

Board Meeting Minutes
The Vancouver Life Drawing Society
Monday, May 30, 2022; 6:00 PM

Meeting held via Zoom.

In attendance: Alain Boullard (member-at-large), Nick Jackiw (treasurer), Jaime Jones (member-at-large), Paul Kernan (vice president), Doug Smardon (president)

Absent: none

Meeting Chair: Doug Smardon

Standing Items:

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.
2. Agenda was adopted. (JJ moved, PK seconded)
3. Minutes of the previous meeting of April 25, 2022, were approved. (NJ moved, PK seconded).

4. Financial Report

The latest financial statements were reviewed. NJ reported strong positive surpluses for the last two months. Also noted that one additional weekly drawing session would push us comfortably into the black. Report approved unanimously (JJ moved, AB seconded).

5. Tech Systems

NJ provided a brief report and referred Board Members to Slack for additional detail. Robostrar has been modified to provide improved administrative capabilities for replacing session managers on a case-by-case basis. The website has been updated to delete a number of random inappropriate links.

Old Business:

1. Review of 2022 AGM and results of Members Survey

- a. See extensive discussion topics under Supporting Material.
- b. NJ briefly summarized his main points of previously circulated ideas and suggestions: the Board has lost its way and needs ways to reconnect with

membership and generate excitement.

- c. DS suggested that Board Members need to start attending sessions to reconnect with our members. Initiate informal one-on-one discussions about art as an introduction to discussion of issues affecting BI and the Board's role.
 - d. JJ agreed there is some level of inertia but not a lack of dedication on the part of Board Members and volunteers. There is a need to attract new Board Members. Covid has clearly been a problem. Opening new sessions will help in providing more opportunities for Board Members to interact with the membership.
 - e. AB agreed with the need to attract new Board Members, but suggested the Board's role is not clear; should Board Members reflect and represent the views of membership or should they be highly competent administrators effectively running Basic Inquiry as a business? AB also commented that after reviewing NJ's list of ideas and suggestions he felt that he should step down from the Board. Also asked if BI should be a family or group of friends with very few rules as it was in the past or should be more akin to an efficient corporation.
 - f. PK agreed on the need for new Board Members but also for a tech-savvy volunteer to manage the Robostrar system set up by Nick. If we can't find a suitable volunteer we should consider creating a part-time paid position. PK also shared AB's view on stepping down from the Board.
 - g. NJ indicated that it was not his intention to suggest other Board Members resign, rather to encourage them to work. He agrees with many of the comments and concerns expressed and considers stepping down himself. However, he indicated that we still need to ask ourselves is what we have done, individually and collectively, as Board Members. The perception of at least several members is that the Board is not effective and that its work is not important or interesting.
 - h. No decision was made to pursue any specific suggestion or recommendation.
2. Negotiation Strategy for Lease Renewal (current lease expiry: Sept 1, 2022)
PK suggested, a) arguing for a reduction in the quoted lease rate based on previously discussed arguments and b) attempting to reduce quoted rates in the initial years with higher increases later.
- Kate Clark, a former VLDS volunteer, has offered to assist with negotiations; she will become involved later in June. It was agreed the Board should meet with Kate to discuss the best approach. NJ will follow up to arrange a meeting.
3. Status of Session Management Update
It was agreed to address this in the New Business Item 6 discussion.
4. Volunteer Compensation

- a. Two proposals were brought forward from the previous meeting for discussion. The first proposes institutionalizing as “permanent” our existing “1 ticket/week for all volunteers” policy. The second proposes discount pricing for tickets for volunteers, with various pricing depending on type of volunteer. See detailed proposals below under Supporting Material.
- b. NJ indicated that while there is some overlap the proposals are different in two key areas, a) overall “fairness” and b) maintenance complexity. To his eye, 2nd proposal not as fair as 1st, in that it disadvantages volunteers who can “buy less” than other volunteers; and 2nd proposal not as simple to maintain as first, in that it requires three new pricing ladders for tickets, which will have to be modified and kept in sync with general pricing on all future price increases.
- c. **Motion passed** to move with ahead with 1st proposal (PK moved, seconded JJ):

