

Willamette Writers Board Meeting Minutes

02/26/2019, 630- PM

Online Video Chat via Zoom

Draft 04/30/2019

Board Members Present: Gail Pasternack, John Miller, Heather Ransom, Debby Dodds (arrived 7:06pm); Kathy Saviers.

Board Members Not Present: Matthew Swihart

Guests Present: Kate Ristau (as Executive Director), Kate Carroll de Gutes, Maren Anderson (as Editor of the Timberline Review)

A quorum was present. Gail called the meeting to order at 6:34pm. Minutes from the February 2019 Special Board Meeting were approved.

Vision for Organizational Structure

Gail led discussion about how to make things work better. One major concern is increasing depth of volunteerism, spreading the burden of work as well as creating a pool of ready candidates for council/committee/Board.

Kate added discussion of Team and Council development, working both within as well as from outside existing Willamette membership.

Heather noted that we need to develop a list of organizational contacts, toward whom questions can be properly directed.

John noted that we should prioritize development according to highest organizational need at the given moment in time -- for example, at the time of this meeting, priority is toward Conference activities. John also emphasized that depth and breadth of volunteers needs to come from all corners of Oregon.

Gail noted first priorities include Committees for Finance and Development Goals; Membership and Chapter Relations; Public and Community Relations, to include the wider participation of the larger literary community. Committees do not require Board membership. Under the Committees would be the Teams.

Kate noted that the Board must determine mission at the highest level. Committee activities are the implementation of Board goals.

Heather discussed expansion of the Board, as existing Committee threatens to overwhelm the existing Board.

Kate noted the formation of an Advisory Council, who are outsiders to Willamette Writers but with a stake in the Willamette Writers mission. Such Advisories could provide referral to specialty skills (i.e. law, finance, grant writing)

[Action Item: Board members will choose their preference for Committee leadership.](#)

Member Attendance at Board Meetings

Gail discussed having Willamette Writers members attend Board meetings. This year's Conference will include an in-person Membership meeting, for the first time.

Gail articulated a vision of full Board meetings which meet less than monthly, preferably quarterly, and would include an in-person element as well as videoconference. Kate added that her discussions with Cultural Leadership Program have included highlighted that in-person meetings carry context and humanizing elements.

Kate also mentioned the prospect of having the in-person meeting in various Membership locations.

Maren suggested having Board meetings take place in conjunction with Chapter meetings.

[Action Item: John will investigate the capabilities of the Zoom platform, with a goal of expanding Member attendance to the Board meetings.](#)

Officer Appointments

The Board slate was approved at the March Portland monthly meeting, at Portland Center Stage.

John nominated Gail as President. Kathy seconded. *Unanimously approved.*

Gail nominated John as Secretary. Kathy seconded. *Unanimously approved.*

Action Item: Kathy will work with Kate to return to the Board with some solutions toward a Treasurer/Finance position.

Discussion of Vice President position was tabled.

Takeaways from AWP

Maren reported that she attended an AWP session on how to run a literary magazine. Lesson: increasing diversity inside magazine, which the Timberline Review, at the moment, is not. Submission fee can be a barrier to submission; Maren suggested future inclusion of a sliding scale. Maren also suggested liaison to local resources and communities that could bring writers of color to Timberline Review. Maren also proposes that Timberline Review involvement become a Member Benefit.

Kate noted the benefit of meeting with Heather during AWP about Young Willamette Writers.

Gail noted beneficial sessions on harassment and inclusion.

Kate also noted heavy visitation to the Willamette Writers table.

Go Around the Room

Debby mentioned running into an ex-Member in Chico, CA, who lives in Redding, who seemed initially enthusiastic about starting a Chapter in Northern CA.

Next Meeting & Prospective Start Time

Next Board meeting will be May 28, 2019, 6:30pm.

Gail adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm

Respectfully submitted, John Miller, Secretary