

**FAI Board of Directors Meeting
12/8/15
Minutes**

In attendance:

Michelle Conceison	David Hirshland	Amy Reitnouer
Mary Sue Twohy	Ralph Jaccodine	Anya Siglin Sadler
Donald Davidoff	Joan Kornblith	Jean Spivey (left @ 12:40)
Lisa Schwartz	Michael Kornfeld	Ellen Stanley
Matt Smith	Tim McFadden	Keli O'Neill Wetzal
Renee Bodie	Dan Navarro	Erika Wollam Nichols

Aengus Finnan, Executive Director

President's Announcements

Meeting called to order at 12:08 PM ET by President Michelle Conceison once a quorum was established. Michelle then reviewed the rules for the meeting and the process to request being put on the list to contribute to the discussion.

Directors are asked to review the dates for all future Board meetings to make sure that there are no additional conflicts. She may change the date for our January meeting to accommodate the directors who will be attending the APAP Conference.

Committee Chairs who wish to report out to the Board in January are asked to notify Michelle as soon as possible so that she can make sure there is room on the agenda. We have a lot to cover in January to prepare for our in-person meeting at the conference in February. The first day of meetings at the conference will be devoted to our Strat Plan and reviewing with Liz Allen Fey.

An additional column has been added to the information Google Doc so that directors may list the email address that they wish to use to receive Google Doc invitations.

Michelle read a note from Jenni Finlay referencing her affinity for the FAI organization and affection for her time on the Board. A brief discussion around Jenni's resignation took place with Michelle pledging to follow up with Jenni and asking all directors to embrace and continue to create a welcoming culture of openness and acceptance.

With no needed revisions and sensing no objection, the minutes from the October 8, 2015 Board meeting, along with the minutes from the October 20, 2015 and November 17, 2015 ExCom calls were accepted as presented.

Executive Director's Report

Membership

Aengus reported that FAI is enjoying the highest membership count ever, with 2383 memberships, up 15% on this time last year.

Our current renewal rate is 60%; we have 129 lapsed members and dues revenue of \$13,300.

Conference

As of December 1, we have 706 delegate registrations (slightly ahead of this time last year), 110 volunteers, and 68 private showcase presenters.

51 scholarships had been awarded by the time of the printed report but Aengus reported that it was now on par with last year at almost 100.

This year the scholarship application process is requiring more detailed information and process a bit more formal.

We are 188 room reservations ahead year over year, and despite some confusion the discounted hotel room block is not sold out.

Action item: Aengus will follow up with the hotel to make sure that correct information is being given to our registrants.

Showcases

The Formal Showcase schedule is complete and has been designed with fifteen-minute breaks to allow for resetting the stages and preparing for the next act. There was a concerted effort made to minimize time conflicts and overlaps of Official Showcase times, including a revision to the start time of Private Showcases on Wednesday night. There was also a reduction in how many Official Showcases went late on Wednesday night (which in the past has run as late as 12:30am).

In part due to increased effort of our new Business Development manager we have received a record number of official stage cash sponsors this year rather than the in-kind sponsorships we've received in the past.

There will not be a dedicated Kansas City night this year. Instead, local performers who were chosen by the jury will be interspersed throughout all of the Official showcases. There will be a local stage as part of the Sunday Music Fair.

We are using an online system for the Private Showcase hosts to submit their room night rosters. This process should expedite the delivery of content to our designers and printers, as well as minimize errors and cost.

We have introduced eight additional Premium Rooms this year and have a total of 50 Private Showcase rooms sold to date.

We are off-pace in sales for the end of year budget; however, we do have new sales in the pipeline with \$10,000 pending. We also have \$35,000 in grants.

Public Events

We have several public events during the conference, including the Wednesday Gala Awards, Winter Music Camp, Official Showcases, and The Music Fair. Tickets are currently on sale online. There is a cap of 100 tickets per night for the Official Showcases.

AGM

The AGM has been repositioned for greater attendance and moved to 9:00 AM on Thursday morning with a continental breakfast 30 minutes prior.

Keynote

Judy Collins is our sole Keynote Speaker this year, presenting at 4:00 PM on Friday. Aengus commented that maintaining a Double Header standard set in an exceptional year with Vice President Al Gore and Graham Nash may be an unrealistic bar to maintain, having exhausted many efforts to secure a second keynote for 2016.

