. Rick created a spreadsheet is a tool to track what we’ve agreed to do and keep a record. List of target institutions and list of what NESEA can offer these institutions. Katie creating a list of folks in the community to get a measure of what institutions should be asked to make up focus group to find out what is interesting to them. Katie was emphatic about need to be bottom up and data driven... goals provisional to be tested as a guide. Geographic distribution could be a metric. Fortunat asked if we could track the number of C and I attendees increases or not.
3. Emerging Professionals – NESEA staff share what has already been done. We are beginning to explore partners and funding potential. Flo is working on how to identify emerging professionals in the database.
4. Volunteer experience – Jenna and Miriam – Developing clear scopes of responsibility. We have a huge pool. Have them draft the tool. Once we have job descriptions, we can increase transparency. One of the metrics would be how do we track volunteers. Two different types of volunteers a.) work exchange b.) committee volunteers.
5. Geographic Expansion – Pro Tours in remote areas. New board member could come from a new region. Metric can be counting new members in new regions.
6. Advocacy – Damainique. Working on focus group June 16<sup>th</sup> for exchange of information with partners doing similar work.
7. Board Development - Lauren and Governance distributing a board self-assessment. How do you feel about the board. Are you participating. What do you bring? This will inform members and board about performance. Hand in hand with board commitment. Ask everybody to complete the survey recognizing we haven’t set forth a shared agreement before. What do we think the role should be? Will evolve over time. 15-30 minutes

Nominating Committee – Work plan spreadsheet with timeframes – Lisa Tallet’s resignation requires nomination of a new member. Looking into and propose diversity plan. We’re looking into 5 candidates to replace Lisa.

We had two exit interviews. Les and Catriona. Share commonalities anonymously. We will report out next meeting.

Jenna shared a draft board member appointment diversity policy. Researched larger population trends in NESEA territory. Analyzed current board membership by competency profession and sector, locations, race, gender etc. vs. actual population. Class, party, parental status, sexual identity, ability.

General discussion ensued about how robust the data was and what data matters. Board expressed general support for policy and provided feedback for

additional refining. General agreement on the targets proposed for racial, gender and regional diversity. Nominating populating committees with this diversity priority. 50% women. Jenna will revise recommendations.

**Martine shared candidates for board.**

**Laura Humphrey**, ICFI

**Carolyn Edsell-Vetter**, A Yard and A Half

**Cindy Malinchak**, Philips Lighting

**Elizabeth DeSalvo**, Trillium Architecture

**Jennifer Young**, Pioneer Millworks

Board discussed the candidates and charged nominating committee to make a recommendation on the June board call.

**50 Miles Street** – Conversation re: whether it makes sense to continue to own the building – is it more of a burden than a benefit. There was a fairly serious leak that was disruptive to building and staff time. 50 Miles Street Committee looked at cost scenarios if NESEA sells and leases back as a long-term tenant vs. if NESEA continues to own the building. RR called Bruce Coldham asked if there was any institutional history that required NESEA to own 50 Miles St. Bruce said, “no.” Michael Bruss adds that whatever the decision, the board should help figure out how to make it better for Jennifer and the staff. Agreed to get a revised pro-forma and find a management firm to take the burden of running the building from the staff.

**Development** – Rob – Capacity Campaign – Let’s strive for 100% participation from membership. Ensure the next 40 years are as good or better than the first 40 years. Access to content to folks who would otherwise not have it. Strategies: tell the story about the organization and the impact the organization has had on us. Point to Strategic Plan as a strength. Transfer Enthusiasm! Engaged boomers and engaged millenials. Create a culture of philanthropy at all scales. Big gifts to the pass the tin. Boston conference. Lucite box with \$5 in the box. Make sure it is easy to donate at each member interaction. Button to click. Tools and metrics.

**Motion to adjourn moved by Fortunat Seconded by Rob Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm