

**FAI Board of Directors Meeting  
May 21, 2017  
Malibu, California**

In attendance:

Matt Smith (President)  
Lisa Schwartz (Vice President)  
Deana McCloud (Secretary)  
Alka Sharma (Treasurer)  
Matt Sever (Member at large)

Lynn Cingari  
Michelle Conceison  
Donald Davidoff  
lou DeMarco  
Dom Flemons  
Joan Kornblith

Ralph Jaccodine  
Tim McFadden  
Amy Reitnouer  
Ellen Stanley  
Mary Sue Twohy  
Erika Wollam-Nichols

Aengus Finnan, Executive Director

Regrets: Cheptoo Kositany-Buckner  
Michael Kornfeld  
Sam Lee (arriving late 5/22)

**Call to Order/Procedure Reminder**

The meeting was called to order by President Matt Smith at 10:03 AM PT with a reminder of the confidentiality of the meeting as well as the procedure for being placed on the list to speak. Matt noted that the meeting was being held in the same location as the first Folk Alliance conference 29 years previous and reflected on how things have changed in that time. Appreciation was expressed to the staff for making arrangements and to the Board for attending.

Aengus reviewed the agenda and mentioned a correction on the schedule for future meetings since the June 14 meeting on the agenda has been cancelled. As an addition to the agenda, Aengus announced that Dom Flemons arranged for a special screening of the next episode of *American Epic* after dinner that evening. This series could be considered for screening at the conference.

**Review/Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from April's board meeting were reviewed. Mary Sue Twohy asked that the Regions Committee section be amended to read as follows:

The Regions Committee met the previous week to discuss and propose goals for the committee and proposals for moving forward. These are to strategically consider the vision of further collaboration between FAI and regions and consider FAI's regional goals and strategies. The Regions Committee requests the Board discuss at the meeting in Malibu how we can better be an alliance with regions while maintaining separate entity status.

Motion: To accept Board Meeting minutes from April 24, 2017 as amended and read back by Deana McCloud.

Moved by: Lisa Schwartz

Seconded: Alka Sharma

Result: Motion passes unanimously

## **Executive Director's Report**

### **Staff**

Aengus expressed thanks to the staff and celebrated their efforts. The success of the conference built on the strength of the entire team. He also recognized Jen and her importance to the team as Aengus' right hand and staff manager. Staff identified in the Executive Director's report includes: Jennifer Roe, Alex Mallett, Jerod Rivers, Jenny Tonyes, Erika Noguera, and Leah Watts, with contracted support from Lellie Capwell, Doug Cox, Beth Hatch, Cindy Cogbill, Jim Shultz, Sheena Keane, and Ana Muira.

### **2018 Preview**

2018 will continue focusing on FAI's Presenter portion of delegates. Some highlights in relation to next year's conference include the use of the Folly Theater for the awards event. This relocation does present challenges for the schedule and transportation, so plans are being made to address those issues.

### **Kansas City Folk Festival**

A festival coordinator, Kelly Dougherty, has been hired to locally run and expand the Kansas City Folk Festival. Kelly will be responsible for coordinating logistics leading up to and during the event as well as developing the volunteer base. When the festival has reached the point in which it is operating as its own entity and the conference is in Montreal, an artistic director will also be hired.

Michelle Conceison questioned if the festival is envisioned to be an independent event that could earn enough revenue to support staff hires, or if the staff would be working for FAI. Aengus noted that this collaboration provides bookend opportunity to embed a relationship with Kansas City and continued public relations work, particularly in relation to funding agencies seeking to support a local festival and FAI's public face components. The contract for the coordinator role and for the entire event is financially modest (\$2000), and the event provides a place within the Kansas City market for artists to perform outside of the conference. In order to grow, it's necessary to have someone other than FAI staff to run it. A discussion among Directors noted that the festival coordinator contract could be funded with grant funds and that the festival presents an opportunity within the community for continued fundraising and connections.

Aengus also noted that public tickets would not be available in 2018 for official showcases due to issues related to space capacity and regulations affecting non-US delegates attending a "business" conference that includes public, ticketed events. Erika Wollam-Nichols asked if there was the option of utilizing the Artist in Residence program as part of a public community event, and Michelle noted the importance for the FAI Executive Director to retain autonomy for programming over an artistic director for the Kansas City festival. Aengus' vision is for the Kansas City Folk Festival to be under the FAI banner.