Workshops/Panels

We are in the process of finalizing the workshops and panels. All moderators and speakers are currently being confirmed.

The Music Fair

The Music Fair (held Sunday and open to the public) is being messaged locally as an indoor Folk Festival. Eric Andersen and Alison Brown will be featured performers along with several others from the US, Canada, and the UK. For the Fair the Exhibit Hall space will convert to an Artisans' Gallery with handmade crafts for sale.

Lifetime Achievement Awards

The Lifetime Achievement Awards voting process is about to go live online. There is a historical list of 200 individuals who vote on these awards. Aengus has identified that over 60 of them are not currently members of FAI. We are encouraging everyone to rejoin. Aengus flagged his desire that next year this honor and the select list be limited to individuals who have membership with FAI.

The Music Camp

Programming for the camp is complete and the full schedule is up on the web site. Special thanks to Doug Cox for a stellar job!

The Folk Store

Aengus provided an overview of the last three months of activity and unfortunately, both traffic and sales have been very slow. In January, Aengus and the Finance Committee will analyze all of the data and propose a plan for the future of the store.

Special Recognition

Aengus suggested that we provide a Lifetime Membership to Louis Jay Meyers in recognition for his many years of service to our organization.

Motion: to formally award Louis Jay Meyers with a Lifetime Membership to FAI;

Moved by: David Hirshland

Seconded by: Matt Smith

Motion CARRIED

Finance Committee

Donald reported that the Balance Sheet is healthy and the P&L is a little off versus budget due to overall revenue being down (mostly conference and store related). COGS (all store) and expenses are also down but not enough for NOI to meet budget. The store is a real concern with revenue off substantially. The good news is COGS is also down because we are not buying any additional inventory, so the gross profit for the store is fairly close to the budget but not sustainable long term.

Donald mentioned the prospect that it may be best to close the store (pending results, review, and recommendation in 1Q), and that if the retail space is no longer active Aengus has proposed consideration of a move to the cultural sector of the city, adjacent to our partner orgs, funders, and community.

Site Selection Committee

Anya reported that we have ruled out those facilities/cities that cannot accommodate us, (Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa, Halifax) and that 4 sites remain in two cities: Toronto and Montreal. The Committee plans to preview all 4 sites Jan 22-24th, 2016.

Nominating Committee

The election closes at midnight today (12/8). There are five seats open and we have nine candidates. Since our last meeting, we have received the resignation of one Board member, Jenni Finlay. The Committee proposed that we fill the vacant seat (from Jenni Finlay) with lou DeMarco.

Motion: that we appoint lou DeMarco to fill the seat vacated by Jenni Finlay and serve out the remainder of her term.

Moved by: Dan Navarro

Seconded by: Ellen Stanley

Result: Motion carried

Action Item: Joan will call lou this afternoon to let him know.

Advocacy Committee

Copyright

The Copyright Subcommittee has drafted a letter to go to members educating them about the Fair Play Fair Pay act and encouraging them to get involved.

Motion: that the Board approves the Fair Play Fair Pay letter as written by the Advocacy Committee and hereby instructs Aengus to send it out to the membership.

Moved by: Donald Davidoff

Seconded by: Mike Kornfeld

Result: Motion CARRIED, one abstention (Mary Sue Twohy).

PRO

The PRO Subcommittee is exploring a possible deal with small venues, much like what was done with house concert hosts and would like to prepare a survey to send out to stakeholders.

Sensing no objection, the Board approved the creation of the survey to be brought back to the Board for final review prior to distribution.

Health

Ralph Jaccodine and Ellen Stanley met in September to discuss the areas that they'd like to see addressed and continue to put together resources. If you have any resources to share, please contact Ralph.

Regions Committee

The agreement is complete! All agreements must now be sent to each region to be signed. We discussed doing something special at the conference immediately after the AGM to celebrate the signing.

Action item: Aengus to provide final copies to Regions Committee Chair for distribution to the regional leaders.

FAR-West

There continue to be complaints about FAR-West showcase process and the way their showcases are juried. It was suggested we have a Think Tank to discuss potential solutions. We will start a dialogue on the listserv.

Closing Statements

Michelle took a moment to recognize all of the hard work of the Board and Aengus and the staff and thanked us all.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:29 PM ET.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Schwartz, Secretary