

NEUAC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – Fall 2022

San Diego, California & Virtual – Zoom Meeting
September 29, 2022 at 9:00 AM PST (12 PM EST)
*-Meeting votes and outcomes are **bolded** throughout-*

1. Call to Order (Tanya Jones)

- Attendees: Kathy Kerr, Frank Rapley, Marina Shah, Enrique Hernandez, Suzanne Holt, Allison Donovan, Theresa Kullen, Aimee Gendusa-English, Haly Laasme, Mike Artuso, Andrea Schroer, David Carroll, Heather Jones, Todd Berreman, Laura Bayona, Tony Hunt, Octavio Verduzco, Olivia Wein, David Conn, Allison Poe, Gabe Terry, Kim Rikalo, Liz Brister, Thomas Joyner, Britton Gabel, Carrie Perry, Christalle Combie, Glenis Scott, Keelie Gustin, John Rich, Steve Whitworth, Bonnie Temme, Brian Caudill, Katrina Metzler, Tanya Jones, Rhonda Harper, Shannon Stahley, Chere Coleman, Celia Andrade, Julie Garcia, Mike Bradford, Gerri Drummond, Erin Mao, Tanasia Poke
- Tanya Jones called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM and asked virtual attendees to introduce themselves.
- Tanya Jones established a quorum.

2. Approve Minutes from June 2022 Meeting (Tanya Jones)

- Minutes are available on the NEUAC Insider Page and were distributed via email prior to today’s meeting.
 - i. **Motion to approve the June 2022 minutes.**
 1. **1st: Enrique Hernandez**
 2. **2nd: Chere Coleman**
 3. **Discussion: None**
 4. **Abstain: None**
 5. **Motion Passes**

3. Committee Reports

- **Finance Committee (Enrique Hernandez)**
 - i. Enrique stated the overall statements have NEUAC in good financial standing and asked for questions.
 - ii. Enrique clarified the Statement of Activity reviews the month-to-month income and expenditures of NEUAC from January – August 2022.
 1. John Rich expressed his appreciation for the month-to-month report and the report’s provision of NEAUC’s timing of revenue and expenses to board members.
 2. Katrina Metzler directed members to the last page of the Financial Report as an overview of the 2022 conference expenses and revenue.
 - iii. Olivia Wein commented on the C-Vent transaction fees and proposed that we provide an opportunity to pass on the credit card fees to our registrants.

1. The Finance Committee discussed this previously – whether attendees could opt in to paying those fees. Katrina stated we would look at this next year to ensure participants have the option, keeping in mind that non-profits will likely not be able to pay the credit card fees, except out of pocket.
- iv. Tony Hunt asked for clarification of financial report approvals. Katrina clarified that we would approve the financial reports first, followed by the audit report.
 1. **Motion to approve the financial report.**
 - a. **1st: John Rich**
 - b. **2nd: Steve Whitworth**
 - c. **Discussion: None**
 - d. **Abstain: None**
 - e. **Motion Passes**
- v. Tanya Jones introduced the presentation of the 2021 audit. Materials were provided to in-person board members and sent to all attendees via email before today’s meeting.
 1. Enrique explained that the audit was clean and that our auditors were happy to see our increased revenue and overall management of funds.
 2. The finding in the 2021 audit is the same as the previous audit finding and pertains to the procedure for opening the mail.
 - a. The health and safety of the limited NEUAC staff outweighed the necessity of opening the mail together, Enrique commented. Moving forward, as NEUAC staff potentially increases, NEAUC will work to open the mail together.
 - b. Katrina commented that the finding can be found in the audit report under the heading “Internal Control over Cash Receipts.”
 - John Rich clarified that this issue is considered a “deficiency” rather than a “finding.”
 - c. **Motion to approve the 2021 audit.**
 - **1st: Kim Rikalo**
 - **2nd: Chere Coleman**
 - **Discussion: None**
 - **Abstain: None**
 - **Motion Passes**
- vi. Katrina Metzler presented the IRS 990 form. NEAUC is tasked with making the Board aware of the 990. It is available on the NEUAC website – no motion is needed to approve the 990. The 990 is currently available in draft form and will be submitted soon.
 1. **David Carroll offered that 990s are available to the public once posted for all nonprofits.**
 2. **Bonnie Temme inquired about the date the 990 would be submitted. Katrina clarified that NEUAC requested an extension to submit the 990 in coordination with Wegner.**
 3. **Katrina requested that John Rich provide an update on the in-person goals for the Finance Committee discussed at yesterday’s meeting in San Diego.**
 4. **John stated that one goal is to find a bank to obtain an ICS account, spreading the money over several accounts so each**

