

ATCA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes | January 13, 2020 • 6:30 PM EDT

PRESENT: Alan Smason (guest), David John Chávez, Amanda Finn (Secretary), Jay Handelman (Foundation ATCA), Lou Harry, William Hirschman (Past Chair), Mark Lowry, Frank Rizzo (Vice Chair), Kelundra Smith, Martha Steketee (Chair), Scott Bennett (treasurer), Nancy Bishop (guest).
ABSENT: Wendy Rosenfield, Charles Giuliano and Chris Jones.

SECRETARY REPORT (Finn): The minutes of December 9, 2019 were approved. (M: Frank Rizzo, 2: Kelundra Smith, Unanimous.)

TREASURER REPORT (Bennett):

Scott: Ran through everything to get updated on the QuickBooks situation. The last bank statements were sitting at about \$60,497 and change. After issuing a couple checks that'll be reduced a little bit. We're in pretty good shape. I put together a budget based on last year's budget estimate. The budget numbers would come to \$300 deficit. But that's the draft budget based on income from membership from last year. Haven't had a chance to go through it. Committees never spent their money so I'd like to approach all of them and find out financial needs for a realistic budget.

Martha: Do we think in this next month before the next EX-Comm meeting the chairs might expect an email from you via Amanda to ask for review and give comments?

Scott: I created a 2020 budget, but haven't compared numbers back to the actual expenditures. Trying to get documents, they're password locked. I'll do it manually if I have to.

Martha: Big picture, the money is transferred, the accounts have been created. Scott is on it.

Scott: The other thing I want to address is when we spoke about the website, apparently Wild Apricot is set up for a monthly payment. But Square Space wasn't set up that way.

Martha: The website was overdue and the bill was from December. I got on and paid it but it all happened late last night.

Scott: Right now, Wild Apricot is \$50/month. If we stay with Wild Apricot we should be able to work out a yearly deal. I cut you a check for the money you laid out Martha.

IATCA cards - Stephanie asked for the address, I gave her Amanda's on the 9th.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Advance reports were distributed as submitted by the committees. Additional reporting:

- **COMMUNICATIONS** (Rosenfield):
 - **Website** (Nancy Bishop):

Martha: We've been in the weeds with our website story. Nancy will talk to us about the report she shared that gives us the results of the member survey she did. The draft proposal for website development she's been working on for a year or more about how to improve our web presence.

Nancy: I sent three documents, a PowerPoint with the results and the report and RFP. 100 responses to the survey of 230-ish members - 45% of members, as we talk about the percentages it's not a random sample. The random sample doesn't extrapolate. I wanted to mention also the group on this project for the last 9 or 10 months we've had this informal website working group which I've been leading happily. Several, five of us.

A few data points: members rarely use the website or members only pages. But the Update is very well read. Most people say they use the website from a laptop. That's surprising because it's often evenly divided between mobile and desktop/laptops. Our website is hard to read on a phone. We will adjust in our update. Certain issues in comments: it's boring, can't find anything, one thing that came up several times which is a concern for the org is there is some elitist aspect to how we operate. Several people say: it's always the same people whose reviews are shown and activities are shown on website. Feeling among some we are an elitist organization and not representative of the organization. Help make adjustments. Maybe it suggests there are problems the org needs to address in a larger sense.

- Cleaner, simpler, easier navigation, more photos
- Use Update to push people to the website to get information
- Make an effort to highlight work, more reviews
- Discussion forum
- More videos/photos

Lou: We have forums, but we don't prod people to interact. We could put in the newsletter to engage in conversation.

Nancy: Forums are in the members only pages. But there is a lot of stuff and how you find things are not clear.

Martha: (regarding RFP) Squarespace public website appears to have a billing history to 2009. That suggests to me that that's when it started. There has been revamping since then but it's a 10 year old website. My assessment it's about cleaning up and revamping. Some parts of the website are either not functioning correctly or haven't been updated. There's a lack of clarity. There isn't a webmaster.

Nancy: Wild Apricot has a lot more options, so we aren't using it as much as we could. An archive has to stay on the website. That's a separate step here that can be a separate quote of migrating it on Squarespace. We could put it in an archive it doesn't need to be on the website.

Scotty: Given the old website Glenn Loney had it was a problem. I created a database and after a given period of time things were shifted into the archive. It was a few extra steps and that website became a dinosaur but putting everything into an archive you can find what you're looking for. It's not a big deal. It's still accessible.

Martha: Is there anything you need from us? It's an impressive set of work the committee has done. What do you need from us to support?

Nancy: Still looking for two people on our committee, two web developers - one I've worked with and one is someone Kelundra has worked with. When we discussed this at the May meeting we discussed a budget then that we should...the tentative approval not to exceed \$5,000. That's in the RFP. I might take it out but sometimes a vendor will ask if there is a budget.

