**STAR ISLAND CORPORATION**

**Board of Directors**

**MEETING MINUTES**

November 18, 2017 at 11:00 am

Star Island Corporation Office

Members in Attendance:

Lisa Braiterman

John Bush (Treasurer)

Tom Coleman

Erik Cordes (by teleconference)

Nick Dempsey

Debbie Duval

Roger Kellman (by teleconference)

Gary Kunz (President of the Board)

Chris Palazzolo (SIUCC President)

Suellen Peluso

Nathan Soule (ISAUU President, by teleconference)

Celeste Magliocchetti (Pel Liaison)

Mary Trudeau (Clerk)

Louise Williams

Other:

Joe Watts, CEO; Chris Bertoncini; Peter Squires

**Check In**:

Board members gave short updates on holiday plans and family news. Amongst the highlights: Erik Cordes noted that he and Brooke are expecting a baby in early May; Lisa Braiterman announced that she will not be seeking a second term on the SIC Board of Directors. Debbie Duval noted that she is enjoying her ministerial work this semester, and that her life continues to be busy and joyful. Chris Palazzolo reported on the new kitten in her family. John Bush reported on the receipt of his fourth degree in May of 2017; and Celeste Magliocchetti put her fatigue in context by describing her overnight work at a domestic crisis center. All in all, the Board continues to multitask myriad careers; family obligations; and personal development in addition to their commitment to the Island.

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**Call to Order**:

Gary Kunz, President, called the meeting to order at 11:25 am.

**Opening Words:**

After realizing that she had forgotten her assignment to provide the opening words for the November meeting, Mary Trudeau was gallantly rescued by Joe Watts and his collection of island poetry.

**Executive Session**:

Based on a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted to enter executive session to discuss an issue concerning Appledore Island, as well as receive an update concerning ongoing litigation.

Suellen Peluso recused herself for a portion of the session, leaving the meeting room at 11:35 am, and remained outside of the conversation for the portion of the executive session concerning Appledore Island. Joe Watts was invited into the executive session.

At 12:30 pm, the Board returned to regular session.

Celeste Magliocchetti returned to the meeting room as the regular session meeting resumed.

**Review and Approval of Minutes of October 11, 2017 Minutes:**

Based on a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

**VOTED** to approve the October 11, 2017 meeting minutes, as written.

The vote was unanimous, with a single abstention from Nick Dembsey (who had not attended the meeting of October 11, 2017).

The Board took a short break for lunch, returning the meeting room at approximately 12:50 pm.

**REPORTS:**

**Pel Liaison Report:**

Celeste noted that her report detailed several Pelican activities, including the continued meetings of a Pelican compensation work group. The group has been organized to meet regularly with Joe Watts to discuss issues related to compensation policies. Clarity and improved communication between staff and the Pel community continue to be addressed, as do housing issues and food.

End of season continues to be a challenge, and Celeste felt that staffing was adequate in late August and September. She noted that the end of season compensation bonuses were appreciated, and have spurred additional discussions concerning “overtime” pay during end of season conferences.

Celeste also reported on conversations concerning strategies to diversify the Pel community. She noted that Pels suggested creating connections with schools that have more diverse populations as a method of increasing educational outreach and diversifying volunteer, staff and guest populations. She noted that the Pel community could benefit from conversations challenging the community to address issues of race and class in improving accessibility to the island.

**CEO Report and Update:**

Joe Watts played a beta version of a promotional video being developed for use on the Star Island website, and for use in marketing and promoting the island. The video was well received by the Board.

Chris Bertoncini and Nathan Soule entered the meeting via teleconferencing at approximately 1:30 pm. The CEO Report was continued to later in the meeting to accommodate Chris Bertoncini’s time constraints.

**2018 Budget Presentation**:

Joe Watts and Chris Bertoncini presented draft budget scenarios for the Board to review. In the interest of simplifying the discussion, John Bush reported that the Finance Committee had reviewed the budget alternatives presented by the staff, and had focused on the varying line items within each of the budget scenarios. The Committee endorsed “budget Version A” with respect to room and board rates; seasonal salaries; professional services; and operating expenses.

Joe Watts noted that the Special Events revenue of 40K dollar was likely a conservative estimate, as was the estimated receipt of 32.5K dollar in grant revenues. Joe reminded the Board that if we are fortunate enough to receive the requested LCHIP grant, we would increase the proposed grant revenues and corresponding capital expenditures accordingly.