account maintains a balance of less than \$250,000 to ensure all accounts are FDIC-ensured.

5. **John further reported that the Finance Committee recommends that the cash reserves maintain a six-month operating budget in the cash reserves, as is standard with healthy non-profits.**

○ **Conference Committee (Kim Rikalo, Celia Andrade, Tanya Jones (Co-Chairs), Katrina Metzler)**

- i. Celia Andrade discussed the committee's goals for increased sponsorship. This will include earlier timing of sponsorship asks and considering the budget cycles of potential sponsors to get our requests in early.
- ii. The committee further recommends that we connect sponsorship to specific events within the conference – such as sponsoring a lunch or technology. This will increase exposure to conference attendees and allow us to budget for line item costs.
- iii. Tanya encouraged Board members to send her requests/suggestions for the San Diego conference reception.
- iv. Steve Whitworth inquired about the plan for engaging local conference participants.
 1. David Carroll offered that Jackie was just awarded a contract by CA utilities to evaluate their PIPP pilot program with utility representatives on the working group for the program that we could potentially engage.
 2. Our SoCal Gas Board Representative (name?) has been reaching out to SDG&E for greater involvement. The committee is also reaching out to Semper International which oversees all the gas company IOUs in California, for engagement.
 3. Katrina noted that we have good membership representation and that she will be speaking at California CALCAPA (Community Action) in the first week of November to get CAA involvement.
 - a. LIHEAP Helps California is also on our Board. Katrina hopes to engage the entire state of CA, not just the San Diego area.
 4. Liz Brister offered that for the New Orleans conference, TCA provided a Volunteer Corps to assist with conference registration sign-in and overall help. Glenis clarified that the volunteers were from their social enterprise program.
- v. Potential theme is "All hands on deck: anchoring our communities."

○ **Membership and Fundraising (Keelie Gustin)**

- i. Steve asked about the 5% fundraising goal – Set it last year and met it. The Board agreed they were comfortable with this amount and clarified the outstanding IOU dollars from last year.
- ii. Mike Bradford and Keelie Gustin are the new co-chairs
- iii. Katrina offered that our membership fees are very low for nonprofits, and we want to be conscious of that; many of our larger corporations and IOU sponsor and have membership in that sponsorship. She reviewed our membership prices; we have not raised prices in six years. Katrina is concerned with retaining new members and strategies to avoid attrition.
 5. Katrina proposed a "NEAUC Welcome Wagon" to the committee to assist with new members – a script to send a welcome email from a

fellow state NEUAC member to increase connection. Several Board Members offered to volunteer in the welcome wagon campaign.

