

## **FAI Board of Directors Meeting March 24, 2020**

### **In attendance:**

Lisa Schwartz (President)  
Deana McCloud (Secretary)  
Alka Sharma (Treasurer)  
Ellen Stanley (at Large)

Enrique Chi  
Lynn Cingari  
Rose Cousins  
Rosalyn Dennett  
lou DeMarco  
Susie Giang  
Chloe Goodyear (left at 4:30 PM CT)  
Michael Kornfeld  
Sara Leishman

Gary Paczosa  
Chris Porter  
Amy Reitnouer  
Laura Thomas  
Meg Tarquinio  
Reid Wick

Aengus Finnan, Executive Director  
Jennifer Roe, Director of Operations

### **Regrets**

Matt Sever  
Gerald Torres

### **Call to Order**

Lisa Schwartz called the Go-To virtual meeting to order at 3:06 PM CT. Aengus sent Directors an updated version of the board kit just prior to the meeting, which included an amended agenda.

Motion: To approved agenda as presented  
Made by: Michael Kornfeld  
Seconded by: Amy Reitnouer  
Result: Motion was approved

Directors participated in a 30-minute reality check in regard to COVID-19 status about how all are doing.

### **Executive Director's Report Post-Conference Report**

Aengus noted that the new board kit includes an appendix with a near final draft version of the post-conference report. Aengus first wanted to celebrate the post-conference report. While there will be a few tweaks, Aengus noted that it was an exceptional event with attendance, and also in regard to the scale, diversity, and conversations held. Aengus thanked all the Board members, staff, volunteers, and contractors.

## **Outreach Events**

Aengus also thanked Amy Reitnouer for her willingness to leave the conference early in order to manage and represent FAI at the GRAMMY event in Los Angeles.

The most recent ExChange event was held in Australia after the conference. Aengus thanked Sheena Lisa, Chloe, and Laura, who were all on site with Aengus. This was the largest of these micro-conferences to occur to date and was a tremendous success as relationship building event.

Lisa expressed major congratulations to Sheena and Aengus on the event. She noted that the level of respect for the FAI representatives was humbling and amazing. Chloe thanked the Board and staff to creating this amazing moment for Australia to have.

Amy mentioned that she was very proud of the GRAMMY event, especially in regard all the regional roots artists represented. Reid reported that he has received a great deal of local positive feedback based on the conference experience.

## **Conference 2021 Projection**

Aengus confirmed that the organization did have a remarkable year in 2020, especially in regard to financials. He and the staff are already planning for the FY 2021 budget to include potential reduced attendance due to COVID-19 effects. Even in an ideal scenario, there will be a dent in the 2021 conference for a variety of reasons, so FAI needs to immediately prepare for those scenarios.

The first scenario would be a dented event with 2000 attendees, which has a significant impact on operations and staffing. Scenario number two is a severely reduced conference of 1000 attendees due to an extended ripple effect. That would result in a scaling back of staff. Scenario three would be to have no conference and use a digital format. This would have the most severe impact on staffing.

Aengus and Jen have met with the Finance Committee to discuss these possibilities and will bring proposals to the next Board meeting so that a decision can be made. Other events that have been impacted to date include: SXSW, Arts Day on The Hill, FAI Community Reception, Nordic Folk Alliance, Kansas City Folk Festival, SERFA, Regional Leaders Retreat, Boston Board Meeting, and Ethno USA.

In terms of immediate finances, Aengus assured the Board that FAI is in a very solid place. The financial reserve was built for this type of situation.

Jen and Aengus have been focused on charting out the financial forecast for the rest of the year. The Finance Committee has already seen this forecast and will be sharing that with ExCom. Non-essential expenses have been scaled back until June, and plans are to extend the Early Bird registration past the current May deadline.

The year-end fundraising campaign had been set to launch before the end of the fiscal year. It would be insensitive to activate it at this time, so that campaign is on hold. The plan is to move the scholarship campaign into the next fiscal year in order to support artists and regular long-time attendees who couldn't otherwise attend due to the economic impact of COVID-19. The goal at this point is to relieve any pressure associated with deadlines, costs, and renewals.

### **FAI Role During COVID-19**

FAI will be working to focus as a staff in support of the community at a high level. A resource page will be maintained to reflect the impact, and that page will be a hub for supporters to access for a schedule of online concerts available.

A discussion followed about the economic impact of COVID-19 on artists. Susie noted that her company hasn't seen an onslaught of refund requests from canceled shows. She feels the Folk community is an accountable one that supports organizations and artists, so perhaps they will continue to support FAI with memberships and donations.

Directors thanked Aengus for his attention to all the scenarios. Matt Smith asked about showcase application timelines. Aengus said that those will begin in May as scheduled and then the situation will be reassessed based on current status.

### **Financial Report**

Alka thanked Aengus for the care and attention for addressing all potential impact. The Finance Report is in the board kit. There isn't a great deal to report or explain regarding the report, and there were no questions posed.

Aengus noted that despite the current situation, FAI will still end within the \$1.6 million budget.

### **Board Committees**

Lisa led a discussion about populating Board Committees. Committee chairs went through the current membership to ensure all were in agreement for being on those committees base on a description of each. Aengus would like each committee to meet on a regular schedule to enable reports to be submitted in a timely manner. A discussion followed about committees and those wishing to serve on each.

Reid suggested that FAI engage the community to sign petitions to encourage lawmakers to include gigging musicians in the recovery legislation. Laura suggested there should be a political/legislative subcommittee. Directors wishing to serve on that subcommittee were noted. Michael said that since FAI is part of many national organizations, the organization can and should be part of that discussion.

Ellen reported that the regional leaders retreat will be a digital meeting instead of in person. Aengus lead a discussion of the benefits of regional leaders meeting in person as well as the FAI in person Board meetings.

The Nominated Committee needs more discussion to establish streamlined documentation to ensure transparency and tee up for a succession plan for the committee lead.

**Action Item:** Before the first NomCom call in April, Amy will be reaching out to each Director who is nearing the end of their term in order to establish their intent to run again.

**Action Item:** Deana will circulate an updated committee chart so all committee chairs and members can review and finalize.

## **May Board Meeting**

Aengus announced that the May Board meeting will not be in person in Boston. Instead it will be a virtual meeting. It won't be a two-day meeting, but will be an extended meeting. Calendar invitations contain the correct link for joining each meeting and include the agenda and the link for the shared Google drive for all member documents.

## **Other Business**

Board members and Board buddies are encouraged to be in touch with one another.

Amy asked about scheduling committee meetings and placing those on the calendar. Staff will handle the administrative duties of putting those on the calendar based on the Chair's preference.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Made by: Alka Sharma

With all business being concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 5:11 PM CT.