

Regular Session Board Meeting Minutes for November 19, 2022

STAR ISLAND CORPORATION

Regular Session Meeting of the Board of Directors

MEETING MINUTES

November 19, 2022 at 10:36 a.m. EST

Members Present

Joni Abbadessa, Treasurer

Kyle Belmont

Patricia Coleman (President, ISA UU)

Cary Cuiccio (President, SIUCC)

Leon Dunkley (via Zoom)

Debbie Duval, President

Elizabeth Erickson

Lucia Green-Weiskel (via Zoom)

Tom Kennedy, Vice President

Caroline Quijada (via Zoom)

April Rosario (via Zoom)

Topher Soltys (via Zoom)

Arlyn Weeks, Clerk

Others

Sabine Michaud, Pel Liaison

Joe Watts, CEO

Opening Words were offered by Topher Soltys

Call to Order

Debbie Duval called the meeting to order at 10:56 a.m.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

VOTED to enter into Executive Session. The vote was unanimous

The Board returned from Executive Session, after a lunch break, at 1:25 p.m.

Minutes of October 4, 2022 Meeting

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

VOTED to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2022 Regular Session meeting.

CEO's Report

Joe Watts began his verbal report by noting that there would be no written conference season report from Justina Maji due to the reallocation of staff work resulting from two staff vacancies. In his fall meetings with various groups Joe has offered the following talking points about the senior staff's view of the 2022 season: 1. COVID-19 and policies, the management of which detracted from routine managerial work and responsibilities; 2. Staffing issues, including seasonal and year-round positions that were budgeted but were not always filled; 3. Services and service quality; and 4. Beloved Community and how people interacted with one another. Joe noted that the combination of these factors resulted in a challenging conference season.

COVID has had impacts of which we are not yet aware. There are budget challenges with communications. Island evaluation reports were shared each week this summer with supervisors. Some things were good, including boats and logistics, and some were rated lower than in 2019, including cleanliness and food, which had the biggest decline. At the UUACC meeting this week, Joe learned that other camps had similar experiences. We are in a better position overall than several other places.

Joe is excited to be working on forward-looking projects, which take extra time and effort. This is a way to engage additional volunteers. We need to emphasize community with conferees and employees in a way that encourages all of us to support one another in these challenging times (not just for Star Island, but for the world).

Budget Presentation

Hope Coolidge joined the meeting at this point.

Joni Abbadessa noted that this is a challenging year for budget planning, which is affected by many issues, some outside SIC's control. Some of the issues are the impact of inflation on vendors and Shoalers, developing a staffing structure to address service quality, and a pay structure that is affected by the economy. The Finance Committee, which also reviewed the Room and board cancellation policy, has recommended a room and board rate increase.

Joe Watts reported that the plan is to cap occupancy at 280, which was the level 10 years ago, with a possibility to go above that on a conference-by-conference basis. The draft budget does not assume occupancy at the 280 level every week. After looking at every conference over the past few years, the staff is projecting 19,406 bed nights as the basis for the draft budget. The draft goal of \$700,000 represents a very modest increase over the anticipated Annual Fund total of \$690,000 for this year. We will have year-end numbers before we approve the budget in January.

In addition to the three new seasonal management positions, the draft budget includes an expanded maintenance crew compared to the 2022 budget. The draft budget also includes money for financial incentives for end-of-season hiring, increased hourly wages for kitchen personnel in order to improve recruitment and retention for those positions, a 6.5% increase in Pelican wages (making the lowest hourly rate \$9.58), a 5.25% increase for all other positions as recommended by HR, and an increase to \$30,000 to the amount to be added to the Board reserve. For room and board rates, the draft includes an increase of 5.25%, but the Finance Committee has recommended an increase of 9%. The Finance Committee also recommends a cancellation policy of full refund for registrations cancelled up to 4 weeks before the start of the relevant conference, and forfeit of the deposit and conference fees for later cancellations.

Hope Coolidge noted that the draft budget will be refined after the room and board rates are set, with a goal of balance between Pelicans and supervisory positions to emphasize service. In order to find a balance between cash preservation and adequate funding of facilities needs, we have slightly reduced the capital budget from the version the Strategic Facilities Planning Committee has reviewed and recommended. Projects in italics will depend on the cash position at the end of the year. We will cover the debt service ratio. We will have \$1.14 million in cash at the start of the year. It was very clear from the staff retreat that there are seasonal issues. It might be a good idea to have a volunteer coordinator for all positions, both office and on-Island.

Joe Watts stated that the numbers reflect funding that will address any of the issues that we are facing and will result in a lower than normal net income. The budget models a 4.5% payout from the Permanent Trust, but it was suggested that this be revised to 4.25%. He noted that we kept room and board rates flat in 2021 and increased them by 3% in 2022 while actual costs increased 15-30% throughout the pandemic. The Finance Committee unanimously recommends a 9% increase this year, with a proportional increase in financial aid. It plans to discuss where the additional funds generated by this increase would go at its December meeting.

