

Vancouver Poetry House

October 3, 2021 Meeting

Board attendees:

Amanda Eagleson

Holden Wall

Max Sumner

Leslie Stark (arrives 16:38)

Lisa Webster

Guests/Staff:

Colleen Brown

Regrets:

Meeting Began: 4: 11PM 16:11

Meeting End: 5: 50 PM 17:50

Motions:

- Motion to Approve September Minutes with Agenda Item Titles added. Made by Amanda. Seconded by Max. Motion passes unanimously
- Motion to end the meeting made by Max. Seconded by Lisa. Motion passes unanimously.

Action Items:

- Continue (and expand on) the rewording of the “affirmative action” part of the policy to make it more accurate and applicable to what is and will be done
- Lisa will share the harassment and bullying policy she has worked on
- Leslie will complete and send Colleen the final report on the raffle.
- Amanda will send Lisa relevant minutes (related to board conflict).

- Colleen will share with Lisa the link to the policy she shares with new hires.

Internal Election Results (for Board Roles):

- Holden puts his name forward for president and asks for anyone else (who might be interested) in nominating themselves/someone else. There is not. Vote is held. Holden is unanimously voted president.
- Max puts his name forward for Vice President. Vote is Held. Max is unanimously elected Vice President.
- Amanda puts name forward as Secretary. Vote is held. Amanda is unanimously elected secretary.
 - Lisa will assist with secretarial duties should Amanda be unable to attend meetings
- Leslie puts name forward to continue as treasurer. Vote is held. Leslie unanimously elected treasurer

Agenda Item 1: Minutes and Action Items

Land Acknowledgement : *As we gather for this meeting physically dispersed and virtually constructed let us take a moment to reflect the meaning of place, and doing so recognise the various traditional lands on which we do our meeting today.* - Holden gave land acknowledgement

Compassion Acknowledgement: "My hope is that we develop enough courage to develop courage. To try to have, try to learn to treat each other fairly, with generosity and kindness. That's my hope."-Maya Angelou (Amanda gave Compassion Acknowledgement)

Approve Minutes:

Holden Suggests titles of the Agenda Items be added to the September minutes.

- Motion to Approve September Minutes with Agenda Item Titles added. Made by Amanda. Seconded by Max. Motion passes unanimously

Action Items updates

- Amanda to start conversation around interval elections (via Basecamp/email)

- This was Done Actual elections take place later in meeting (Agenda Item 5)
- Board to review section in our HR policy and consider rewrites on the affirmative action section also review sources provided in Colleens' HR policy work.
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PsfraXR67ZP-CM-sDAqMbBt-7wTcvLGyTuGNoFIgIUg/edit#heading=h.tp1bh90tt1e> -
 - Amanda to do a Basecamp post regarding this
 - This was done. There is more work to be done regarding this. Discussed further during the meeting.
- Amanda to redistribute committee funds and contact the two interested parties-
 - This was done. Waiting for responses from both parties Doodle poll will be sent when this occurs
- Amanda to send (coordinator) applicant information for both “monthly fill-ins” and potential partnerships to Joseph and Colleen and they will share with the rest of the staff-
 - This was done
- Amanda to set up an Auto-reply for the Admin email
 - This was done
- Holden to login to the Admin email on his phone so notifications are received
 - This was started but the required phone number needs to be confirmed. This is completed after the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Financial Report

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Vancouver Poetry House						
2	Balance Sheet						
3	As of 31 August 2021						Accrual Basis
4							31 Aug 21
34						2310 - Deferred contrib app grants	158,306.13
35						Total 2300 - DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS	158,306.13
36						Total Other Current Liabilities	162,986.13
37						Total Current Liabilities	163,277.23
38						Total Liabilities	163,277.23
39						Equity	
40						3000 - OPENING EQUITY	9,651.46
41						32000 - Retained Earnings	16,115.72
42						Net Income	(28,717.94)
43						Total Equity	(2,950.76)
44						TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	160,326.47
45							
46							

We are still coming to terms with (need to gain a better understanding of accrual accounting)

Agenda Item 3: GM Report

Regarding HR: Colleen has concerns as has a better understanding (from Brad) around the previous HR issues with AD. That the connection had not been made prior for her of the contentious AGM (where the board resigned). And the previous complaints of racist behavior Among lead staff. That she hadn't fully understood why the AD didn't stay as a contract was not renewed and this would appear to be a resolution. But that this was because of the AGM where the community rallied behind a perceived labor issue and the board was unprepared at an AGM to shut down the conversation as it being a labor issue as it wasn't and it wasn't an appropriate place to have that conversation. This left the AD feeling unsupported, and the board's mass resignation. Colleen is wondering about role playing scenarios ("what can we say about peoples working relations at meetings" , for example).