“to make permanent our current ‘1 ticket/week’ volunteer compensation practice rather than anticipate a return to our previous ‘unlimited drawing rights’ during the period of active volunteering”
- d. With Robostrar automatically assigning tickets to Board Members and Volunteers at a rate of one per week and with limited attendance by some Board Members the potential for banked tickets to accumulate creating a future liability for BI the option of limiting the number of banked tickets was discussed.
- e. **Motion passed** (NJ moved, PK seconded):

“to institute a cap of 50 banked tickets per person by restricting further tickets sales or volunteer-ticket-distribution to Robostrar users who already possess 50 or more tickets”

5. Studio Safety Equipment

No decision on this issue was taken at the last meeting (minutes have been corrected). The proposal is to use some of the \$6,000 grant per year from an anonymous benefactor to purchase a defibrillator. NJ will source a suitable product and report back to the Board.

New Business

1. New Board Meeting Agenda and Minute Format (PK)

- a. PK proposed including supporting material with meeting agendas. It was also agreed that the same supporting material would also be included with the meeting minutes. PK also suggested finalizing the meeting agendas 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting. Late items for inclusion can be added at the start of the meeting.
- b. NJ suggested that Board Members adding motions to the agenda preface them with an introductory statement describing the intent of the motion using the format

“Whereas...”

2. Changes to Studio Safety Plan (DS)

- a. See Supporting Material for proposed revisions.
- b. NJ indicated support for the changes apart from final bullet on studio occupancy, suggesting that the maximum occupancy number should be explicitly stated.
- c. PK suggested dropping the text in brackets in item 1. It was also suggested that the safety plan title be modified to indicate that the safety rules apply to studio sessions and not to other uses of the studio / gallery.
- d. **Motion passed** to approve changes to safety plan with the modifications noted above (NJ moved, JJ seconded).
- e. NJ agreed to update the rules and post on Google Drive and on the website.

3. Artist’s Self-Curated Gallery Contract modifications. (DS)

- a. See Support Material for proposed revisions, which insert a new item requiring artists develop and enforce a Safety Plan for their events sufficient to satisfy any current legal requirements, and that we eliminate the \$25 rental fee.
- b. DS/NJ/AB: Do Artists need to show us their safety plan to the Board? A: No; it is for their participants’ use.
- c. NJ: Can we add a damage deposit, just to motivate return of the key, cleanup, etc.? A: Yes.
- d. **Amendments approved**, with DS responsible for updating document and NJ for reposting.

4. VLDS Insurance Renewal (NJ)

- a. NJ advised that our insurance is up for renewal and we can expect price increases. Directs & Officers policy has already been renewed for a 2-year span and general studio policy will follow shortly.

5. Proposal to Increase Session Seat Sales and Studio Capacity

- a. **Motion passed** (DS moved, NJ seconded):

“to increase studio session seat sales from 16 to 18, and to increase maximum studio occupancy during studio sessions from 20 to 22 persons.”

6. Call for New Sessions & Session Managers.

- a. Discussion: What sessions do we need managers for?
- b. NJ indicated that Steve Williams will continue Saturday sessions until July 2nd then step down, having taken over Thursday mornings effective June 2. Steve will try to

recruit a replacement for Saturday.

- c. NJ proposed Ron Bijok as candidate for Saturday given his history replacing Steve.
 - d. It was noted that while painting sessions typically don't cover costs painters are important contributors to our Society, especially in shows and gallery events. For this reason it was suggested we consider a long pose session or double session (same artist for 2 weeks) even without session-specific economics justifying it, especially if we can add another Regular or Gesture session on an evening or weekend (our busiest formats and times).
 - e. DS will put out a call out to recruit new Session Managers, and NJ will confirm with Cyprian about extending his Friday format to include more double sessions.
7. Request for a \$300 tax receipt for Vicky Earle for her donation of 10 easels
- a. Unanimously approved. NJ will look after this.
8. Proposal on motion to increase model fee
- a. See Supporting Material for full text of proposed resolution
 - b. Motion passed (NJ moved, PK seconded):

"Effective June 1, Basic Inquiry will increase its model fee to \$100/3-hour session."
9. Schedule of Next Meeting
- a. Next Board meeting will be June 20th, by Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Supporting Material

OBI. AGM & Board Discussion

This year we attracted four members to the AGM, and zero new members to the Board. Everyone on the Board currently has been on the or, in Jaime's case, close to the Board for many years. We are aging out of relevance and are not mobilizing replacements. What are the implications of stagnation of interest in Society functions, and stasis of Board Membership? Obviously, we can blame the ~600 people who make up our membership and non-member participant base as apathetic and disinterested, or we can acknowledge our own failure of leadership in motivating new interest in the operation of the Society among the many people who take advantage of its existence.