Extensive discussion of the room and board increase followed, after which the Board decided that it is not ready to vote on a specific increase in room and board rates, necessitating a meeting in December. Joe noted that we will need to approve a 2023 room and board rate next month or postpone the launch of online registration until after the January meeting.

Hope Coolidge left the meeting at this point

Beloved Community Project Update

April Rosario reported that the Task Force has met to start planning and has welcomed Leo Abraham as its Pelican representative. It has established five work tracks that will bring in non-Task Force voices: 1. Monuments and representations, the stories that we tell (“Does our physical plant reflect our values?”); 2. Pelican recruitment, looking at the information put out to non-Shoalers and targeting colleges that have hospitality and culinary programs; 3. Financial aid; 4. The Guidebook, updating and choosing a piece for conferences to emphasize this year; and 5. On-Island programming, Christana Wille McKnight’s offerings for conferences.

Treasurer’s Report

Joni Abbadessa reviewed the financial reports as of September 30 and also reported that the Annual Fund is expected to meet its goal this year. The Board self-evaluation revealed a need to explain the financial reports more thoroughly. She offered to meet with Board members

individually to improve understanding. We may offer a separate meeting before or after a future Board meeting for financial explication/education.

Pelican Liaison's Report

Sabine Michaud reported that close-up ended on November 18, when she and Kristen Simard finished closing down. She was frustrated that during the last two weeks of close-up, after most of the close-up crew had left, the mindset was that close-up was over. There was a need for more of a community attitude during these two weeks. Equipment failure at the end of close-up was also frustrating. She saw the need for a dedicated maintenance employee, given the types of vehicles we have on-Island. A West Coast Pelican Reunion was held around Halloween.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

VOTED approve the reports of the CEO, Treasurer, Beloved Community Task Force and Pelican liaison. The vote was unanimous.

Committee on Appointments Report

Lucia Green-Weiskel presented the report of the Committee on Appointments, noting that most new committee members will begin their service on January 1. She listed the appointments made by the CEO to various operating committees.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

VOTED to appoint Mark Woolley and Fiona Duncan to the Finance Committee. The vote was unanimous.

Special Nominating Committee At-Large Selection

Debbie Duval reminded the Board that one member must be elected annually to the at-large position on the Special Nominating Committee that nominates the President and Vice President, as required by the by-laws.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

VOTED, with 11 in favor and two abstentions, to appoint Caroline Quijada as the at-large member of the Special Nominating Committee.

Reserve Policy Update Recommendation & Approval

Joe Watts reported that the Board Reserve Policy has been updated, including a new goal of \$500,000, in addition to our credit line, and that this version has been recommended unanimously by staff and the Finance Committee.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

VOTED to approve the updated Board Reserve Policy as recommended by the Finance Committee. The vote was unanimous.

Room and Board Cancellation Policy

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

VOTED to approve the room and board cancellation policy set forth above. The vote was unanimous.

Strategic Plan Work Group Update

Caroline Quijada reported that the work group has met twice and agreed to draft a strategic plan to cover the years 2023-2027 to be presented to the Board at its March meeting and to Corporation membership at the 2023 annual meeting. If the work group discovers any misalignments with the vision and mission statements, this will be brought to the Board for discussion. The work group is currently drafting goals and doing some blue-sky thinking.

Governance Task Force Update

Tom Kennedy reported that the Membership subgroup has largely completed its work, which will be released to the Board when all 4 subgroups have completed their recommendations.

Board Self-Evaluation

Topher Soltys identified the following issues for the Board: 1. How do you feel about the tool that we used this year?; 2. What is the Board's role in fundraising?; 3. Where do responsibilities for choosing Board members lie?; 4. Orientation of new Board members; 5. Engaging with external constituents. He acknowledged that ratings were lower in terms of updating the strategic plan, but we are addressing that now. The summary report from the tool was very helpful. It was noted that some of the assumptions behind the tool are not realistic for us. It was also noted that it was good to use the NH Center for Nonprofits tool, as it gathers the collective wisdom of hundreds of nonprofits and points us towards some best practices we may want to adopt ourselves. Much like finance, we may need more orientation and/or training on our facilities literacy.

The Board agreed that we will address the remaining issues arising from the self-evaluation at the December meeting.

SIC's 2023 Financial Grants Program

Mike Bray joined the meeting at this point.

Kyle Belmont noted that changes to the policy for 2023 are described in the memo in the Board packet for this meeting. We want to decrease barriers to financial aid in ways that are informed by practice and experience. These changes will not change conference financial aid policies. The next step is to work with the conferences and encourage them to adopt the same policy.

Mike Bray left the meeting at this point.

2023 COVID-19 Policy Overview

Joe Watts reported that the Health Committee will meet on December 15. In 2023, our current thinking is that we will expect but not require vaccination, require pre-arrival testing, on the honor system, and strongly recommend masking when it is needed, emphasizing personal responsibility. We also anticipate a full return for day visitors.

Due to time constraints, the remaining agenda items were deferred to the December meeting.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 3:44 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Submitted by

Arlyn Weeks, Clerk