

Minutes: INN Board Call

November 17, 2016

Board Secretary Brant Houston

Attending: Neal Shapiro, Lee Keough, Laura Frank, Hsiu Mei Wong, Reg Chua, Steve Beatty, Norberto Santana, Bruce Theriault, Brant Houston, Sue Cross

Absent: Trevor Aaronson, Anne Galloway

Called to order at 11:04 a.m. MST

Previous minutes were unanimously approved.

Budget review: Cross reviews the 2017 budget, with operating expenses of about \$1.68 million. Treasurer Reg Chua went on to present “a nicely conservative budget,” noting that a large percentage of the budget is unrestricted money is in the budget and there is a six month reserve.

A discussion ensued on earned revenue and strategic planning and the history of the budget.

Brant moved to approve the budget as presented. Laura seconded. The budget was unanimously approved.

A discussion ensued on recommendation to increase rates for memberships and/or affiliate members. INN membership rates remain below those of similar organizations and Cross said some funders have recommended higher rates. However, INN has just moved to auto renewal and no change is recommended for 2017-2018.

Membership update: Cross reviewed changes in the membership application to emphasize original reporting, as a number of aggregation sites had applied for membership. She outlined a process to sunset members that have ceased publishing regularly for more than one year. The process does not require a bylaws change; it’s policy in applying bylaws. Anyone who left membership could reapply if they resumed publication.

Cross also recommended an associate member category. Discussion ensued about appropriate associate membership dues and the value of membership for associates. Cross agreed to come back to the board with a formal proposal.

A discussion ensued about limitations on advocacy and lobbying. A task force was formed of Norberto, Lee and Bruce to look at issues with Sue in 2017.

Discussion ensued on having an in-person in NYC April 26, 2017 [SC note: Date was changed to **April 25, 2017**]. Brant, Reg and Bruce will help on that agenda.

Discussion ensued on hosting of members and fiscal sponsorship costs and charges. Norberto asked how many members don't use Largo. Sue said a third of members use Largo.

Brant suggested staff do a study on the economic value of INN membership. Cross said staff has been pulling together initial valuations and can tackle a more complete valuation in 2017.

Discussion ensued of advocating for real news vs fake news. Board noted it wants to broaden appeal of INN and its members. Sue noted that technology director Adam Schweigert wants to set up concierge service for donations. Board members discussed feasibility. The idea would face some significant accounting/tax reporting challenges on the back-end. Several board members were doubtful many members would participate. Cross said the staff will continue investigating options.

Meeting adjourned noon MST.