What can we do to motivate better interest in the operations of the Society (and therefore of the Board) among its many members and non-member participants? \$10 discounts and colorful posters are strategies we've tried. They're insufficient. Here are some other ideas to consider:

a) The Board should establish, clarify, and publicly document Board Member "service requirements" in the way we do for most other volunteer positions (which have Job Descriptions or even entire Handbooks devoted to them). Some example requirements, I believe, for effective Board participation include:

- ability to read and effectively express oneself in written English
- ability to participate in e-mail participation at least weekly, more often on urgent things
- ability to access, navigate, and work with Google Drive, Google Docs, and (for financial info) Google Sheets, and ability to preserve and perpetuate Society's organization of its business documents
- ability to (learn how to) participate in Slack electronic discussions, and to monitor and pursue Board business through Slack's organization of the society's electronic discussions — **WE SHOULD BRING BACK SLACK**
- ability to take part in monthly Board meetings, face to face or virtually in real time, with other Board Members
- ability to devote 1-2 hours/week to electronic communications and 2-3 hours/month to physical meetings

Once we establish these service requirements, we should also evaluate ourselves and our own performance in terms of them. If we're not willing to meet these requirements, we should step down to make room for people who are.

b) We might also consider the question not just what does the Board actually do for the Society, but what has each of us actually done as a Board member for the Society in the past 12 months? Was the Board the right channel for those contributions? Were those contributions enough to justify a Board?

c) We could reflect on each of the borders of Board operations with other aspects of the Society from the perspective of motivating better Board / membership transparency and engagement. Specifically

c1) Board & volunteers. How do we, individually and as a Board, interact with Session Managers and other volunteers? How can we amp this up?

c2) Board/session & session participant engagement. How do we, individually and collectively, interact with participants, new members, and new models? How can we amp this up?

c3) minutes/Society. We have interesting discussions about critical issues, and often disagree. Then in our disseminated minutes we under-document the core issues—usually only summarize our conclusions—and almost never document differences in opinion. How are people reading the minutes supposed to intuit that the Board is a place where

critical things are decided, that stakes are real, and that individual input and expertise is *important*? Can we change the minutes to actually document more of the substance of Board participation than just our bureaucratic output?

c4) participant education and/or new participant orientation. How does someone who signs up on the internet learn about who we are and how we work? Answer, most of the time: they just don't! How can we improve that?

d) Finally let's acknowledge our poor showing on topics of inclusiveness, representation, and diversity. Very few organizations have not had occasion to reflect, often painfully, in the past decade on the degree to which their management and leadership reflects their institutional makeup in terms of ethnicity, gender, and age, or more usually the degree to which it is biased to reflect a specific subpopulation that is old, white, and male. We are all old, white, and—with the departure of Kelly Talayco—male. What steps and explicit initiatives can we take to foster more diverse participation in the Board?

OB 4. Volunteer Compensation

1. Discussion of **two** Proposals on Volunteer Compensation

Proposal 1: to make permanent our current "1 ticket/week" volunteer compensation practice rather than anticipate a return to our previous "unlimited drawing rights during the period of active volunteering."

Potential rationales for proposal:

- a) Previous policy benefited volunteers inequitably, in that some volunteers have much more calendar liberty to indulge in lots of free drawing whereas others have much more constrained schedules. That tickets "last until you use them" guarantees an equitable benefit to all volunteers, regardless of their current schedule constraints.
- b) That such tickets accumulate, when unused within the week of their allocation, provides potential continued benefit to volunteers after their period of service proportionate to their length of service, reducing or eliminating the need for ad hoc "post-service" drawing compensation.
- c) Fixed (rather than unbounded) compensation for volunteer services rendered helps Basic better quantify both the "cost" and "value" of volunteer compensation
- d) Awarding tickets for actual service rendered, rather than merely for occupying positions ("job titles"), scales to a potential motivational solution to various occasional tasks which require member volunteer effort but fit no clear existing volunteer position (e.g. fixing ceiling leaks, replacing the toilet, power washing the sidewalk, etc.).
- e) Both the allocation and accounting of free tickets, and their registration and use by volunteers, fits well within well-tested pathways within our current electronic systems (Robostrar).

