

# **Board Meeting Agenda**

## **The Vancouver Life Drawing Society**

Monday November 14, 2022 — At the studio, 1011 Main Street  
6:00 - 7:30PM

**Chair:** Doug Smardon (President/Acting Vice-President)

**Attending:** Alain Boullard (Member at Large); Nick Jackiw (Treasurer/Acting Secretary);  
Jaime Jones (Member at Large)

### **Standing Items**

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:15pm after informal discussion.
2. The agenda was unanimously adopted.
3. The Minutes of the September 19, 2022 Board Meeting were unanimously approved.
4. The Treasurer gave a brief Financial Report identifying no unusual developments.
5. As Technology Coordinator, Nick gave a brief Technology report. Since the last meeting, weekly distribution of complimentary tickets to volunteer members has been fully automated, occurring at the same time (Sunday pm) as weekly model payroll, with an email confirmation to President and Secretary. The (Robostrar-mediated) Terms & Conditions of Basic Inquiry participation have been updated to stress existing statements about (a) non-refundability of tickets; and (b) participant agreement to follow Session Managers' direction. A variety of minor bugs in Robostrar flushed during last meeting's Admin Training have been fixed, and Nick has begun the process of integrating Robobooker (his and Alain's early, personal system for managing models) with Robostrar (the more public-facing institutional system). Finally, the website has been updated with Harvey Chan's current show, as well as some information on past shows.

### **Old Business:**

- 1) The President reports our new Lease has been fully signed-off by the City and is now in place.

- 2) City of Vancouver: Affordable Spaces Grant response received. This is an informational update. (Nick)

The grant Nick and Doug prepared last month (in their ongoing attempt to find some form of relief from our new rent hikes) has been approved by the City's Affordable Spaces and Small Grants and recommended to the Vancouver City Council for funding, with a recommended funding rate of \$4,000 on an initial \$6,000 request. This  $\frac{2}{3}$  recommended funding level is higher than the average recommended level of funding for all approved grants in our category! While the money has not yet been finally confirmed or disbursed by City Council, it is standard for them to approve the recommendations of the grant agency that reviews the actual proposals. If we are ultimately funded, this bodes well not only for the present financial year but for next as well, when our proposal anticipated we would request a significantly larger amount of funding. Affordable Spaces funding can help us defer fee increases in the short term and may even allow us to roll back fees, or increase services at our current fee schedule, over the full term of our new lease.

- 3) Storage Slots

This remains on Jaime's plate. Jaime will contact people with belongings currently in the (long unpaid) slots and ask them to remove such contents by the end of the year or implicitly consent to its removal. Beginning in 2023, the slots will be allocated to volunteer members.

## **New Business:**

1. Studio Rental Policy

The Board discussed the various challenges and difficulties presented by Studio Rental. The existing Rental policy makes the Studio available to members working with member volunteers for rental at a very affordable rate (\$25/day) when not in use by sessions. This policy excludes commercial uses of the space, such as conducting drawing lessons or workshops. The Board is occasionally approached by people interested in commercial applications of the space, such as hosting drawing lessons, private modelling conduct for third parties, or commercial workshops. While acknowledging some subset of such activities might be both of interest to our members (e.g. lessons and workshops) and/or in keeping with the Society's Constitution (promoting figurative arts, when they are involved), they also raise several fundamental challenges:

- Non-Profit Subsidy of For-Profit Activity. Not all of our volunteers care to volunteer their time and effort to serve the commercial self-interest of arbitrary renters. And in that our low day-rental fee effectively subsidizes the Studio's market rate (which the Society pays our landlord), via member contributions, to a deep discount, not all of our members

care to allocate their fees to directly subsidizing the commercial self-interest of arbitrary renters. The Board generally holds the belief that commercial interests should pay their own way rather than benefit from the volunteer labor, membership fees, and charitable donations that members make to our non-profit Society.