Further discussion dealt with the timing of the local festival and whether the cross-over of artists playing at both the conference and the festival would create issues if the festival were held a different time of

the year. However, there were advantages noted to separating from the conference calendar, including the opportunity to partner with other established festivals. Aengus stated that there was nothing set at this stage. All conversations are in play about the structure and how it will look, and FAI will be key advisors to the festival planning. Matt Smith suggested that there be a Festival Subcommittee as part of the Programming Committee.

### **Professional Development/Training**

Joan Kornblith asked about the Business Development Manager and whether training was being provided for staff in relation to grant writing and other professional development skills. Aengus replied that staff is pursuing this with training sessions and discussions with Dodee Crockett facilitating training.

### **Memberships/Ticket Sales**

Special early bird discounts of \$30 are being offered for members only from May 15-29. Since May 15, 55 membership registrations have been sold. This includes 6 new membership commitments, and 3 lapsed members rejoining. With this discount comes the option to donate the \$30 back to FAI. 4 members so far have done that. In addition, 21 tickets to the Kansas City Folk Festival have been purchased at \$10/ticket, and 20 tickets have been purchased to the FAI awards show.

### **International Updates**

Folk Alliance Australia is being relaunched as part of Australian Music Week. This is an opportunity of ensure the Folk brand is in the mix with American Music Association Australia.

Irish Folk Retreat will take place September 20-21, 2017 in Clonakilty, Ireland. This will be a boutique gathering of industry agents and presenters in Ireland and a starting place for future UK/Ireland gatherings. There is potential for planting seeds and engaging conversations for relationships to be developed and explore interest in developing something in Ireland modeled after FAI.

Nordic Folk Alliance is aligning with FAI and a formal proposal is being drafted for Board review. Their plans continue for launching an industry focused event gathering in 2018 that will be a littler larger than the Irish retreat.

### **FAI Offices**

The lease for the current office space expires in 2018, so Jen and Aengus have been looking at new locations. Staff is at capacity in the current space, and the ideal space would be within the Kansas City arts community. There is currently a building under development at the west end of Crossroads that features a residential building with commercial office space. The developer has committed to having FAI as tenants with twice the current space. FAI would be responsible for the build out of the facility, but the developer would forgo charging rent in order to have FAI as a cultural presence and in exchange for FAI providing jam sessions and other programs. Michelle congratulated Aengus and the organization for being recognized as a significant cultural resource in the community.

### **Finance Report**

Alka Sharma provided the finance report with reconciled data through the end of March 2017. She thanked Donald Davidoff for his help with the transition.

Michelle asked about the current inventory in the store. Donald suggested writing off that cost of inventory and giving things away or perhaps having a silent auction for some instruments. Ellen Stanley

asked that an updated inventory list be sent to Board members in case anyone knows of an organization that can use items.

**Action Item:** Create an updated inventory list that can be sent to Board members for possible donations.

Tim McFadden asked how the investment in Canada was paying off, and Jennifer Roe reported that the current exchange rate is \$97,147.

### **Development Report**

Development Chair lou DeMarco provided an overview of where the Development Committee currently is in conversation with Aengus and Alex. Included with this document is a draft for a tri-fold for development collateral purposes. This would be a long-term collateral piece (3-5 years) which can garner immediate financial benefits at conferences and festivals where FAI is a presence. Erika asked about strategies for growing the donor base to involve people first through memberships. Joan volunteered to help with wording for the piece. lou noted that this tri-fold could be used as a complement to the annual report for reaching potential donors and members.

The next proposal from the committee was to energize Board members to help raise \$500 each using individual contacts. An elevator speech is being developed that will be sent to all Board members. A discussion followed about the shift in asking Board members to solicit donations and that this would need to be clarified for potential new Board members prior to their running for election. In addition, it was noted that this was a goal rather than a requirement for Directors, and that it was not a shaming mechanism, but merely a way to think about fundraising. This would need to be a different kind of ask so as not to conflict with existing fundraising many of us do. It was further noted that asking for advise when approaching potential donors is often more effective than asking for donors, especially when connecting with specific programs or memberships. People who are members and who are already participating are more likely to give. Aengus noted that fundraising is ultimately a staff responsibility, but the organization needs to expand development and what we accomplish as a charity with a balance of programs and fundraising.

