

Belt Media Collaborative Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2019
4:00 p.m. ET

Attendees:

Board Members

Present: J.W. Babcock, Dan Crissman, Peter Debelak, Vicki Sitron, Anne Trubek

Absent: Sean Decatur

Quorum present? Yes

Others present:

Executive Director: Ryan Schnurr

I. Call to order

II. Board Membership Updates/Transitions

1. Anne Trubek (AT) steps down as board chair and resigns board membership, effective immediately
2. J.W. Babcock (JWB) nominated + seconded for Board Chairman
 - a. JWB elected unanimously by all present (Sean Decatur absent)
 - b. JWB notes his intention to serve for only one term
3. Vicki Sitron (VS) nominated + seconded for Vice Chairman
 - c. VS elected unanimously by all present (Sean Decatur absent)
4. Dan Crissman (DC) agrees to continue as Secretary

III. Reports

1. 2019 Q2 Report by Ryan Schnurr (RS)
 - a. Total revenue: \$16,395 (\$3,235 membership/29 new members, \$9,360 donations/2 total, \$3,800 grants/partnerships)
 - b. Total expenses: \$24,445 (ending balance: \$25,214)
 - c. Grant funds received from Indiana Humanities (\$1,800) and Amazon Literary Partnership (\$2,000)
2. 2019 Q3 Report (RS)
 - a. Total revenue through 9/1: \$14,747 (\$1,547 membership/8 new members, \$6,200 donations/1 total, \$7,000 grants/partnerships)
 - b. Total expenses through 5/31: \$13,222

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- c. Grant funds from Buell Center (\$5,000) and Ohio Arts Council (\$2,000); NatGeo (\$11,000) underway and should be received by end of Q3/beginning of Q4
- d. Q3 monthly pageviews steady between 20-30,000; slight increase over Q1/Q2
- e. Most-viewed story (“West Virginia Recovery Boys”) attracted 2,000 unique pageviews

3. Board comments on reports

- a. Peter Debelak (PD) asks RS about the greatest challenges of his role
 - i. RS notes that balance between focus on editorial and fundraising is increasingly difficult; wherever more energy is directed, more is achieved
- b. PD proposes the board members do more outreach locally for fundraising; JWB to host social event in Cleveland with potential funders for Q4 board meeting, RS to organize and provide invitation list; VS to reach out to the Detroit fundraising community
- c. AT urges membership as the focus over major gifts or grants and reduction of yearly membership price point from \$60 to \$40; VS agrees that membership funds are unrestricted, while grant funds often come with strings attached
- d. JWB notes that an editorial point-of-view could drive engagement, and featuring a regular columnist can help with topicality; AT observes that the site has become less edgy and less political over the past year, and a balance of more literary posts with more timely articles could increase membership

IV. Old business

- 1. None

V. New business

- 1. Q4 Goals
 - a. Newsmatch 2019 fundraising drive
 - b. Best of Belt Anthology to be printed (DC handling production)

VI. Adjournment (JWB)