6. Celia offered reinvigorating the idea of virtual regional meetings between NEUAC events – a way to share experiences and update the members about what is happening in NEUAC. It could also increase LIHEAP action day participants.
 7. Mike Bradford, co-chair, offered that the committee is continuing to fix things within the membership sphere that may have “band-aided” previous issues. We understand we need to increase revenue, but the committee is concerned about increasing fees for nonprofits in the wake of the economy and post-COVID priorities and seeking sustainable and lucrative resources for income rather than easy membership fee increase options.
 - a. No vote is needed because we decided not to increase membership dues.
- **Public Policy and Advocacy (Alison Poe, Brian Caudill)**
- i. Continuing Resolution is the big policy update. Federal funding runs out tomorrow – Senate is currently debating the legislative vehicle that contains the CR and will fund Congress through 12.16. Hopeful Senate will finish today and vote and can go to the House tomorrow to get CR approved before midnight.
 - ii. When Congress reconvenes in December, we are hopeful for an omnibus that contains all funding bills. If not, another CR to fund the government through the first quarter of 2023, which could be dicey because it is a new Congress, and there could be a rewrite of funding bills if new Congressional members.
 - iii. Congress has high hopes to get an omnibus done before December. High-ranking members retiring with a priority to get it done as a legacy item.
 - iv. Exciting that there’s an additional \$1B in CR for LIHEAP. Once appropriations are passed, we will see what the actual appropriations number is. The current number is \$4B.
 - v. David Conn asked whether there is any discussion of changes to the funding formula.
 - vi. Allison clarified there is chatter regarding the funding formula, but there is little “appetite” to change formula funding and does not anticipate changes to this process.
 - vii. Brian Caudill offered information on LAD logistics.
 1. Back in person for 2023, which will require new logistic considerations. AGA offered to host, but if more than 200 people, we will need to find a larger space. AGA can accommodate up to 175 in their room – anterooms may also be available if needed.
 2. Emphasis on State Leaders becomes a little more focused in person – the individuals setting schedules, meetings, and working to ensure all meetings are covered.
 3. Further concerns about when to host – current dates may fall during a recess week. Alternative dates – a first whole week of March – state team meetings and action day March 7 & 8
 - a. Training for advocacy training and state team sheets will be provided the week virtually before, so people can digest and think of questions.

4. Steve inquired who would handle the scheduling. NEUAC will survey State Team leaders to see if they would like to schedule meetings or if NEUAC would like to do so. We are combining the best of both worlds.
5. Katrina clarified that Advocacy Associates conducted the scheduling previous year, and it was a massive part of NEAUC's budget. There is no room in the budget for that this year.
6. Katrina discussed the PP&As role in LIHEAP Action Month – developing advocacy and social media strategies to determine what we want to focus on that month.
7. PP&A Goals include ensuring we are back in person for LAD, the critical need to hold a Hill briefing post-election, due to the possibility of chambers flipping and new members in Congress. PP&A wants to redouble efforts to find LIHEAP champions. Caudill considered the possibility of the Senate flipping and Susan Collins, a LIHEAP Champion, becoming an appropriations chair that may not sign on to support letters, as is custom.

4. Executive Committee Update (Tanya Jones)

- Tanya reviewed work on wages of NEUAC staff to ensure NEUAC staff were paid fairly. Katrina had received job offers – she discussed them with Tanya, and Tanya and the Executive Committee reviewed a wage survey and the gap in the NEAUC Executive Director's Salary. Tanya built a salary package that included, a 10% base pay increase (effective immediately) to bring her closer to the job market offerings, an increase to 4% from 3% for annual raise, and a bonus build-in if she raises our reserves by a certain percentage.
 - i. Liz inquired whether the annual increase would be contingent upon an yearly review of the NEAUC ED. Tanya and Rhonda clarified that the annual increase and annual review were based on the cost of living. If NEAUC wasn't performing well, the Executive Committee would discuss the 4% yearly increase and determine what steps to take. Previously, this increase was based more on the cost of living but is not guaranteed year to year.
 - ii. Celia Andrade offered insight from her organization and its workforce challenges. Her organization uses information about the cost of living adjustments rate set by the government and incorporates it into their staff salary structure.
 - iii. Tony Hunt asked whether the adjustments made were just for Katrina. Should she leave, the format will be restructured for a new executive director. Tanya stated he was correct.
 - iv. Tanya further clarified that the annual increase would allow us to sustain the salary, and raise the wage as needed, while appropriately managing the budget.
 - v. Steve clarified that there is also a performance-based component. Tanya confirmed that this was correct and that it would coincide with the annual review of the executive director.
 - vi. The Executive Committee will examine the medical copay costs for NEAUC staff next year.
 - vii. Katrina clarified that we paid for a wage comparison survey for our area alone, putting Katrina and Erin under the average pay by over 30%. Katrina has built a raise into the budget for Erin's one-year evaluation in October that mirrors her increase.
 - viii. **Motion to approve compensation package as presented.**