Proposal 2: Move away from the current practice and establish a nominal volunteer ticket pricing system. For example, Full Time Volunteers, i.e.. Session Managers pay \$3 to 5/ticket in books of 10, Part Time Volunteers, i.e.. Relief Managers pay \$5 to 7/ticket in books of 10 and Board Members pay \$1 to 3/ticket in books of 10.

Rational:

- a. Assigning volunteer weekly passes requires someone to physically enter the data on Robostrar. The system should be designed to require as little administering as possible.
- b. Some volunteers may never or very rarely use their weekly assigned session tickets and can potentially under the current system accumulate about 52 tickets a year. Maximum limits of held tickets can be set, but again requires monitoring and administration. Meanwhile, if ticket sharing comes into effect some volunteers may be apt to sell/give away/share their unused session tickets; detracting from Basic's ticket sales.
- c. With volunteers purchasing tickets a little money is collected, particularly at sessions heavily attended by volunteers.
- d. Puts responsibility on volunteers to acquire their own tickets.
- e. This proposal does not preclude the awarding of session tickets to volunteers/members in recognition of extraordinary contributions or assistance.

NB 2. Safety Rules for All Participants

- Register for sessions in advance using Robostrar, Basic Inquiry's online registration system. (No cash payment; ~~no~~ drop-in attendance can only be considered if unregistered seating is available and attendees register at the door).
- Do not enter the Studio if you are sick or have prominent symptoms of a contagious disease, ~~or if you do not have proof of double vaccination.~~
- ~~Do not bring food, and do not eat, in the Studio.~~
- Respect others' personal space and maintain appropriate social distances in the Studio.
- Follow any instructions given by the Session Manager, including leaving the Studio if so requested.
- ~~Respect a maximum Studio occupancy of 20 people. (Available artist seats are capped to a lower number to accommodate a model, a session manager, and a contingency margin.)~~. During this time of Covid, attendance is being limited to prevent undue over crowding with a gradual increase in numbers as concerns over Covid decrease. ***Does this last line have to be said or is it implied by the first line of the SP where attendance must be registered via Robostrar?***

Attending a drawing session is not without risk. Attendees should make their own judgment about whether to attend a session under current conditions. Face masks are currently optional in our studio. These rules, protocols and requirements may change at any time.

NB 3a. Artist's Self Curated Gallery Contract modifications

17. During times of Covid or whenever communicable diseases are a concern the Artist(s) are responsible for developing and enforcing their own Safety Plan in compliance with B.C. Health Authority Guidelines for any gallery opening being proposed and for gallery hours. This may include but not limited to, not entering the gallery if feeling sick or exhibiting symptoms of a communicable disease, limiting gallery attendance, the serving of food and beverages, the wearing of masks, provision of hand cleansers, proof of vaccinations or any other protocols deemed necessary.

NB 3b. Gallery Rental Fees

Do we want to maintain the current fee of \$25 per week, reduce it to perhaps \$10 or \$15 per week or eliminate a rental fees all together? Initially there were no fees, and the gallery was always booked solid. Then the Board introduced rental fees of \$100/week and bookings stopped instantly. Fees were reduced to \$50 then the current \$25 but the gallery has never recovered the initial enthusiasm.

NB 8. Proposal on motion to increase model fee

Whereas

- model fees have not increased in more than four years;
- cost of living has increased dramatically in that interval (Canada inflation almost 6% in first half of 2022; Vancouver cost of housing up 19% in 2021);
- as self-employed contractors, models received minimal government subsidy during 2020-2022 pandemic, while experiencing great loss of professional opportunity;
- Basic Inquiry is no longer paying the top rate for 3-hour modeling sessions in the local figure drawing community (compare Anvil Centre at \$125)

Therefore be it resolved that

- Effective June 1, Basic Inquiry will increase its model fee to \$100/3-hour session