Scott: Depends on how many pages are involved

Nancy: My developer said WordPress can do the things we need. I don't know if a specific member organization does it better.

Alan: I do have some expertise in this. We just went to a full blown Wild Apricot website. We updated our old to the new website. WA does not play well with WordPress.

Nancy: WP in itself with widgets and attachments can do what WA does.

Send RFPs due by March and go over it in March or April. We can then come back with a proposal for the project with costs. I would say in May perhaps.

Martha: That's thrilling, I'm thrilled. Any way we can help let me know in the interim.

- **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION** (Smith-Chávez):

Kelundra: Basically in our existence the EDI committee toward the end of every year sends out a committee member survey asking everyone to talk about what they want to see done in the following year. It helps guide our focus and attention. The last few years we've had the focus of identifying one major accomplishment we can all put our effort and support behind. One of the things we were big on is the development of the diverse critics list. Another thing was the website, another was training at every ATCA convening. We'll keep doing that and adding more to that. Our members are eager at this point to do a few things. One of the things has been a mentorship program. That's something that's been a topic of conversation before I was a member of ATCA.

Take the time to develop a mentorship program. I haven't had a chance to talk to Mark about this yet. Over the coming weeks we'll see how realistic this is given the nature of what criticism looks like now but that is something that has been on their minds.

There has been a great amount of interest in external communication that is overseen by the EDI committee for member and non-member critics. Part of that ties into what Nancy was talking about with an easily navigable and create an editorial board that have constant content. Desire for something more immediate and shareable. Our website is dated.

Figuring out our value statement to prospective members. What benefits do we offer? Who can we partner with to offer things to ATCA members? How do we keep them? We need passive programming. What can we put on our website and perks or benefits we can offer? What can we help people do?

Martha: There are so many opportunities. Most of the goals are integrating with the full organization. Bringing focus and energy to our whole organization.

- **MEMBERSHIP** (Kelsall-Lowry):

Martha: We have next steps to have conversations about categories and bylaws, it's time to look at the results of the bylaw vote and execute.

Mark: 87 people responded and the yesses got 83.

Martha: We now have new membership categories. Not having a web master shouldn't preclude us. We can update the membership section on the website which is a really pragmatic thing. Next steps?

Mark: Updating the website is first. We can talk about that, but I have access to that and can help. Cameron and I are having a phone conversation here in the next few days to talk about getting a membership call going for next issues. It'll kind of dovetail with the thing we've been talking about. Recruitment plan going with new tiers in mind.

Martha: Applaud this effort. Folks who go back decades, this topic of expanding our vision and expanding our reach/embrace of writers and how we expand categories to support and invite in has been a topic for all these years. I want to celebrate this moment. We're doing it.

Bill: It's really encouraging. It gives great comfort to get traction due to Mark and Kelundra and others. I'm really happy about it. I've said this 7 or 8 times. A lot of time what people need to be is contacted.

PROGRAMS | Events – ATCA-PPF (Harry):

Lou: 200 emails back and forth so far. The Steinberg/Osborn awards at South Coast Rep. We're heading in the right direction.

-Timing, operating on short notice trying to do everything we can do make it happen and get ducks in a row

-Unlike at Humana or other festivals, one issue here is that we are welcome to the entire festival which is great, they don't have capacity to give us meeting space. Taking bids for how to meet

-Playfully suggested we are close to Disney Land, not the easiest thing to have happen. Trying to make that happen. Again that creates challenge with a whole in the schedule.

Here is what we know: April 22 board meeting, next day Thursday being at Disney, Friday there are two readings and a performance, Saturday is our full group meeting/workshops-Steinberg presentation at 8 pm-production 90 min, Sunday opportunity for reading and then leave

5 hotel bids and got it down to Crowne Plaza with free shuttle at \$119+tax.

Pushing Disney to tell us if they'll let us in the park without charging us. I want to be able to tell members right now to start booking, but part of it is at what point do we say this is happening? What's our failsafe? If for some reason Disney says no we can't do it, that leaves a wide open Thursday. We could just say it's a Friday/Saturday and move the meeting to Thursday. There are things we can do. Are we comfortable doing this?

Jay: Not a problem, but I don't want to fly across the country for two days. Disney would be nice but the program would be interesting. We could fill that time up with other programs. We do have lots of ideas for panels and discussions and brainstorm out things.

Lou: I need to adjust budget if we have to rent space to do a full day of conference.

Jay: Sooner is better because the cost of airfare goes up the longer you wait, the other thing is you are estimating 35 people coming. What can the theater handle? What if we got 100 people to come? That's not realistic but is there a limit?

Lou: I haven't explored that side of it but it's more an issue with the readings. One reading we didn't have the room for.

Jay: However we describe this, the Foundation would be having its annual meeting there a lot earlier than the past which means I don't have a choice I have to be there. I don't want just the board there and a few other people. Praise to you, not criticism. Just a concern. Make sure we gather together as large a group as we can.