Lisa: There are challenges in having a board and having employees but the work being done right now will help resolve these issues (future forward). Complaints resolution, having a framework and expectations are key. With regards to past issues the questions are; does VPH have relationships with that person and do they desire one going forward? Is outreach an option? It depends on what the board wants in a relationship.

Colleen: She does still have contact as she will do WordPlay jobs and has done shows. But that contact, then, is limited to programming staff.

Lisa: What the incident described indicates is a need for clear expectation between staff and board around discriminations harassment etc... It shows that needs to be in place. This might be (at this point) less about healing and more about a future forward approach. There's been board turnover in the interim, we don't really need to rehash everything but need to focus on the work of having clear expectations and guidelines. That needs to be the focus.

Colleen: Who Provides (for example for the coordinator) these guidelines? In that case would it be Joseph or the board?

Lisa: The board gives them to Joseph to action. So he has processes and procedures to outline.

Some conversation regarding Lisa has recently actioned a Harassment and Bullying Policy and offers to share this with the board. Colleen expresses concern as the focus has been on hiring but not so much this part (of HR policy) so there is a fear of making the same mistakes again.

Lisa brings up nonprofit advisors. And states it depends on how much struts we want. It could be as simple as asking for confirmation "Have you read the policy"? In an email.

Colleen brings up that there will be (contrac) staff meetings. Not everyone is available at the same time so they are broken up. There will be a calendar for meetings (and events) set and shared tomorrow.

Amanda confirms that admin@ is still the best place for staff complaints (especially as it's no longer forwarded to staff). Lisa expresses an interest in sitting in on a (staff) meeting.

The website is being made one (rather than a multi-site) this won't change much from the frontend but will make things easier for the staff (in using the site).

Regarding Education: Amanda W has three in-person wordplay bookings almost completed. There was a hangup in Mailchimp and the newsletter announcing wordplay needs to be resent.

Amanda W would like to start interviewing new poets for wordplay this month (Joseph would likely sit in) and we would hire at least one wordplay poet to sit on the committee. We are looking at 2-3 hires.

- Holden and Amanda E both express that they like the idea of hiring new Word Play Poets

Daniela has had one meeting in MOSAIC and they are interested in partnering with us. We are also setting up meetings with Frog Hollow and Qummit

Colleen notes she has a meeting with an entertainment lawyer which is a positive as there was some concern regarding coproductions.

Agenda Item 4: AD Report

As Joseph is absent board will receive the report after the meeting and hear from him next month

Agenda Item 5: Board Elections (moved to the end of meeting)

- This is moved until the end of the meeting as Leslie will be a late arrival for this meeting.

You can nominate yourself and others. And we now have enough for a Vice President position. Holden: I did mention at the last meeting I'm not comfortable with continuing the role (of President) but primarily because of my discomfort with chairing meetings. But it was brought to my attention this can be shared. In this case I'm willing to keep the role of president.

Holden nominates himself for president and asks for anyone else (who might be interested) in nominating themselves/someone else. There is not. Holden is unanimously Voted President.

Max asks for details of the role of Vice President. Is essentially to fill in when Holden is not able to fill the role.

Max puts his name forward for Vice President. Vote is Held. Max is unanimously elected Vice President.

The next role was Treasurer. Leslie puts her name forward (with the caveat that if anyone else is good at or has an interest in numbers she is willing to step down from that role). Vote is held. Leslie is unanimously elected treasurer.

Amanda puts name forward as Secretary. Lisa offers to fill in on days she is not able to attend meeting(s). Vote is held. Amanda is unanimously elected secretary.

Some discussion on board make-up and challenges.

Holden advises Leslie that Colleen needs the final report on the raffle.(and that we can't get gaming money until it's done).

Some conversation regarding live shows.

Lisa asks about "politics" past board iterations. Amanda/Leslie that it's been good for the past year. Amanda will send Lisa relevant minutes.

Agenda Item 6: Discuss HR Policy wording.

