

## **FAI Board of Directors Meeting September 23, 2020**

### **In attendance:**

Lisa Schwartz (President)  
Matt Sever (Vice President) – left at 3:41 PM  
Deana McCloud (Secretary)  
Alka Sharma (Treasurer)  
Ellen Stanley (at Large)

Enrique Chi	Gary Paczosa
Lynn Cingari	Chris Porter
Rose Cousins - joined at 4:03 PM	Amy Reitnouer
Rosalyn Dennett	Laura Thomas
lou DeMarco	Meg Tarquinio
Susie Giang	Gerald Torres - left at 3:56 PM
Chloe Goodyear	Reid Wick
Michael Kornfeld	
Sara Leishman	

Aengus Finnan, Executive Director  
Jennifer Roe, Director of Operations

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by President Lisa Schwartz at 4:05 PM CT with a brief check-in and reminder about confidentiality of the proceedings.

### **Minutes**

After a review of the minutes from the previous meeting, there was a correction for June 30 meeting attendance to indicate Laura was present.

Motion: To approve minutes with correction as noted  
Made by: Michael Kornfeld  
Seconded by: Chris Porter  
Result: Motion was approved

Lisa informed the Board that Rose Cousins has made the decision to step back from the board effective the end of this month. This will be addressed later in the NomCom report. Thanks was given to Rose for serving on the board.

### **Executive Director's Report**

#### **Office Update**

An office update was provided, noting that staff continues to work from home for the foreseeable future. An update on FAI's COVID19 pivot content provided a summary of items that are being worked on daily. The overall focus continues to be online resources, trainings, networking, and community support available on folk.org resources page to inform others of what FAI is doing during this time.

A few new items that are being done include:

- Artists in (Their) Residence - funded by the Antonia and Vladimer Kulaev Cultural Heritage Fund, curated by Chris Thile.
- Global Music Match, pairing artists to cross-promote in other markets via social media and song sharing.
- Village Fund – Concept to raise enough funds to distribute \$500 grants to artists and industry entrepreneurs in need.
- Lyrasis Circuit Rider Grant – An 18-month/\$60,000 grant to enable FAI to hire Majestic Collaborations to address and support the needs of the national nonprofit presenting network through a 5-phase process with an end goal to create Safe Reopening guidelines.

### **Ethno USA**

Ethno USA has been suspended for a year, resulting in JMI and FAI no longer requiring full-time staff to coordinate the program at this time. Unfortunately, Jay Gilman has been laid off as a result. A part time contractor will be hired in 2021 when there is need to recommence planning.

### **Radio Chart Guidelines**

For the first time, guidelines are now posted at <https://www.folkradio.org/folk-charts/folk-chart-guidelines/> and have been circulated publicly to provide best practices and details for artists, labels, and promoters servicing radio, as well as radio DJs reporting to the charts. Thanks were provided to MarySue Twohy, Michael Kornfeld, and Kari Estrin for their support of FAI's management of the Folk Chart (previously the Folk DJ chart).

### **Virtual conference**

In place of the in-person conference, staff are planning on hosting a four-day virtual conference in February under the theme "Folk Unlocked". The organization is looking for maximum engagement while also keeping in mind the financial situation and parameters facing the community for setting costs. Staff are exploring all platform options for the 2021 virtual conference after experiencing AmericanaFest and IBMA to see their platforms in use, and consultation with numerous vendors.

### **Memberships**

FAI is moving forward with establishing universal start date for memberships. Currently all membership dues are waived through the end of December 2020. This will be extended to the end of February to align the with new universal start date as of March 1.

### **Cultural Equity Team**

The Cultural Equity Team has had a couple of initial meetings, and Aengus is thrilled to have Reggie Harris and Karima Daoudi joining that team joined by Alka Sharma and Gerald Torres as board representatives. The team will be selecting another ten community members to meet in order to gather information and make recommendations to address cultural equity so that current practices and programs can move forward and galvanize as policies and procedures, informing FAI's next Strategic Plan.

### **Strategic Plan**

The current Strategic Plan expires in 2021. Aengus suggests waiting until recommendations from the Cultural Equity team are received and there is time to reflect on those as a way of guiding the future plan.

## **Board Succession**

Aengus provided a chart that outlines the terms, and the Board members set for retirement, flagging ExCom, which is due for election next year. Succession planning in all leadership roles needs to be considered.

## **Staff Handbook**

A draft copy of a change in the staff handbook was provided, noting that it is prudent to revisit this documentation from time to time. There are some basic corrections and updates from the past few years that need to be made to the document (ie. FAI's office address has changed, board approved new mission, values, strategic plan goals).

Aengus drew board attention to additional proposed changes addressing a return to FAI's original structure of vacation time separate from sick days and personal time allocation, rather than a combined PTO (Paid Time Off). Looking to the future (and an eventual return to the office), especially in light of C19 and based on FAI's staff function and size, it is felt that the combined PTO format is discouraging staff from claiming sick time, and is not as advantageous overall. Aengus and Jen have discussed this with staff, and Jen has compared FAI's holiday structure to other Kansas City non-profit organizations. Aengus noted that these recommendations were previously presented and endorsed by ExCom.

Motion: To approve proposed changes in the staff handbook  
Made by: Ellen Stanley  
Seconded by: Amy Reitnouer  
Result: Motion passed

Lisa thanked Aengus and Jen for the thoughtful and detailed update to the handbook.