Other suggestions for a strategic fundraising approach included adding "Donate/Ways to Give" on collateral, and list "organize fundraising events" as an option. As Chair of the Nominating Committee, Amy Reitnouer agreed to inform potential new Board members of this goal. Dom Flemons agreed that having a goal is a good idea to start with and that it will be advantageous to learn key words and strategy for asking. lou thanked everyone for their input on this goal, and added that Friend of Folk will continue in 2017. Ellen Stanley and Matt Smith will be holding events at their locations in the fall. In 2018, Los Angeles and Austin are being considered for locales in which to raise funds. A mobile app through mGive is also being considered based on cost and return on investment.

### **Membership Committee**

Erika reported that the committee has been active on many fronts, including how we can learn more about our members, educate them about FAI, and engage them. Michelle, lead on the Research Subcommittee, will be including non-directors who have experience in structural research on the subcommittee. These advisors include Linda Fahey, Kristen Thomson, and Erin Benjamin. A Board activity was conducted to brainstorm ideas regarding type of questions research can help answer when considering individual and industry interests. This activity lasted for 90 minutes during the meeting and continued over the lunch break.

Lunch break: 12:15 PM

The official Board meeting reconvened at 1:32 PM for an Accounting 101 Session presented by Donald. This session was held in order to familiarize Directors with accounting terminology and processes. Accounting session concluded at 2:39 PM.

### **Budget Proposal**

Alka presented the proposed budget for 2017/2018 as well as a comparison chart from 2016/2017, with Projected Year End data, plus FY 2017 Variance Projected in comparison to the budget. A discussion followed about types of income and sources as well as target revenue contributions based on FY 2017's projected year end. Aengus stated that much of the development shortfall had to do with the slow roll-out of the campaign with limited staff and resources. Donald advised that the risk in the revenue goals is definitely in the Contributed Income area. The Finance Committee agrees with the goals based on the current surplus revenue. Aengus noted that we do need to have a back-up plan. This year targets weren't hit, but were covered through different areas of revenue. The plan is to really bolster the development side of things to realize the goals set. Grants as listed on the budget should be Grants and Foundations. There are foundations in Kansas City that are potential donors, but we haven't been in a position until now to approach them. This year's conference income was \$61,000 over budget, so the revenue goals for FY 2018 were increased accordingly.

Matt Smith mentioned that there was the potential of many people returning to attend for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018, and Michelle noted that it would be interesting to see the impact on membership that the conference in Montreal will have. Tim mentioned the consideration about the impact of site moving might have on the budget and realized revenue.

The large increase in the budget for the awards show was discussed, but Aengus confirmed that this show is special because of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, so the budget was increased accordingly. Other questions addressed the camp and the importance of fulfilling that educational mission. Aengus advised that the camp costs \$30k per year. The goal is to scale down in order to refine the vision and find more targeted ways to bring in the immediate community. Matt Smith mentioned that reducing the costs of the camp doesn't reduce its effectiveness if the impact of the mission is the focus. Lisa Schwartz voiced concern about renaming the camp after Louis and continuing to support it in his honor. Aengus agreed that scaling down and raising the bar is the strategy, and that staff is passionately committed to the camp's success.

One adjustment Aengus mentioned on the budget details is under Net Ordinary Income. There should be a line for Depreciation. The net Ordinary Income should be \$1301, and the Net Year End Income should be reduced to \$605.

Motion: To accept the proposed FY 2018 budget

Moved by: Donald Davidoff

Seconded: Ellen Stanley

Result: Motion passed unanimously

### **Advocacy Committee Report**

Committee Chair Ellen Stanley advised that the committee has combined the Visas/Immigration and Air/Travel subcommittees, with Michelle as the lead. The PRO subcommittee is pursuing the next steps based on goals. Health subcommittee lead Ralph Jaccodine and Ellen have been discussing the next steps for providing a platform in order to gather regional and international health resources. In addition, the goal is to gather people's stories, perhaps by creating a Facebook profile. FAI will share these on social media and the community will gather information.

One strategy for sharing stories was to have a monthly profile with a different artist about health issues and how they were dealt with. Joan mentioned that in the past this was done via email using a basic form in order to share stories. Jen said that staff could set up the form and email addresses for this purpose.

