

Board Meeting

August 2, 2019

Teleconference - 3:00 PM CST

In attendance:

Lisa Schwartz (President)

Alka Sharma (Treasurer)

Ellen Stanley (At Large)

Dom Flemons

Chloe Goodyear

Joan Kornblith

Sara Leishman

Amy Reitnouer

Matt Smith

Denise Stiff

Meg Tarquinio

Laura Thomas

Reid Wick

Regrets:

Lynn Cingari

Lou DeMarco

Michael Kornfeld

Deana McCloud

Gary Paczosa

Matt Sever

Gerald Torres

Absent:

Gil Gastelum

Call to order: Lisa called the meeting to Order at 3:10, once quorum was established.

Review of Minutes

Motion: To approve the June minutes

Made by: Matt Smith

Seconded by: Sara Leishman

Result: Motion passed

Finance Committee Report - Alka

Alka presented the financials and reported that we are in great shape financially, with a Fiscal year end actual profit of \$42,000 ahead of the budgeted total income. The annual audit will begin Aug 6-8 with a representative from the accounting firm present in the FAI office.

Jennifer reported that we now have an Insured Cash Sweep account that earns approximately 2% interest. We are moving \$525,000 into the account (including the funds from the now closed Money Market account at Lead Bank which was earning approximately 1% interest).

Staff will be working towards managing our operational cash account on a weekly basis (rather than monthly) so that we can have a better view of cash needs, and consequently move more funds out of the operating account into the ICS account.

Alka congratulated Aengus and Jennifer and excused herself from the meeting at 3:25 pm.

Executive Director's Report - Aengus

Aengus discussed how the financial, operational, activity, and membership growth of the past five years are helping FAI as we show up at industry events with higher profile and credibility, and generating new partnerships and opportunities. An example is the new relationship with Jeunesse Musicale International (organizers of global Ethno Camp programs) who have ultimately picked FAI to host a fully funded position through a grant they have secured through Carghill Philanthropies. We have successfully recalibrated public perception of FAI in the industry and community and are keeping folk a relevant and resonant genre.

He highlighted FAI's growing relationship with **American For The Arts**, citing Jen's participation in Arts Day on the Hill, and Aengus' attendance at their national convention as a reciprocal exchange with their CEO, Robert Lynch.

The results of the 4th annual **Kansas City Folk Festival (KCFF)** were reviewed. The June 30th event was the first edition held separate from the conference, and as an outdoor event organized by a local volunteer team, with strong support from FAI staff. It was a small crowd (300+), but in the range of what was expected. While it was a challenging event to pull off, it was a great success in terms of the committee seeing something come out of their work, providing the positive momentum to continue with a 5th edition in 2020 with a festival coordinator and grant funding already in place and committee members considering their roles. The end goal is that a year from now it will be its own non-profit under FAI.

Conference update: FAI is substantially ahead of pace for the conference in registrations and reservation and is already at 70% capacity at the hotel. Staff fully anticipate the conference reaching physical capacity, cresting the 3000 delegate threshold.

Board members congratulated the staff. Reid asked if we were happy with the showcase applications. Aengus shared that there were over 1000 applicants, and stated that most of them came in at the deadline, as they have historically.

Aengus explained his process for reporting against the Strat plan, and does not intend to put items under each section for every meeting unless there are updates, but will keep the bullet points.

The board was updated on the **Folk DJ chart**. Staff intent is to transition the chart to a new more accurate and efficient platform (rather than cumbersome and error prone customised software harvesting information from individual emails posted to the FolkDJ Listerv. It will likely take FAI a year to research, beta test, and transition from one system to the other (including a FolkDJ training session at the 2020 conference). Staff are actively exploring options and will consult the Radio Task Force.

The **Executive Summary of the stakeholder research** conducted by Slover Linett last fall, and presented to the Board and membership in Montreal, is nearing completion. Michelle Conceison is the main author of the summary of the research, with comments from Slover Linett. Joan Konblith agreed to work on editing the document.

The **private showcase poster survey** (to inform a policy to minimize damage, clutter, waste, and safety concerns on the private Music Floors) has received over 600 responses to date. To staff surprise over 2/3 of respondents feel FAI should no longer allow individual artists to poster the halls, but favour one centralized public display of artists posters, and the leading 1/3 favoring permission for Private Showcase hosts to post notices about the entire lineup of their rooms in limited designated spaces. Staff intend to use community feedback to inform a final decision.

Since the 2020 conference is in January and the 2021 conference is in February, staff have an extra month coming back to KC. There are long-term operational items and system updates that will be implemented during this extra month.

Aengus announced **"Living Traditions" as the 2021 theme**, with a focus on traditional music, a summit for folklorists, and a tie-in to the bicentennial of the State of Missouri.

Programming Committee Report - Reid

The Committee is starting to put a focus on unique programming for New Orleans, where there is a lot of interest and excitement growing. The open panel submission process drew suggestions from members and past attendees.

Michelle (as Program Manager) has already put in a fair amount of research regarding panelists, speakers, and partnerships. Michelle is also being assisted by Treasa Levasseur, FAI's Outreach Coordinator who is reaching out to presenters and community organizations throughout the south, the Carribean, and Latin America.

The Committee will be meeting again soon.

Awards nominations. Open nominations from FAI's membership closed July 30th. There will be an update on the awards at the next meeting. Aengus has proposed that the programming committee (who are already consulted in relation to the awards) be the **"Programming & Awards" committee in 2020**, and play a more formal role in overseeing the categories.

Advocacy Committee Report - Laura & Michael

Aengus, Michael, Dom, Jen, and Laura were on the last committee call. Laura reported that the committee has followed up with the Communications team in the FAI office to start posting the self-care tips collected at the Montreal conference. They will be posted every other Saturday on social media. They are encouraging the use of the **#FolkLifeBalance**. Staff will also be creating a dedicated webpage for the committee's resources, has worked on - folklifebalance.