Amanda Provides a link to Colleen's HR policy but the primary concern was this section of the policy manual:

We maintain an affirmative action policy.

"Affirmative Action is a policy to increase the range and diversity of skills and experience within the Society. Hiring preference will be given to qualified applicants from a diversity of groups who face systemic barriers to employment based on class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, ability, etc."

Amanda couldn't find anything where there would be a legal issue with this phrasing but what she attempted to do was say the same thing but with more familiar phrasing

"Throughout Canada's history, many groups have been the subject of racial discrimination, either through official, government-supported means, or informally. In line with equality provisions of s. 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms we maintain a policy of proactive, strategic outreach to increase the range and diversity of skills and experience within the Society. Hiring preference will be given to qualified applicants from a diversity of groups who face systemic barriers to employment based on class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, ability, etc".

Colleen: How would this be implemented? My question would be more an implementation question.

Amanda: I feel (in terms of what's already in place) the taking away of names and replacement with numbers is an important part of "equality provisions". I think that strategic outreach I feel has been done (in the chart you have) we could maybe look into other places we could be advertising?

Colleen: But my understanding is that we would choose categories of people who are underrepresented and hire within those categories and that's where I'm not sure how to do this as I would be vetting people's identity (legally). I think we need to apply to be allowed to do that.

Lisa: When the federal government is doing preferential hiring they say "We encourage the following...*lists groups*...to apply. But for some (based on position) it might be only (for example) only indigenous people can apply. So it really depends on the goal.

Colleen: See when I hear preferential hiring that's my association. Like we are hiring for an Indigenous curator (for example) and we haven't done that. What we are doing is providing an equal opportunity and increasing our applicant base.

But we haven't actually asked for identity within an application. And I do believe that we need to apply to have the ability to do that.

Lisa: But one way around that is within the programming. For example: we would want one Indigenous show/event or one LGBTQ + with an expectation associated with hiring.

Colleen: I think so (that this is a way around this). And I believe that this has been done. But that's not a regular job with us.

Lisa: What are the systemic barriers? Because the purpose really is dismantling systemic barriers so that the representation of your workforce is reflective of the population. Is there a systemic barrier you are trying to address? You have hires who are LGBTQ+ you have indigenous people who are employed and on your board. So what are the barriers you actually have? If you're fumbling for it (what the barriers are) *who* has told you that you're not meeting employment equity or not having a representative (employment) body?

Colleen: That's a good question and point. This hasn't really been implemented in the last set of hiring. The decision that there were specific barriers (to employment for those positions) and we were going to resolve that. And again I don't think it's legal (to do so). Without specific approval.

Lisa: I don't know about that part of it (the legality) . I would go to what do you need to demonstrate to your funders. Is it a systemic barrier coming from the art world itself? As far as I can see this organization has always had a fair amount of diversity.

Colleen: Funders are happy with the diversity in the organization but people in the community would like to see more diversity in the leadership (so the board and Joseph and my Position) and (likely) people on the stage as well. But mainly, Administration.

Amanda: If we feel that needs to be addressed further. Specifically the policy manual (so that the manual better reflects what we are actually doing).

Holden: Yeah, it's worth a longer conversation. Colleen has implemented procedures to prevent discrimination within the hiring process (which could be something to write into *this/policy*). But we are not doing preferential hiring and should consider if we want/need to.

Colleen: Do we need to look for a particular group of people?

Leslie: Recruitment practices should put diversity first. The how and where of recruitment?

Holden: And where we are doing special programming for Indigenous peoples/black history/pride month(s) if the slam coordinator was not Indigenous or Black or LGBTQ then we could/would do hiring for "curation for this month" from this identity group.

Colleen: My sense is that in the past, we have done this, but more in the sense that we (the coordinator) knows someone and seeks them out. But that's a bit of a problem in that it's not an open call to that community, it's like "you have to know us". I think examples of this are important. Like let's pretend we are seeking out curation for a month. And what would that look like?

Amanda: I like that, because there are points of reference for that. There are (for example) publications that have done just that (I'm thinking of Room Magazine).

Leslie: Yeah, we don't need to reinvent the wheel on that.

Holden: And I think in the past it's been more performer based (in terms of representation for those months) than curatorial.

Amanda: So a further reworking or my rewording of the Affirmative Action section of the policy manual is needed.