1. **1st: Steve Whitworth**
 2. **2nd: John Rich**
 3. **Discussion: None**
 4. **Abstain: None**
 5. **Motion passes**
- Additions to the Advisory Board
 - i. Tacoma Public Utilities (Francine Artis), Con-Edison (Jennifer Rodriguez), and THAW. We typically vote on advisory board members once a year. After the vote, three organizations missed the previous emails asking them to confirm their situation and someone with interest.
 - ii. **Motion to add Tacoma Public Utilities, Con-Edison, and THAW to the NEUAC Advisory Board.**
 1. **1st: Rhonda Harper**
 2. **2nd: Steve Whitworth**
 3. **All in favor; no abstentions; motion passes**
 - Financial Review instead of Audit
 - i. Enrique reviewed that the process would be less expensive, with the same information, and allow us to keep in compliance. Our organization's size does not require an annual audit.
 - ii. Steve W. agreed this is a good plan, but we want to ensure we have a schedule for when the audit does occur/ a schedule.
 - iii. Bonnie Temme inquired whether the audit company prepared the 990 and how would we continue our relationship with them?
 1. John Rich clarified that a financial review would be completed by the same audit firm, including preparation of the 990.
 2. Finance Committee did not come up with a schedule and is open to board suggestions.
 - a. Steve W inquired whether other Board members' organization do something similar to this. John Rich's recommendation is to do a review for next year and then determine the schedule for the review/audit procedure. **Enrique agreed.**
 - iv. Celia inquired as to the cost difference between the financial review and the audit. Katrina clarified it is 50% as much as an annual audit. The reason we are discussing this is so we can budget for a professional strategic plan in the coming years. Cannot afford to do both in the same year. Audit - %15,000/year, annual review \$6,000/year
 - v. **Motion to do the financial review for one year and evaluate a review/audit schedule in the future.**
 1. **1st: Tony Hunt**
 2. **2nd: John Rich**
 3. **All in favor; no abstentions; motion passes**
 - Katrina introduced our current Strategic Plan, which was reviewed at yesterday's in person meeting. The current plan is in effect for another year, but it takes a year to do another strategic plan.
 - i. Katrina reached out to recommended contractors. No one able to do for less than \$20k to \$25k; we are attempting to build this into the budget. This would be for an outside person/third party to do the plan.
 - ii. Keelie inquired why so expensive; DC contractors, Katrina seeking recommendations; not sure if it is because of our reach

- iii. Chere offered the national piece doesn't have anything to do with it – strategic plans are expensive.
- Ad hoc JEDI Committee
 - i. Rhonda proposed the formation of a committee to look at our staff, communities we serve, and members – take a holistic approach to look at it from a high perspective to see how we can incorporate it.
 - ii. Saunteel on the committee, Scott Thach, Rhonda – current committee members;
 - iii. Rhonda would like to get a kick-off meeting started to take a look at what NEUAC needs to look like and look at moving forward when it comes to JEDI in connection with what we do as an organization; notify Rhonda if you'd like to participate on the committee; ASAP; the goal is to have kickoff meeting soon
- Communications Committee
 - i. Tonya proposed – this would allow us to promote Katrina and the organization to handle communications.
 - ii. Volunteer to chair and be on the committee – reach out to Tanya.
 - iii. Bonnie Temme – have we considered reaching out to our general membership to get our general members engaged in the committee?