Bill: If Disney falls through it's a great selling point but we can fill that with programming with little trouble. Lou you should be proud of what you've been able to put together so far.

-What airport are you talking about?

Lou: John Wayne is right there

Bill: Between those of us on the phone and the NSA listening in, are we like 95% agreed we're doing this here absent we are seeing something here. Is there a plan b. Is there a plan c?

Lou: Barring Disney there is no reason we can't do this conference. If we have that extra day I'll need someone to help me with programming. There is a downside not being boots on the ground but the logistics are all coming together.

David: Happy to help with programming. I'm about 6 hours away but there is always a reason for me to go down there. If there is anything I can do here I'm happy to do it. Maybe other companies I could look at East-West Players. They're out of LA. We can definitely talk offline.

Lou: They are on my list and a few others I would love to logistically get 40 people there but bringing them in as part of panels or workshops to take advantage of the folks there it would be enormously helpful.

Frank: If Disney falls through I have a number of contacts in LA, playwrights who write for TV and a few other contacts that might be helpful. Like David let's talk if it goes that way.

Lou: For me to get the ducks lined up do I let the board know we're ready to go? Do I need a vote? What do I need to move forward?

Jay: I signed contracts with the hotel. That was in consultation with Bill. Robert dealt with some of it too because he helped pay with the organization's card.

Martha: In the short term work in our regular management meetings. We can execute whatever you need to. We can find out how that works.

Alan: We had something close to 300 room nights we had to guarantee. If we didn't meet that by a date we got bumped out of our rooms and had to pay rent. Part of that was based on food too.

Lou: 10 on the first night with the board but 25 each for 3 nights.

Jay: There are 9 ex-comm members, 6 foundation members and a few others who have roles and will be there too. Unless you know they are sharing rooms we might need more rooms.

ATCA-Provincetown20 (Smason):

Alan: I want us to have a conference...

Martha: Provincetown in the Fall?

Alan: September 23-26 if anyone wanted to hangout on the 27th they can stick around but the conference with the people at Texas Tech to take part in the works they have there would be Wednesday-Saturday. Ken is the general manager of the festival.

I've been promoting this since 2017. This is the 400th anniversary of the pilgrims/puritans on Plymouth Rock in Provincetown. The idea was the puritans in England shut down all the theaters. Censorship. All the productions they're doing have to do with censorship.

Two different inns are half a mile away, everyone walks in Provincetown. These two seem to be giving us the best break in room prices. Bradford Motel \$165 or Surfside \$165. Both include breakfast. If our group is intending on having a meeting the breakfast might be important, but if we want breakfast at the meeting that might be explored in terms of cost.

Mixers and events as ATCA members we would be invited to each night. A lot of food part of the event we might not have to worry about that. All of that to be determined. Find out who goes to what.

Martha: Maximum size of the meeting?

Alan: 80 people, but it was brought down to 30.

Frank: Both those hotels are in opposite sides of P-town. Which one do you recommend?

Alan: I've never been to P-town.

Frank: I have and they're on opposite ends.

Alan: We use one or the other. We wouldn't use both.

Just in prelim discussions we have the Bradford is pretty much solid were trying to get Surfside down. The main thing is they'll hold the rooms for our conference but won't hold them past May.

Martha: This is a deep dive into our upcoming event! We'll keep following up and including you to what you can in upcoming ex-comm meetings.

Lou: We need events that are smaller for folks who can't afford either.

- **PROGRAMS | Awards – Steinberg-Osborn (Harry):**

Lou: All plays are in. Discussions are active and happening on the ATCA website.

- **PROGRAMS | Awards – Primus (Reid):** No report.
- **PROGRAMS | Awards – Loney (Rizzo):** No report.
- **FOUNDATION REPORT (Handelman):**

Jay: We have raised \$5100 this year in our annual appeal compared to last year it's \$2000 more than last year. There are a couple people on our board who have not contributed. If you haven't given to the Foundation and are on the board that would help us have 100% participation. Waiting for Frank from the Gay Journalists association.

MARTHA: Administrative tasks being handed out and we're assessing amongst ourselves whether there are tasks that ought to be handled by a stipend funded administrator. We're actively figuring that out.

- **PROGRAMS | International (Jenkins):**

Martha: Also address to lengthy report from Jeffrey. IATCA cards will go to Amanda. Maybe we can get the international committee to move to digital in the future. The cards are on their way.

2020-2021 international cards. Jeffrey's news is that he is throwing his hat in the ring to chair the International ex-comm. If he's not elected he will probably step down. He's been on the committee 10 years. He's proposing Wendy become the ATCA representative. She would need to be accepted but they all know her.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM EDT. (M: Frank Rizzo, 2: Lou Harry, Unanimous.)

NEXT MEETING: Monday, Month DD, 2019 • 6:30 PM EDT