

Vancouver Poetry House

July 4th 2021 Meeting

Board attendees:

Meeting End: 16:20

Amanda Eagleson

Holden Wall

Leslie Stark

Max Sumner

Guests/Staff:

Colleen Brown

Joseph Dandurand

Laura Orban

Liz Orme

Regrets:

Meeting Began:

14:10

Motions:

- Leslie makes a motion to approve the minutes from June. Max seconds. Motion is approved unanimously
- Motion to approve the native hip hop festival society Rhymes with Orange partnership (and associated payment of poets) made by Amanda. Seconded by Holden. Approved unanimously.

Action Items:

- 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-7wTcvLGyTuGNoFlgIUg/edit#heading=h.tp1bhz90tt1e>

- Joseph will reach out to Sam regarding any interest in the hiring process (or if they have any candidate recommendations)
- Joseph and board will reach outside of the organization for a committee member
- Board members and Admin to responds to Doodle poll sent by Naomi
- Amanda to start sending out emails for committee members
- Board to complete reports and drop them into the agenda as well as finalize the sequence of events.
- Board to arrange a run-through of the AGM
- Holden will look into the rules regarding AGM time limits

Agenda Item 1:

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.*

Compassion Acknowledgement: *You can't forgive without loving. And I don't mean sentimentality. I don't mean mush. I mean having enough courage to stand up and say, 'I forgive. I'm finished with it.'*— Maya Angelou

- Scheduling done to meet up with potential interim board member for July 7th 6pm
- Approved June Meeting Minutes.
Holden asks for a rewrite of “questioning capacity” as connotation doesn’t match intent on Page 4 under the GM report. Amanda agrees phrasing is inaccurate. Both Leslie and Amanda correct a spelling error each. Amanda will edit the section about ASL as it is a “word salad”.
Leslie: I move that we approve the meeting minutes from last month
Max seconds this motion
Motion is approved unanimously
- Action Item Updates
 - Holden (and rest of board) to set up meetings with those who expressed interest in the board membership callout. This is mostly completed. There is one interested party who has expressed that while still interested they would like to apply for a paid position with us. So we will see.

- Board begins committee member list conversation on Basecamp. This has been done.
- Members of board to meet with Joseph regarding Slam Coordinator position. This was done via email
- Amanda to have an AGM agenda outline started and shared. This is done (shared further down in the agenda)
- Amanda and Joseph to complete post for indigenous history month that acknowledges recent events and offers indigenous led organizations to donate to (Colleen to put out using Hootsuite). This was done.

Agenda Item 2

Financial Report

Laura: I've calculated the amount to pay to WorkSafe BC for April/May/June (the second quarter) and I paid this with a Visa so that expense does appear in the financials.

Also I've entered all the adjusting journal interest from Avisar (as well reclassification of expenses).

So, the financials which are for June (to date) include what the auditor did to finalize 2020. So (lets say) for the budget for June there is a difference of \$5000 in loss instead of \$3500 its \$8000. And for YTD it's pretty much the same.

The next big thing (expense) would be the invoice from Avisar, to complete the payment for their work.

Holden: Question about \$5000 difference (with YTD pretty much on par with the budget). Big picture; are we ok? Just overall how are we looking?

Laura: Yes. Still ok.

Agenda Item 3

General Manager Report

Colleen: There have been three callouts for new members. Notifications have been sent for renewal as well. So my next steps are to invite people to the AGM and put the announcement out again on social media (it has already gone out once) and then (unless you want to direct me) I'm done with that (except to write a report for it).

I have some programming parts to go over here because we have new partnerships and co productions. We have a recent event for Stage to Page, so we partnered with them, we provided funding so that they could get ASL and in return they acknowledged us during their event. Then our second co-production which is a three way split between Stage to Page, ourselves, and Brandon Wint. So that is a three way contract. Stage to Page offers the tech and promotion, we

are providing infrastructure and money, and Brandon is offering the poetry. This has been a very successful event in terms of the box office. And we've found a way that works with our audience in terms of having pay what you can tickets in eventbrite.

We were approached to partner/co-produce a program called rhymes with orange with the native hip hop festival society. That request came from RC and that event will go on July 24th so we do need to decide if we want to support them. Again it would be a three way relationship between us, poetv, and the native hip hop festival society. And they would be asking for financial support to help pay the poets.

