

NEUAC Fall Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Virtual – Zoom Meeting

October 20, 2021 at 1:00 PM

1. Call to Order/Welcome

- Katrina Metzler established Quorum to start meeting
 - Rhonda Harper called meeting to order at 1:01 PM
 - **Attendees:** Kathleen Kerr, Ariel Drehobl, Faye Kinner, David Conn, Sarah Schaffer, Rhonda Harper, Keelie Gustin, Katrina Metzler, Bridget Doran, Edith Baltierrez, Haly Laasme, Chad Quinn, Nancy Loehr, Enrique Hernandez, Steve Whitworth, Tanya Jones, Tammy Maynor, Chere Coleman, John Rich, Tanasia Poke, Cheryl Stowell, Silvia Aldana, Kim Rikalo, Bonnie Temme, Angie Sterner, Mike Bradford, Gerrie Drummond, Frank Rapley, Saunteel Jenkins, Alison Donovan, Kelly Caplan, Brian Caudill, Emily Wong, John Godfrey, Allison Bury, Susie Holmes, Edward Gingold, Andrea Shoer, Billie Kaumaya, Scott Thach, David Carroll, Elizabeth Berube, Zoe Ahlstrom, Tim O’Dea, Liz Brister, Erica Lambert, Sheila Pressley, Anne Armstrong, Olivia Wein, Maria Delaplain, Lorena Shah, Denise Adamucci, Scott Alan Davis, Tiffany Gilstrap, Michael Bell, Krista Capp, Jackie Castrellon, Aimee Gendusa-English, Celia Andrade, Jay Rappaport, Denise Adamucci, Kim Campbell
- Rhonda - Patrick Strickland has left the Lumbee Tribe to explore new opportunities.
 - Tammy Maynor now serving as NEUAC Lumbee Tribe representative and board member
- Welcome Introductions – First time attendees, new NEUAC board members
 - Katrina – Welcome to Andrea Schroer (NASCS Weatherization Director), Angela Sterner (replacing Mary Wilkins, Salvation Army – Central Territory, retired), Jay Rappaport (HHS, Intern, Division of Energy Assistance)
 - Saunteel Jenkins – Welcome to Krista Capp, alternate for Saunteel

2. Approve Minutes from Last Meeting (R. Harper)

- Rhonda – Need a motion to accept minutes from June 15, 2021 meeting, with the following corrections:
 - Steve Whitworth – correction – add last name on motion from June 15, 2021 meeting
 - 1st: Enrique Hernandez
 - 2nd: Silvia Aldana
 - Abstentions: Chad Quinn
 - Motion passes
- Rhonda – Clarification on virtual vote procedure – utilize “emotion emoji” in Zoom application or say “yay” – specified abstentions should be sent in the chat or verbalized after the vote
- Katrina – Additional clarification on vote procedure – considered “approved” unless you put “nay” or “abstain” in the chat

3. Committee Reports

- **Finance Committee/Financial Report (John Rich)**
 - Balance Sheet Review: Cash (this year vs. last year) up 11.9%, assets up almost \$32,000, liabilities also up slightly, due to accrued vacation and deferred membership revenue, total equity up 3.6% - excellent condition financially
 - Income Statement (Profit & Loss) Review: Total income slightly down due to timing of the report, particularly in general contributions, expenses are down 5.6%, net income showing a larger balance. Just now entering the fundraising part of our year – reports will show improved financials as fundraising kicks off
 - Katrina – Need a motion to approve the financials (separate from the 990)
 - 1st: John Rich
 - 2nd: Nancy Loehr
 - Motion passes
 - Audit Review: One “significant deficiency” (not a “material weakness”) due to limited numbers of employees – only one individual opening the mail, depositing checks, and finalizing receipts currently.
 - Katrina – Same finding in 2018, 2019, and 2020 – each year had a plan to address, but each year plan influenced by something – COVID-19, loss of Director of Operations. This was a finding for many small organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic – not much we could do about it.
 - Motion to approve the audit review report
 - 1st: David Conn
 - 2nd: Chere Coleman
 - Motion passes
 - Form 990: Presented to board and reviewed by board. NEUAC will send to auditors for any final changes; uploaded to website after finalization. John Rich clarified the board does not have to approve the 990, needs to only see it.
 - Rhonda clarified she should be listed as “President” in the signature block
 - Change mission to reflect “utilities” rather than “energy”
 - Finance committee already reviewed and noted the above errors – approved 990
 - Contractor Policy
 - Katrina -- Finance committee offer recommendation that it will annually review contracts of \$10,000 or greater at meeting immediately following the annual conference and make recommendations on rebidding to the full board – motion required.
 - 1st: Steve Whitworth
 - 2nd: Kim Rikalo
 - Motion passes
- **Executive Committee (Rhonda Harper)**
 - Yotel Hotel contract cancellation for 2022 LIHEAP Action Day due to COVID restrictions and security concerns on the Hill; event will now occur virtually.
 - Contract in place with Yotel for 2023 LIHEAP Action Day
 - Rhonda – Called for motion to ratify decision for 2022 Virtual LIHEAP Action Day and 2022 Yotel Hotel cancellation