- Arbitration and Execution. Any policy allowing *some* commercial use will need to arbitrate *what* such activity is acceptable and what is unacceptable. This can come down to narrow and contentious judgements over the “artistic value” of certain enterprises, etc. Similarly, in that any policy that provides very attractive rent to commercial day activity is likely to attract multiple possible renters, some sort of arbitration will be needed to decide who can rent at a given time, for how long, and in what compromise with other prospective tenants for that time. Finally, all of this—accepting applicants, executing leases, collecting fees, distributing and reclaiming keys, and monitoring tenant compliance with lease terms—is significant Society work for which we, at present, have no existing capacity or interested volunteers.

Therefore, the Board agrees at this point to leave our Studio Rental Policy as is (i.e. non-commercial uses only), and to invite any members interested in proposing a more productive use of the Studio facility (outside of sessions), that addresses some of these challenges and accords with the non-profit nature and artistic interests of the Society, to represent such proposals at the next AGM.

Finally, as part of this discussion, the Board explored whether studio rents could be collected through Robostrar. Nick replied that Robostrar itself was not particularly well-suited to that, being focused on session administration, but that the underlying e-commerce accounts (PayPal and Stripe) permitted “direct payment” into Basic Inquiry’s accounts by direct webform (outside Robostrar). So existing or future Rental Policies could direct tenants to pay by e-transfer to our PayPal or Stripe account, with—for example—tenant-provided proof of such payment a lease precondition to that tenant’s ability to collect Studio keys.

## 2. Insurance Compliance (Nick)

The Secretary has submitted our annual Certificate of Insurance, completed by HUB, to Shirley Lam at the City.

## 3. Pre-COVID Corporate Members still holding paper tickets. How to deal with transferring their paper tickets to electronic ones? (Nick)

The Board discussed the case of a local animation studio that holds numerous paper tickets purchased under our pre-COVID, and now discontinued, Corporate Membership program. Since the commercial studio hopes to distribute these tickets separately to individual employees over time, both the studio and our Robostrar customer service frontline (Nick & Doug) would appreciate being able to avoid the amount of “manual work” required to identify these employees in advance of sessions, enroll them each in

Robostrar, credit each of their accounts with one e-ticket in exchange for a paper ticket, and then have them register in a session using that e-ticket. However, under discussion, the Board could come up with no alternate mechanism that preserved present Society-wide policies that (a) pre-registration via Robostrar is necessary and (b) individuals taking part in Studio sessions agree, as individuals, to the Terms & Conditions the Society imposes on such participation. So in this case as in others we encourage paper-ticket holders to identify the Robostrar account(s) of individuals to receive those paper tickets, and we will credit those accounts on a per-ticket basis.

4. The Society has been approached by a past Corporate member seeking “private” / custom sessions or workshops, either in studio or on-line, for that corporation’s employees. Is this Basic’s current business? If not, how can we constructively reply? (Nick)

The Board briefly discussed, and unanimously concluded that if the requesting institution was itself a non-profit, e.g. a local high school, then any member volunteer interested in volunteering to serve that institution would be eligible to rent the Studio off-hours under our current rental policy for the purposes of such a bespoke workshop, but that in keeping with the “Studio Rental Policy” discussion above, at present the Society will not devote volunteer time and effort, or membership fees and donations, toward supporting private commercial interests.

5. Louise James proposal to paint studio in the New Year. (Doug)

Louise has generously offered to undertake a large repainting of the studio and its furnishings. Reviewing specific ideas, the Board was enthusiastic about painting the walls and potentially the bar and newsprint cabinets, but less certain that painting the maple wall and counter cabinets was a good idea. Doug agreed to work further with Louise to clarify a proposal.

6. Holiday Schedule (Nick)

Based on Session Manager survey, our schedule for the holidays is that Basic will hold sessions as usual *except*

- We will be closed on December 25th, with both sessions canceled.
- We will be closed on January 1st in the morning (but open for the afternoon).

Robostrar will reflect these closures by the start of next month.

### **Set next meeting date**

Based on the Society’s success, after a long and difficult process, in regaining our footing after the first onslaught of the pandemic, the Board voted unanimously to conclude its business year

with a holiday celebration dinner to which all volunteers were invited. The President will pursue with possible participants, tentatively for December 6, at Bodega restaurant, across the street from our Studio.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.