We also have the potentially ongoing relationship with Frog Hollow and their program that offers teaching film practices to at-risk youth. I would like to continue working with them in the fall but I'm unsure in what capacity at this time (I thought maybe with them providing a videographer/teaching opportunities for our poets).

There is then the New Strategies Grant (this is not approved yet) if approved it would be a co-production with Brad Morden and also all the artists participating in that grant

Then there is the Talking Stick Festival which we are in co-production with.

I bring this up as we anticipated we would learn more about how to structure co-productions when/if the Digital Strategy Grant went through but these co-productions are coming up fast and furious so we do need to do that work more quickly so I need to reach out to our granting bodies to make sure that work is being done properly.

Amanda asks regarding the Rhymes with Orange partnership what was needed from the board (for approval) and if it's just the approval for funds to pay poets that's needed.

Colleen expresses that there has been \$2000 spent in the hiring process that was not budgeted and we didn't have Brandon Wint in the budget. We have received funding as part of our covid relief but these numbers I will need to go over.

Essentially we would be paying 10 poets and the number RC suggested was \$100 per poet.

The problem with that number is it's below CARFAC fees and I think we want to go into these relationships with the understanding that the payment of the artists is what we would expect if it was solely a VPH production. So I think I will talk to RC and see if it's possible the rate would be \$150 which is what our rate would be.

Amanda: So we would be looking at \$1000-\$1500

Colleen: Correct. I can find the money in the budget so if this is something that we want to do I think we should go ahead.

Amanda: This is something I would want to do. I can put this forward as a motion.

Holden: I would be for this as well. I second the motion (also appreciative of how Colleen has been handling these partnerships to ensure poets are paid our wage if it is the higher wage).

Motion passes unanimously.

Regarding staffing; I've written more detail into our hiring procedure. I would like the board to look at our HR policy as I believe it doesn't comply with Canadian Best Practices. I believe what occurred there was the person contributing to that policy referenced affirmative action which isn't the language I've seen in Canadian policy. I would like the board to take a look at that and I've included a list of references. The Canadian government's guidelines for hiring research chairs is very useful (surprisingly enough). Requests board members review our hiring policy and consider a rewrite regarding the affirmative action section.

Regarding hiring a committee is together for the Volunteer Coordinator and almost for the Education Coordinator. Seeking one more external person. (External people receive and honorarium of \$200.00)

There is board insurance now we still don't have liability insurance. I'm hopeful the work around HR and diversity will help in this regard.

The review engagement was finished and there was a scramble and I ended up signing the charitable tax form this year (we can't do that again next year).

Regarding CADAC the numbers are not updated because for whatever reason I can't get in (as an editor).

**There is some discussion about this. Colleen will look into it as it was not due to any changes made by Leslie or Amanda.*

Telus, BC Arts, Metro, and the Vancouver Foundation grants are not submitted yet.

We have our award announcement from BC gaming \$10,000 which is an increase of \$2800 from last year and we have submitted the City of Vancouver grant but they haven't told me the value yet.

Canada Heritage grant is still outstanding (\$95,000 over 5 years).

New Digital Strategies grant is also outstanding (for \$100,000) but all of that money is accounted for.

Agenda Item 4

Artistic Director Report

Last week I attended Stage to Page. We donated \$500 to that. There were some issues near the end of the event Johnny has provided an email regarding this. There was a long discussion during the event regarding appropriation.

Margo Kane has been contacted and we have an opportunity to be a part of talking stick. There is so much pain right now. I want to do something really positive, something with a positive (and fun) message, right now. Unsure of venues and exact dates right now.

And about the Slam Coordinator. We have had two. I'm hoping we see some movement on that.

Leslie: Do we know if any of the other candidates (for the other positions) that might work?

*response from both AD and GM is no

Amanda: Have we considered reaching out to Sam. I think they might be a good resource. And it might be nice to offer that they be involved in the process.

Joseph: I hadn't considered that. I wrote them to let them know we would be looking for a new coordinator but I didn't do that. I'll make contact with them tomorrow.

Holden: Do you have a hiring committee set-up?

Joseph: Confirms Leslie and Amanda Max are willing to be on the committee

Holden: I think it would be a good idea to reach out to someone outside of the community (and definitely outside of the board).