- 1st: Nancy Loehr
 - 2nd: Kim Rikalo
 - Motion passes
- Signers on Arlington Federal Credit Union account updated to Katrina Metzler and current Treasurer (John Rich).
 - Bank required meeting minutes and formal vote from Executive Committee to change the names. Per NEUAC by-laws, formal votes by Executive Committee must be ratified by Board of Directors – called for a motion to ratify update of signers on Arlington Federal Credit Union account.
 - 1st: Enrique Hernandez
 - 2nd: Nancy Loehr
 - Motion passes
- Contract for 2024 Annual Conference in Chicago – contract negotiated and signed – called for a motion to ratify with the full board.
 - 1st: Enrique Hernandez
 - 2nd: Nancy Loehr
 - Motion passes
- Continue to count virtual attendance as satisfaction of the attendance requirement for NEUAC board members through 2021—called for motion of ratification from full board
 - 1st: Steve Whitworth
 - 2nd: Bonne Temme
 - Motion passes
- John Rich was appointed as Treasurer after the death of Dave Rinebolt; Kim Campbell was appointed as Parliamentarian – called for motion of ratification from full board
 - 1st: Nancy Loehr
 - 2nd: Kelly Caplan
 - Motion passes
- Katrina wrote a letter of support to Congress regarding removal of methane fee for LMI customers – called for motion of ratification of letter from full board
 - Brian Caudill – Part of Build Back Better legislation – would impose tax of 18 to 34% which translates to an additional \$242/year – it will disproportionately impact households in low-income space without much evidence it will impact greenhouse gas emissions. Brian provided link in chat for other organizations to sign on to letter.
 - Board engaged in discussion regarding how the fee may be utilized, which board members would be able to support this action (based upon their represented organizations).
 - 1st: Saunteel Jenkins
 - 2nd: Chad Quinn
 - Abstentions: Enrique Hernandez, Ariel Drehobl, Bonnie Temme, Edith Baltierrez, Alison Donovan, Frank Rapley, Steve Whitworth
 - Provided board members with a five-minute break to read and review letter.
- Continuation of ongoing discussion regarding incorporation of JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) principles at NEUAC – called for motion to form an ad-hoc JEDI committee, open to both governing and advisory board members.