### **Site Selection Task Force Report**

Tim McFadden reported that the task force recommended that the RFPs guide the discussion about future sites for the conference. RFPs go out on June 1 with several markets identified. Responses to the RFP solicitations will be reviewed in July and results/recommendations will be reported to the Board on August 10. The location frequency will be explored, but RFPs will reveal the best approach for future planning.

Aengus added that the review and RFP description is based on the current arrangement with Kansas City. The contract with Kansas City is expiring, so we do have to go back to the current host hotel for future proposals. The new ownership of the Kansas City hotel may change the contract. In regard to other host cities, the benefits of moving will need to be weighed against the cost, particularly for staff and development, while appreciating the benefit of visiting the home bases of delegates and the new excitement that is created from new artist and new experiences when moving the location.

According to Tim, when the RFP was sent to Canada, only 2 cities came back with hotels that could accommodate the conference. Amy asked if toggling in and out of Kansas City every other year is more complicated than a multi-year conference in Kansas City and one year elsewhere. Tim feels that if we stay headquartered in Kansas City, hosting in a different region every other year could increase area membership and involvement. Matt Smith asked that Directors send any additional site suggestions to the task force.

### **Regions Committee Report**

Regions Chair, Mary Sue Twohy, posed the question discussed within the Regions Committee: "How can we better align with regions while keeping separate identity status?" The relationships with Regions have been changing over the past 5 years. Based on discussion with Regional leaders, Aengus noted that there was a need for a better understanding of differences and mutual understanding between the Regions. Members expect commonality between the Regions and collaboration between them. FAI is focusing staff on areas of service to Regions. The FAI Board has a governing relationship with Regions, with the staff focusing on facilitating Regions and conferences to access information in a more effective and consistent way.

The current staff related work with Regions includes:

- Regional retreats
- Elections/training administrators
- Proposed PRO umbrella

- Proposed Marcato app
- Attendance at Regional events

A SWOT brainstorming analysis exercise was conducted from 3:40 PM until 4:15 PM. The discussion focused on the topic of better alignment while retaining separate identity, noting if opportunities are staff or board responsibilities. After the exercise, it was suggested that we provide the Regional leaders with the same exercise to explore their boards' feedback and compare to locate differences in perspective for a more healthy discussion. This feedback will then be returned back to the FAI Board to discuss a moderated conversation and compile data. Aengus mentioned that the relationship is very positive with healthy discussion due to the Regional retreat and agreed to the proposed exercise for Regional leaders.

**Action Item:** Mary Sue will provide Regional leaders with the SWOT analysis exercise and supply feedback to the FAI Board for discussion and data compilation.

**Action Item:** Regions and Governance Committees will meet to discuss FAI Board service and Regions leaders to codify language so that the Board can vote on said language at the next meeting.

### **Strategic Plan**

Matt Smith reported that the current strategic plan is good through 2018 and will need to be updated. Matt provided an explanation to new Directors of the process of working with Liz Allen Faye on the strategic plan as we dig into the existing strategic plan, look at updated goals and updated tactics in order to reach those goals and reassess strategy. These facilitated sessions with Liz created elevated discussions that otherwise would have been difficult to reach in the same amount of time.

**Action Item:** Organize think tank to review previous notes and draft written during the Tulsa meeting (April 2016) to update strategic plan through 2019.

**Motion:** To adjourn meeting

**Moved by:** Lisa Schwartz

There being no other business on the agenda, meeting was adjourned at 4:26 PM

**FAI Board of Directors Meeting  
May 22, 2017  
Malibu, California**

In attendance:

Matt Smith (President)  
Lisa Schwartz (Vice President)  
Deana McCloud (Secretary)  
Alka Sharma (Treasurer)  
Matt Sever (Member at large)

Lynn Cingari  
Michelle Conceison  
Donald Davidoff  
lou DeMarco  
Dom Flemons  
Joan Kornblith  
Sam Lee

Ralph Jaccodine  
Tim McFadden  
Amy Reitnouer  
Ellen Stanley  
Mary Sue Twohy  
Erika Wollam-Nichols

Aengus Finnan, Executive Director

Regrets: Cheptoo Kositany-Buckner  
Michael Kornfeld

**Call to Order/Group Activity**

The meeting was called to order by Matt Smith at 9:06 AM PT. Jennifer Roe introduced an activity for researching past programs in order to create a story about FAI. After reviewing a specific year's program for one hour and taking notes, each Director reported the story from that conference to the group. Jen recorded notes on these reports for the next two hours of the meeting. The intent is to use some of the highlights from those notes for the timeline staff is developing.