Staff will be sending out the "self-addressed postcards" at the 6 month mark to the Montreal attendees who wrote themselves a positive message. Matt Smith mentioned that he loved the mental health theme and the importance of this, and would like to see it continue.

The Committee is already discussing the CommUNITY focus for the 2020 conference and plan to continue aspects of mental health.

The Quiet Room is being planned again (Yoga, meditation, recovery sessions) and the committee would like to bring more awareness (and attendance) to this room.

Reid mentioned that MusiCares would still like to have some presence even though they cannot attend. He also mentioned another foundation - Send me a Friend.

Laura asked that if board members have suggestions, to email her.

Nominations Committee Report - Amy

Amy stated that they had a good kick off to the election process. They have 10 applications and nine other names of candidates who were recommended. There are three incumbents. They have five seats open for the ballot, and two seats available for appointed.

The plan to run seven people on the slate for the five spots. The Committee will present the tentative slate to ExCom on September 15th with the final slate to the board by October 1st, per the timeline dictated by the bylaws.

Matt Smith asked how she feels about the expressions of interest to date and asked if there is good diversity. Amy stated that it's primarily white males who applied. More outreach is required.

The committee is eager to talk to everyone and would like to have more standard information required on the form in the future to gather more information about the individual's past and current board experience. Matt Smith mentioned the importance of us considering new members as we think of our future board.

Reid suggested Leyla McCalla. He had a conversation with her recently about. Dom suggest Kris Preugson??? at Country ?? Laura mention Maggie Landau.

Amy is also open to suggestions for advisory council members.

Development Committee Report - Denise

Denise shared that for the second year the board generated donations from non-Board donors by the June 30th fiscal year-end was just over \$3000, against the \$10K annual goal.

The committee is proposing a different approach this year and will be putting together call teams to do a thank you day in September to appreciate current donors (a proven technique for donor retention). A simple script will be developed for all board members to make these calls on the same day. No money will be asked for during these calls - just a thank you.

The same teams and technique will be employed on December 3rd (Giving Tuesday) with board members making calls to their own list of prospects to ask for a donation towards the FY2020 goal of \$10K. A script will be provided.

Board members are asked to make their personal annual donation to FAI by September 1st. Aengus mentioned the importance of a 100% participation rate (regardless of the amount) in terms of messaging to funders, donors, and the public. He will match the total donations made by staff.

Governance Committee Report - Matt

Sara presented a committee motion to add another body on the committee to help with the transition.

Motion: To approve the proposed referendum question (as read aloud and presented in the board kit) for the Nov 8th, 2019 FAI election ballot to amend section 6.5 of the current bylaws to increase the number of Directors able to serve on the Nominating Committee from two (2) to three (3), and to increase the total number of Committee members from five (5) to six (6).

Made by: Denise Stiff

Seconded by: Matt Smith

No discussion.

Result: The motion was approved unanimously

Term Limit Policy - A policy is being proposed by GovCom to set a standard 2 term limit for directors.

Proposed Policy:

To encourage turnover, and include new voices, while still allowing an appropriate amount of time to accomplish long and medium term goals, Directors shall serve no more than 2 elected terms (a total of 6 years). Directors at the end of their term limit may still be considered for limited appointment per the Term-end Extension by Appointment Policy. They may also seek re-election after sitting out a term.

Motion: To adopt the proposed Term Limit Policy, effective as of the date of the motion

The motion was tabled until the September meeting to make some corrections and to have more directors present for the vote. The motion should be circulated with online conversation should occur before the September meeting.

Dom asked for clarification on the language about the number of terms as it relates to this sentence: Directors shall serve no more than 2 elected terms. Matt Smith suggestion we change it to two consecutive terms.

Regions Committee Report - Matt

Matt Smith reported that FAR-West received a formal complaint that fewer than half of their Official Showcases were from their region. That person planned so send a complaint to FAI. It has not been received to date

Other Business

Denise brought up that we discussed in Nashville that we do not have involvement from Mexico. She encouraged the board to think of ways to make connections in Mexico to remedy the lack of people from Mexico. Identify 8 to 10 artists or organizations in Mexico.

Aengus mentioned that this issue has been raised in the past, that SWRFA doesn't have the capacity to lead on this, that FAI has to be realistic/clear about what it has to offer initially in relation to the investment that would be made by Mexican and South/Central American delegates attending FAI for the first time. To build industry relationships in Latin America he attends Circulart in (Colombia) has been invited to attend in FimPro in Mexico, but hasn't yet attended. He has had initial conversations with board member Gil regarding the Latinx community, is reaching out to the LatinGrammy's, and has held meetings with the Mexican Consulate in Kansas City. Treasa is also reaching out to some contacts. This is definitely a community where outreach should be focused at a national level within the US, and into new countries, especially Mexico.

The correct dates for the 2020 Australian ExChange program March 3rd and 4th.

Aengus gave another update relating to the regions and diversity, equity, inclusion initiatives. The Regional leaders did an online training session regarding board diversification. FAI is providing the regions access to its Non-profit Connect training resources and is asking that each of the regional boards do that training as a full board by early fall. FAI will be hiring a local facilitator to present a Cultural Equity webinar for our full membership. Regional boards will be invited to participate in the cultural equity summit in NOLA and the development of our plan. This will lead to a cash investment by FAI for each of the regions to hire a facilitator to present cultural equity training at their 2020 conferences, starting with SERFA. The following year FAI plans to invest in a cultural equity scholarship to support attendance by delegates from marginalized communities.

Adjournment: Laura moved to adjourn at 4:39 pm