- Incorporation of JEDI principles suggested for board composition, annual award winners, impact of NEAUC policies and advocacy on minority populations, as well as staff composition and hiring practices.
 - Board engaged in discussion of benefits of JEDI integration.
 - 1st: Nancy Loehr
 - 2nd: Kim Rikalo
 - Parties interested in participating on ad-hoc JEDI committee: Nancy Loehr, Ariel Dreihobl, Lorena Shah, Alison Donovan,
- **Conference Committee (Tanya Jones & Rhonda Harper)**
 - Planning meeting on 10-19-2021 - trying to decide if moving 2022 annual conference from in-person to virtual; monitoring COVID-19 conditions
 - Discussed who felt comfortable traveling in June 2022 (most people were comfortable); engaged in small group discussions of themes (resiliency, reuniting) and pre-conference activities; recommendation to avoid a hybrid model due to cost
 - Katrina will review planning meeting recommendations with Planning Committee
- **Membership/Fundraising (Steve Whitworth)**
 - Encourage utilities who pay for membership AND receive a complimentary membership for sponsoring NEUAC to consider gifting the extra membership to a non-profit partner
 - Committee reviewed the Sponsorship and Membership Forms for 2022 – included in board member packet
 - 221 official members as of this meeting
 - Membership Goal for 2022: 230 members
 - Fundraising Goal for 2022: 5% increase in revenue
 - Committee continued discussion on how to challenge board members to help NEAUC reach our goals for 2022 – including connections with Community Action – to realize the value of a NEUAC membership
- **Public Policy & Advocacy (Brian Caudill & Allison Bury-Poe)**
 - Policy update: 2021 - \$3.75b appropriated for LIHEAP, additional \$4.5b supplemental for LIHEAP – most the program has ever received; additional utility assistance opportunities in rental and mortgage assistance programs
 - 2022 CR locked in numbers from last year; distribution should happen in quarter four of 2021; letters in Senate and House urging HHS to release funds.
 - House: \$3.91b for LIHEAP – bipartisan effort representing incremental increase in program; Senate: \$3.92b for LIHEAP
 - Unsure of appropriations process – likely we will have a CR until mid-December due to debate around Build Back Better (BBB) and bipartisan infrastructure packages
 - Additional funds included in bipartisan infrastructure bill, if passed with BBB, comes to an additional \$100m per year for 5 years.
 - NEADA sent out letter urging an additional \$5b for the program based on their evaluation of increasing utility prices in next year
 - Broader group comprised of utilities trying to figure out how to positively impact LIHEAP legislation – perhaps through reauthorization – and help to improve the program
 - Not an effort to get involved in a “formula fight”

- Effort to serve more than 25% of the low-income population; eligibility tweaks, auto-enrollment, innovation grants for states, HHS transparency regarding allocations, etc.
 - Discussion by those on call involved in group as to what utilities are trying to achieve
 - Policy proposals related to climate change seem to have an impact on those who can least afford it (low-income households); NEUAC continues to play a vital role in advocating for clients and participating in discussions on how to effectuate climate change in a different manner
 - Open discussion as to states with only a heating program – value of a cooling program in those states; how to pay for a cooling program
 - Open discussion as to low-income water program – unsure as to whether the program will continue past this funding year
 - State plans are still being approved – approved plans housed on NEADA’s website; funds yet to hit in most states
 - LIHEAP Action Day: February 22 and 23, 2022 – will occur virtually due to Congressional security concerns and COVID-19
 - Particular issues with getting a meeting in House – requiring escorts; no use of tunnels
 - Working with firm “Advocacy Associates” – to help us manage a large virtual meeting
- **Site Selection Committee (Chere Coleman)**
 - New Orleans 2022: Preconference 6.27, Conference 6.28, Sheraton New Orleans at \$189/night
 - San Diego 2023: Planning meeting 9.27.2022, conference 6.13-6.15, Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina at \$217/night
 - Chicago 2024: Planning meeting TBA, conference 5.22-5.24, Sheraton Grand Hotel at \$195/night
 - 2025 conference: tabled for now

4. Executive Director’s Report (Katrina Metzler)

- Annual Budget for 2022 Review
 - Discussion of differences in annual conference registration revenues from 2019 (in person), 2020 (virtual), 2021 (virtual) vs. anticipated for 2022 (hopefully in person)
 - Entire budget based on an in-person conference
 - Discussion of variance in charges between in-person and virtual LIHEAP Action Days
 - 2022 LIHEAP Action Day proposal (Katrina to Policy Committee): Increase to \$199 for utility non-members and \$99 for non-profit non-members; only non-members are charged for this event
 - Increase in LIHEAP Action Day costs due to planning a virtual event – too much for the NEUAC staff to handle internally (one of the reasons for Erica’s departure); contract with Advocacy Associates to help us manage a successful event
 - Initial estimate for Advocacy Associates assistance was \$10k, actual contract amount is \$20,700 – their assistance is critical
 - When comparing revenue from LIHEAP Action Day 2022 to cost of Advocacy Associates – puts us overbudget \$8,711.08. We do have money in the bank (“cash reserves”) – but do not want to eat away at them to facilitate event, if we can avoid it.

5. Other Business (Rhonda Harper)

- None

6. Adjournment (Rhonda Harper)

- Rhonda called for a motion to adjourn
 - 1st: Saunteel Jenkins
 - 2nd: Chere Coleman
 - Motion Passes
- Meeting adjourned at 3:57 PM.