Joe noted that the 2018 budget reassigns some of the Development Department responsibilities (events and sponsorship) to Lisa Santilli, creating additional time for Development Department work on the Annual Fund and pursuit of grant monies.

Joe also noted that the budget requests funding to increase our IT seasonal professional staf position to a ten month position with benefits. He stated that this is a 25K dollar net increase in costs, but that the benefits to improved efficiency warrant the expenditure. Joe note that the Business Center continues to be a popular amenity, and that there has been continued pressure to improve broadcast abilities.

Room and Board rates were discussed, and it was noted that being a “single” on the island can be expensive. Concerns by Board members included the pricing of the Units, and whether or not the lesser room rates in the Cottages represent a subsidy to families. Joe stressed that the development of a “Master Housing Plan” will be useful in answering some of these questions, and in developing equitable housing strategies and pricing.

Based on a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

**VOTED** unanimously to approve the “Version A” room and board rate schedule for the 2018 Conference season.

At approximately 2:10 pm, Roger Kellman; Chris Bertoncini and Nathan Soule left the teleconference call.

**CEO Report (continued):**

Joe updated his report with a discussion of housing and beds available on the Island. Joe noted that Mike Bray and Justina Maji have inspected each sleeping room on the island and have “found” spaces for several extra beds available to house conferees. Joe noted that full utilization of these beds assumes a willingness to share rooms by conferees. Again, the future value of a Master Housing Plan was noted.

**Treasurer’s Report**:

John Bush had few comments on the end of season financial statements, noting that the report spoke for itself.

**2017 Conference Season:**

Joe reported that the numbers for the 2017 conference season were largely as predicted. Bed nights were at 99% of the goal, 20,250 of the 20,350 bed night goal. Despite falling just short of the bed night goal, the number represented our highest enrollment total in recent years. Joe noted that over the past seven years, we have experienced bed night growth of 13.8% (2,449 bed nights).

**2017 Budget Update:**

Joe reported that the recent information shows an unexpected 35K dollar food overage, but with that exception, the financials are largely as expected. Joe noted that the discrepancy was noted upon a review of the invoicing for the summer. He stated that changes in the control of invoices have been initiated.

**2017 Financial Aid Program Annual Report:**

Tom Coleman reported on the health of the island financial aid grants program. Noting that late season cancellations resulted in slightly less “spending” of allocated monies, the funding was more than adequate for the requests received in the 2017 season. It was noted that youth conferences tend to receive the most grants, and that this is an investment in developing life long relationships to the island. The Board discussed the efficiencies of collaborating with conference financial aid funds to ensure that Shoalers are receiving the maximum amount of funds that they are eligible to receive.

Tom noted that the Committee has become increasingly efficient through the use of electronic applications and compilation. He noted that there are three rounds of grants, which allows the Committee to update the pool of available monies as grants from earlier in the season are accepted or declined.

Tom noted that in 2017, the Committee awarded $31,035 dollars, an amount that represented an average award of 77% percent of each applicant’s requested subsidy. Tom noted that no applicant withdrew their conference registration due to insufficiency of a grant amount. Actual amounts applied to conference bills was 28,152 dollars. The discrepancy was due to late season conferees who failed to show up on island.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

**VOTED** to approve the CEO, Treasurer’s and Pel Reports.

**Action Items:**

**Extended Vacation Period (EVP) Recommendation**:

Representing the Personnel Committee, Debbie Duval presented the Extended Vacation Period (EVP) Policy recommended by the Personnel Committee. Joe noted that he fully supports the policy which allows an extended period of vacation once every seven years. The policy allows the CEO to determine the timing of the vacations with respect to staffing needs (in the case of the CEO, the Board determines timing).

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

**VOTED** to accept the recommendations of the Personnel Pommittee and approve the Extended Vacation Period Policy, as written.

**Committee on Appointments Liaison Report:**

Tom Coleman presented the liaison report for the Committee on Appointments. Noting that the Committee is mindful of diversity and the qualifications for each committee, Tom reported that during 2017, 17 new committee appointments were made and 21 second term, or advisor, appointments were supported.