5. Executive Director's Report (Katrina Metzler)

- Katrina reviewed invitations to conferences she had to turn down for personal or budget reasons, including National CAP Conference South Carolina association – the same week as the CALCAPA conference (prioritized as our current conference is in San Diego).
- Hawaii PUC – questions about State LIHEAP funds. Katrina is seeking volunteers for State LIHEAP funds input – connect with others who might be able to help them. Tight deadline – Hawaii PUC has a report due in December.
 - i. Aimee at NCAP volunteered – Illinois background -ratepayer-funded LIHEAP dollars, participated in the development of the program
- Katrina presented in collaboration with Faye Kinner to federal and state lobbyists with AGA – to talk about a policy update, the organization's history, candid formula discussion, the future of the program, etc.
- Katrina received calls from Bloomberg Washington Post, on insight into rising utility costs, etc.
- Katrina reviewed the proposed 2023 budget
 - i. Changes made since last year include changes to budget development to increase transparency on the development process; Katrina is looking at the column saying 2022 January – August and September – December anticipated to determine reasonable considerations for 2023
 - ii. Predicting the conference and LIHEAP Action Day will lose money again in 2023 (anticipated) – even after making every cut she could cut
 - iii. Katrina is anticipating an increase in general contributions – sponsorships – to help cover costs – the goal is \$430k
 - iv. Membership – anticipating a considerable increase that included a dues increase; without dues increase; we will need to considerably increase our membership for 2023; no membership fee increase built in – clarified with Steve
 - v. David Carroll asked why speakers didn't pay a registration fee – this issue was addressed thoroughly in person; the decision put before the board is that we offer a 50% discount to speakers next year, per organization, per breakout session – would be significant for us; reflected in revenue increase
 - vi. Looking at 2023, predicted revenue of a little over \$1M

- vii. Salary line item reflects Erin’s annual review increase, Katrina’s increase, and intern that floats between LIHEAP Action Day and the conference; 15 weeks at \$18/hour
- viii. Katrina also noted the addition of a retirement account for NEAUC employees; previously voted on and approved by the board
- ix. Contracted services decrease – lost Bridget Doran this year – cannot be replaced with one person; now have a bookkeeping company; still looking for someone to do the other things she can do
- x. Katrina reviewed tech costs at the conference, including the cost of renting equipment and NEUAC’s methods of carrying their own tech/projectors to the conference – out of date and antiquated; new laptops and equipment are a necessity – seeking donations of a new laptop
- xi. Current budget – only dollars to travel and prevent at our events; no money for Katrina to travel and present at other events;
 - 1. Liz Brister – need to grow bases for utility partners; when opportunities arise, and a CAA offers you – see if we can get a utility to sponsor the travel and use it as a way to grow a utility base
 - 2. How to pull in utility partners to help support Katrina’s travel; members/speakers of the conference that are members of a utility company, do not give them free registration, suggestion
- xii. Conference budget will be more, according to MSI; increased food and beverage cost; not much wiggle room in reception
- xiii. Katrina reminded the Board that the budget is a plan – if we do well in other area, we can do this. And we still have a reserve to lean on if we have to, but we’d rather not use them.
- xiv. Katrina reviewed the “wish list” – areas of sponsorship that would help mitigate some of these cuts
- xv. Gabe inquired about saving money by not having a physical location – current rent was \$12k/year; Executive Committee previously discussed – want the zip code and Washington DC presence; secure location required for our records – would have to store somewhere which would be a cost
 - 1. 8, \$10k sponsors would cover the wish list; our number of sponsors year over year has mostly stayed the same, per Katrina.
- xvi. Enrique offered that moving forward/next meeting – we come up with some policies about how different things are funded and managed – how we can better control the finances
- xvii. Citizens Energy commit \$5000 for the Whova app; another \$5000 for charging stations
- xviii. **Motion to accept the proposed 2023 budget.**
 - 1. **1st: John Rich**
 - 2. **2nd: Glenis Scott**
 - 3. **Discussion: None**
 - 4. **Motion passes**

6. Update from Federal Partners (Heather Jones, HSS/ACF)

- o Discussion around LIHWAP Dashboard; LIHEAP will emulate the dashboard – in the process of developing
 - i. Different GIS than what is on Performance Management Data Warehouse – utilizing information from all data resources; hope to post reporting information