Break for lunch at 12:17 PM

The meeting reconvened at 1:07 PM. Aengus reviewed the schedule for the remainder of the day. Directors continued the group activity in order to continue reflecting and sharing stories from past conferences. This timeline creation of the complete conference story continued for 17 minutes.

**Programming 2018**

Cindy Cogbill was dialed in to join the meeting for a discussion and brainstorming of ideas regarding Programming for the 2018 conference. Aengus shared with Cindy what the Board has been doing and provided information to Directors focusing on ideas and names for 2018. The Programming Committee will be teeing up suggestions and topics with an eye to elevating the level of participation, looking at ways to bring in new people and refreshing some of the voices. This elevation of the level of discussion includes bringing in ethnomusicologists, archivists, and policy makers for a summit/field session with their colleagues. In addition to the track for this summit, Cindy noted that the staff approach with the

Programming Committee includes the following 4-tracks used in the past to ensure proper planning and continuity: Industry, Presenter, Artist, and Community. A general brainstorming session followed for 45 minutes to discuss panelists to engage, panel topics, and Directors with contacts for those potential panelists. During the brainstorming session, Jen created a Google Doc to chart ideas for reference and to share with Directors for follow up.

Aengus reminded the Board about focusing on diversity when discussing potential presenters and personal contacts to enable confirmation of suggested presenters. Our continued partnerships with other organizations throughout the world will look at diversity. Additional ideas are needed as we develop a plan for 2018.

### **30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Additional Items**

In looking back at the past 30 years of the FAI conference and Folk music, the 2018 conference will be a time to celebrate. A retrospective video is being created as part of this celebration. Since the conference will be the kick-off of the 30<sup>th</sup> year, the Board is asked to consider things that can be done throughout the year, such as suggestions for fundraising events in other markets. We are also looking at creating a coffee table book to commemorate the 30 years of FAI and considering producing a boutique record (10 songs) of the past 30 years, perhaps in collaboration with Smithsonian Folkways. Aengus encouraged Directors to consider additional ideas and submit them for consideration.

Tim suggested that we create a special badge for people who were at the 1989 conference or host a special reception for them. What about comped or reduced cost on registration as a thank you for those founders? Sam asked about creating a digital archival, and Aengus noted that we are treating this year as a time to digitize and create this archive. Sam would like to help as need with this project.

Dom suggested a “call and response” type approach each month, engaging constituents to reply to songs or subjects that FAI feels would be poignant to its members. This allows interactivity and engagement for the question “What is Folk?” Joan mentioned that an anniversary card with 1989 cover art could be created for founding members. Aengus added an idea about a Habitat for Humanity meeting idea, in which a house concert would be held in 30 different cities simultaneously in Habitat for Humanity communities, as well as launching International Day of Folk Music.

Other ideas included creating a memory capsule to be opened in 30 years, the declaration of honorary day in the community, working with past photographers and designers on a project, and having current Board members write letters to a member of the board who will be serving in 20 years. Aengus encouraged people to continue thinking of programs, ideas, and participants.

### **Clark Weissman Meeting/California Delegate Reception**

Directors reviewed the list of guests for the reception being held later that evening and their significance so all would be aware and have background information. The goal of the event is to celebrate those in the area who have been involved with FAI as well as using this as a chance to develop new relationships and foster interest for attending the conference. (See appendix A for list of guests) Prior to the reception, the Board will gather with Clark Weissman, co-founder of FAI, at 4:00 PM to thank him for his work in laying the groundwork for the organization.

Aengus and Matt Smith thanked the Board for its time, ideas, and interaction. The Nominating Committee is discussing names for next year’s slate of candidates. The committee will meet with the Executive Committee prior to the next scheduled meeting to discuss the proposed slate.

Motion: To adjourn meeting

Moved by: Ellen Stanley

There being no other business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 3:12 PM