Tom reported that the Committee continues to consider non-Star constituency appointments, noting that this type of community involvement can help with the Annual Fund, and the profile of the Board.

**Committee on Appointments Report:**

Tom Coleman reported that the Committee on Appointments recommends the following appointments by the Board:

Membership Committee

Patty Boynton for a first three-year term, starting in 2018.

Marlene Smurzynski for a first three-year term, starting in 2018.

Caroline Quijada for a first three-year term, starting in 2018.

**The Committee on Appointments informs the Board of the following appointments made and approved by the CEO:**

Outreach & Engagement Committee

Rev. Christina McKnight for a second three-year term, starting in 2018.

Rutledge Marine Laboratory Committee

Katie Martell for a first three-year term, starting in 2018.

Based on a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

**VOTED** to approve the recommendations of the Committee on Appointments to the Membership Committee.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**UUA Promise and Practice Campaign**

Gary Kunz reported on the ongoing UUA Promise and Practice Campaign. While he noted that Star Island continues to work on diversity in both conferences and staffing, a recent testimonial on the UUA’s web site presented an unflattering perspective of a conference experience from an island conferee. Joe noted that that the Island had not been approached by the UUA to discuss the content of the testimonial prior to it having been published.

Board members discussed the testimonial, and it was noted that some of the concerns of the conferee were related to issues of hospitality that were about feeling unwelcomed as a person new to Star Island, which may or may not have also had racial overtones. It was noted that the testimonial did not distinguish between the conference in question and the Star Island Corporation. Hospitality continues to be in the forefront of our mission, and the Island continues to address the long standing concern with this issue.

Joe reported that Rev. Chris Jablonski and Rev. Leon Dunkley, UU ministers with ongoing relationships with Star Island, are mapping a direction for how Star Island can focus more intently on diversity, with the intent of deepening our already existing commitment to inclusion, civility and hospitality.

**Bringer of Light Award Discussion**:

Tom, Erik and Nate expressed an interest in developing criteria for nominations for the award. The Board agreed to consider potential recipients and bring these names to a future discussion.

**Pension Plan Update**:

Joe Watts reported that there is increasing regulatory focus on compliance with pension plans, and that our plan was reviewed earlier in the year. Additionally, we are looking at some alternatives for our pension plan provider. Debbie and Joe noted that the Personnel Committee is involved in this review, and should a change be recommended in the future, it will be brought before the Board.

**Council of Conferences Liaison Recap and Report:**

Nick Dembsey recapped the October 14 meeting of the Council of Conferences. Noting that the meeting was sparsely attended with only 23 attendees, Nick noted that discussions included diversity and scholarships, and a review of the alcohol policy.

The Board noted that the Council participation is concerning, and that better attendance is desirable. It was noted that it is difficult to be independent and effective with no funding and a skeletal governance structure. The Board discussed using the SIC staff to take on administrative tasks for the Council as a means of providing better communication and outreach.

**Nominating Committee Liaison Report:**

Suellen Peluso presented the Nominating Committee Liaison report. Noting that the committee is functioning well, she reported that Annie Stewart is the new chairwoman and is working to get up to speed on the function of the committee. She noted that the committee develops slates of candidates, balancing a willingness to serve with the talents brought to the table of the various applicants. Diversity is an important consideration in nominations, and the autonomy of the Committee is stressed to the members.

**Fund Development Committee Liaison Report**:

Suellen Peluso reported that Peter Squires has been acting as the Interim Development Director in the wake of Pam Smith’s departure. She noted that the transition has been smooth, largely due to Peter’s familiarity with Star Island and the Annual Fund. Suellen noted that the Fund Development Committee meetings have been poorly attended, and that the success of the Annual Fund appears to have diminished the interest on the Committee.

Peter Squires entered the meeting room at approximately 3:20 pm, to introduce himself to the Board. Peter noted that he has been a Pelican and long time conferee, with a variety of conference affiliations, and has been the Chair of the Fund Development Committee.

**Meeting Reflections:**

Board members noted that face to face meetings remain preferable, and that even with a longer agenda, this meeting remained productive. Technology continues to benefit the Board, although criticism of the Go To Meeting app continues to emerge. Joe noted that staff is currently investigating other options for teleconferencing.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

**VOTED** To adjourn the meeting at 3:30 pm.

Submitted by:

Mary Trudeau, Clerk