- for the current federal fiscal year to communicate a number of households assisted
- ii. Katrina inquired if State information would be available on the Dashboard – hope is for state information, as well as territory and tribal information
 - iii. Seeking to capture not just “output” but also “outcomes” – what is the impact? What is LIHEAP doing?
 - iv. Demo not currently available but will be shared as soon as it is available.
 - v. **Why was the water dashboard created first?**
 1. Emergency program necessitating the need to share information related to the ARP and CAA;
 2. Water program also does not have a performance management website; we already have an OCS website and LIHEAP Clearinghouse for LIHEAP
 - vi. ARP obligations and expenditures
 1. Difference between obligation and expenditure is key – HHS issued an IU with this; also 12/17 information memorandum
 - a. Obligation – promise to make a payment or contract with the subrecipient that obligates the funds
 - b. Expenditure – the actual payment
 2. **Funds can be expended through various means, including increasing income eligibility threshold, additional Wx allocation, issue supplemental benefits, paying on past due home energy bills, increasing funding for crisis programs, etc.**
 3. Concerns about funding amounts decreasing and LIHEAP’s role as an eligibility, not an entitlement, program – what that means for our customers in the future
 4. HHS tracking drawdowns and obligations weekly and reaching out on an individual basis to discuss the obligations of funds
 5. Funds need to be obligated by tomorrow but could very well be expended in FY 2023; all depends on the State’s process/procedure
 6. Gerri inquired if exceptions will be made in the obligation date because of Hurricane Ian; Heather clarified that the obligation date could not be changed because it is included in the appropriations statute; HHS has inquired several times, but it is a hard deadline date
 7. Heather highlighted the Disaster Flexibility Hub – NEUAC sent a communication – OCS has sent that includes weather updates, grant recipient guidance, individual family assistance information
 - vii. Funding Issues – General Update
 1. FY23 Senate CR with an additional \$1B supplement for LIHEAP (anomaly); on top of the CR; the same information provided in our policy update
 2. In process of reviewing all model plans – cannot release funding until all model plans are received, reviewed, and approved for recipients – want to get funding out as soon as possible
 3. Dear Colleague letter out today and tomorrow \$360k reallocation not utilized – small reallocation before 9/30
 4. Updated the LIHEAP OCS main website – includes videos and Clearinghouse updates; in the process of developing the FY23 funding toolkit and heating assistance media development

5. Will update energy price projection dashboard – GIS dashboard based on administration data predicting by state the increase in prices of energy will do to LIHEAP benefits and provide states guidance to increase benefit amounts;
 6. OCS will release one-pager to each state for energy price projections; the dashboard is public-facing; provide additional outreach and advertisement to get folks to apply; the NIRA hotline will also updated to make it more customer-centric; direct to the county they live in to direct sub-recipient provider
 7. 3 pilot states for community solar opt-in – working on over the next few years so low and moderate can also have access to solar and cost savings
- Not in-state plan to attend NEUAC; maybe some rules and regulations at the grant recipient level that allow them to participate or not participate – Heather will check back and verify no regulations at the HHS level
 - i. WAP office sends notifications encouraging allowable expenses – the difference is (David) WAP is a categorical grant, feds can tell you what to spend money on; LIHEAP block grant, so state rules decide – most likely difference
 - ii. Many decisions left to grant recipient; David issue a Dear Colleague letter – let states and tribes know it is up to them
 - Steve Whitworth – can LIHEAP funding be used for electrical equipment and repair – weatherheads lost in a storm, etc. – does it have to be included in state plan?
 - i. Can be used, but not sure it has to be included in state plan. Talk to program specialist for FL.
 - Bonnie Temme – expenditures are determined by the grant recipients – up to the State on what the expenditure rules are; follow up with State office and understand expenditure timeframe
 - Britton Gable – LIHEAP ARPA funds – plan at OCS regarding unobligated LIHEAP ARPA funds that states will not have obligated by 9.30 – any unobligated funds after 9.30 will have to be returned to US Department of Treasury; no reallocation or reallocation of the funds

7. Adjournment

- **Motion to adjourn the Fall 2022 Board of Directors Meeting.**
 - i. **1st: Bonnie Temme**
 - ii. **2nd: Rhonda Harper**
 - iii. **Abstain: None**
 - iv. **Motion Passes**