Joseph agrees. We will discuss further via email (an honorarium will be set-up for the person from outside so they are paid for their work).

Colleen express worry given the importance of the position and Leslie states this is something we can keep running (with a rotation of coordinators/hosts) for a while.

And there's some conversation about considering the position.

Agenda Item 5

Holden reads out the following for the minutes:

We currently have 31 members who can vote at the AGM recently renewing members include:

- Johnny T
- Tawahum
- Frankie
- Joseph
- Colleen
- Sean

- Daniyah
- Rudi
- Santiago U
- Nadia Landman
- Amanda Eagleson

new members

- Hanna Huguet
- William Davie
- Chandra Gurang

Amanda expressed concern about some members who have not renewed.
Discussion over the fact that someone can be lapsed for 30 days and still vote.

Agenda Item 6

The Anti-racism Audit begins in July. Please review Naomi's outline

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1nmTgsu6tYBvrPHV7oujfJOJG1Z68j2q>

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Laura and Liz leave the meeting

Agenda Item 7

Letter to potential committee members

Link provided to board members for input

Holden asks if we can go over the names on the Basecamp thread for committee members

Names are discussed (regarding who to reach out to) Leslie provide input and opinion

Holden recommends timing the send outs (for members) so that we would not have an issue with too many responses but can send out according to if someone declines.

Amanda will start sending out emails for potential committee members.

Agenda Item 8

There is discussion on how to read the instructions for determining the number of open seats at the AGM given that there are two up for election (3 open or 5 open?). Colleen reminds that the intent is to prevent a board from being stormed (which she has seen before).

We need to be able to account (at the AGM) for how many seats are open so could say, "We don't want to go below 5 so we have 4 seats open or we are looking to add half (each time) to get to 11, main thing is to have an answer and a reason for it".

Laura goes (and Colleen and her arrange to meet-up)

Amanda: I like the idea of 4 (Leslie and Holden and 4 open seats)

Colleen: So a board of 7?

Amanda: Yes

Holden: Can someone who has been expelled from the board nominate themselves?

Amanda: I don't know

Holden: I would think no? And it would probably be a nonissue. But is it allowed?

Max: How does expelling someone from the board work (within the manual)

Holden: This was done by board vote

Some conversation on the nature of expulsion, that background would be meddling in the hiring process, mistreatment of a potential hire, and generally blocking the board from getting anything done for months.

Colleen: When you elect, is there a process (introduction and then someone speaks on behalf of person)?

Amanda: It's hard to say at the last one we had been intending (according to the structure) to have the vote during the meeting. But because the meeting went so very long this process was adjusted and the votes ballots sent out after.

Discussion regarding a potentially contentious meeting.

Holden: Regarding seats I would like to suggest 6 (rather than 7). So Leslie, Me, Amanda plus three additional. I believe our current process are to protect the board from takeover, so I wouldn't want to increase board numbers by over double the current amount (3). Doubling the board though leaves space for 50/50 votes and it would be an expanded board that still allows for growth.

Max: This seems good if the maximum is 11. You can double (to 6) and build slowly in following years.

Amanda: Ok, so 3.

Colleen: So you have 5 open seats (two from reelection and 3 unassigned)

AGM Sequence of Events

Amanda suggests an action item that over the next week we drop in our reports to agenda and communicate on the sequence of events.

There is discussion regarding time limit enforcement so that the meeting does not run too long.

And the need for a run through.

Colleen: You can enforce time limits if things are running too long.

Amanda: I think two there needs to be someone to work with Holden (as Frankie did last year).

Colleen: I don't know what the exact rules are regarding time limit enforcement.

Holden: Last year two people went over. But I didn't jump in the first time so after that I was worried if I did step in after that it would be interpreted as bias (only wanting those who agreed with me to speak) I jumped in with the other person. And then there was no bringing it back. But if I had a sure rule that I could articulate at the start that would be better.

I will also look into that

Amanda: Stresses the need for a run through.

Discussion about driving membership numbers up. Max expressed that he had people in mind.

Colleen: For new members to vote at the AGM they must be signed up by the 8th.

Holden: Should we aim for a meeting for next week then? For a runthrough?

Amanda: Yeah that would be good

Holden closes meeting 15:55 at Max's request meeting continues in-camera until 16:20