## **Finance Report**

Alka Sharma reviewed the current financial balance sheet noting that FAI is still expecting payment of \$20k from JMI for the Ethno contract, and that there is an outstanding tax reimbursement amount still due from Montreal for which a claim has already been filed. Confirmed NEA Cares act PPP funds are also still due, and though FAI was approved for an SBA forgivable loan of \$8000, the EIDL loan application for a larger low-interest loan was denied. Jen noted she is reaching out to contacts in order to clarify the issues, confirm the status of the \$8K loan, and resolve the necessary EDIL paperwork if possible.

Regarding Budget vs. Actuals, FAI is obviously in a very different place than last year due to COVID19, but the organization is doing ok under the circumstances. Aengus noted that FAI is still on track to land at the overall approved end of year loss amount. The organization is in an exceptional and urgent fundraising situation, mitigating what could have been devastating losses, but that stress is shared by all organizations currently.

## **NomCom**

Committee Chair Amy Reitnouer presented the slate of board candidates for 2021. The committee (composed of Amy, Meg Tarquinio, Laura Thomas, Gary Paczosa, and Chris Porter, along with non-directors Allison Russell and Gil Gastelum), considered 46 candidates and held over 15 interviews. In a year when FAI is facing a great deal of losses, the caliber of the people who were interested in serving and being more involved was a definitely an impressive testament to its renewed credibility.

NomCom proposes presenting a slate of seven people (including 4 incumbents) for the 5 available seats. A review followed of the proposed candidates. Amy noted that the willingness to serve was what really stood out with all of the candidates. Discussion followed about regional representation as well as the best balance overall with diversity, industry, and experience. Support was voiced for the great slate.

NomCom will share a document offline for future committee planning (noting people whom they interviewed but are not on the current slate and who are interested in serving and could be used in different areas on committees, task forces, and other programs to take advantage of their interest, and skills, matching those with FAI's needs).

The proposed appointments were also reviewed. Rose's retirement created an opening for an additional appointment to complete her term.

Appreciation and enthusiasm for the suggested slate were expressed. Lisa noted that ExCom fully supports this slate and recommends that the Board approve.

Motion: To approve NomCom's proposed slate as presented  
Made by: Amy Reitnouer  
Seconded by: Reid Wick  
Result: Motion passed (with Amy, Laura, Meg, and Gary's abstention as they are on the slate)

Aengus noted that this amount of interest from these highly skilled people is a testament to all of the incredible achievements in the past five years, and that the appointment of FAI's 3<sup>rd</sup> international director in 5 years is significant, and marks our expansion into Latin America.

### **Fundraising Committee**

Sara Leishman assumed a co-chair role on July 1, so she led the discussion and voiced appreciation for all the participation and candid conversation during the Think Tank in order to get the two-way conversation going. There is more to come, but she expressed appreciation thus far.

### **Programming**

Programming Chair Deana McCloud noted that the committee is holding a call the next day with Michelle and Treasa to see how they might like to activate the committee.

### **Advocacy Committee**

#### **Copyright/PRO Subcommittee**

Michael Kornfeld led a discussion about some issues that he has been made aware of in regard to house concerts, small venues, and streaming concerts.

Aengus will be following up with BMI and ASCAP for further discussion in regard to going back to PROs on behalf on small venues in order to de-escalate the tension between PROs and small venues, while addressing some of the issues and discrepancies as a sort of broker between the two entities for a process already in place.

### **Health Subcommittee**

Laura Thomas noted that Ellen is not on the health subcommittee, and Rosalyn is serving on that now. Deana will correct and update the committee list.

Laura reported that the health subcommittee has been very busy. Because of COVID19, the subcommittee reviewed the wellness resource page and has given updates to Marisa to be posted.

The subcommittee has also revived the Folk/Life balance social media campaign. Marisa has been great working with the subcommittee as they strive to do a post each week, recruiting artists, industry people, and those within the folk community to post and do social media takeovers. Wellness Wednesday posts and Fridays are social media takeovers.

The committee is also discussing isolation stressors related to mental health and are starting a peer listening room that will be a Zoom meeting with cap of 15 people. Tim Easton has been great as the primary person to recruit volunteers. If initial sessions go well, additional suggestions will be sought.

### **Legislative action**

Michael is hoping to have the first meeting in October. Aengus noted that the American for the Arts 15-point advocacy piece is provided in the board kit.

### **Travel/VISAs**

Aengus shared an update on conversations with a few cohorts sharing concerns about VISAs and access. An overview of what has been advanced by DHS and coming into effect on October 2 was provided. The main issues are around processing time, national reciprocity, and the cost for bringing artists into the U.S. as opposed to the relative ease with which artist can travel from the U.S. to other countries.

### **Regions Committee**

Ellen thanked the Board for responding quickly for approval for FARM bylaw changes. There are a few elections that are currently being held. All Regional conferences have been cancelled, including SERFA's second cancellation (Spring 2020, and 2021). All the AGMs for each Region are being held online. The SWRFA virtual conference is the next weekend, and registration is free, so all are encouraged to attend. Each Regional conference is open to all, regardless of each person's home region.

### **Other/New Business**

Susie Giang asked if FAI is doing anything to encourage voter registration. Jen responded that we haven't as of yet, but plan to, based on a recent meeting and new materials from Americans for the Arts.

Aengus thanked Rose Cousins for her participation and her work on behalf of FAI and the Board.

Motion: To adjourn meeting

Made by: Alka Sharma

With all business being concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 4:33 PM CT.