

Timber Framers Guild
Board of Director's Meeting

Aug 31, 2011

Meeting opened at 7:04 pm

In attendance:

Joel McCarty – Executive Director,

Lisa Sasser – President,

John Miller – Treasurer,

John Mumaw - Clerk

Collin Beggs

Clark Bremer,

Randy Churchill,

Adrian Jones

Missing was Chris Gunn, and Gabel Holder

Joel reported that Alstead, NH had escaped flooding from Hurricane Irene. He said it was remarkable how the hurricane respected the boundaries between New Hampshire and Vermont. Lisa said that she lost power for a couple of days and apologized for not having a more well developed agenda for tonight's meeting.

Joel said if no one objected he would begin with his agenda and then back into the format of the narrative. Balloting for board of directors has begun with five candidates. Joel said that he was proposing that the F2F at Leesburg be moved to Sunday and Monday after the conference instead of before. He wants to talk about the joint conference proposal between the ILBA and the TFG at Asilomar next April. He wants us to endorse the conflict of interest policy. He wants us to approve the minutes for July. And he wants to announce the dates for the September board meetings. Joel asked if anyone wanted to add anything. Lisa said that she wanted to add that from a discussion at the last executive board meeting and based on improvement in the Guild's finances following the Poland project that the board has directed Joel (based on the sense of the board at the last F2F) to reinstall staff health insurance.

Joel asked John Miller to summarize the financial report from the last board meeting. John said things were looking pretty rosy actually. John said the financial health was greatly improved largely because of the cash infusion from the Poland project. John said that we were reasonably close to budget projections in all areas save possibly in the area of advertising revenue. John said that we have implemented a new review procedure based on the latest audit that involves both the treasurer and the executive director getting bank statements and financial reports directly from the accounting firm. The treasurer and executive director will then (with the help of a review checklist) review the statements and reports. Joel pointed out that this was based on a recommendation from the auditor as a “best practice” and not as the result of any irregularities found.

Lisa asked if anyone was experiencing any difficulties with the new conferencing service. Clark said that his connection currently was awful. Lisa asked if the meeting notifications had been timely. Several chimed in to say yes.

On conferences Joel said that David Blackwell had been offline about four days because of the hurricane, but that he and David were meeting twice a week otherwise. We have recently closed a deal with the SIPs School to have a two day pre-conference workshop. Marnie Blake believes that she is on schedule with the presenters bios and the AIA learning objectives. Joel said that he had posted the speaker list on basecamp for us to review and that it would be updated frequently but frozen by mid-September. Web registration for the conference should start Tuesday after Labor Day. Paper registration should start sometime later.

Joel said that he would like to discuss the possibility of a joint ILBA/TFG conference at next year's spring conference at Asilomar. Joel said that at the direction of the executive board he had posted on Basecamp a budget and two

revisions of a potential joint conference. Joel said that he had also provided us with summary statements. Randy said that he was looking for a “go” or “no go” statement from the board since the time was late for the planning involved. Randy said that the last budget Joel had posted had some fairly optimistic attendance figures from the ILBA and that the price of the conference was more than the ILBA's last conference. Randy said that he didn't think this was going to be a “slam dunk” for anyone and that the first few years would probably be learning years. Adrian asked if the goal should really be increasing conference profitability or if it should be more “cross pollination” of ideas. Clark said that he agreed and that he had been at ILBA conferences before but he wasn't sure if this was this going to be a special event or something that happened every year. Lisa said that it seemed to her that we should make it a one time event with no commitments but that if everything worked out well, if people were excited about it, and if it appeared we could tweak the format so that it was profitable then there should be no reason not to continue.

Lisa asked if anyone had any sense that any guild member would be put off by attendance or exposure to round log enthusiasts. Clark said that he thought that as long as this was presented as a one time/trial type of thing he didn't see any reason why anyone would object. For budgeting purposes Joel said that at the low end he had projected 150 guild attendees, 25 ILBA attendees, 15 TFG precon attendees, and 5 ILBA precon attendees. This would amount to retained earnings of \$6,400 not counting any auction proceeds or expenses. Clark said that the figures seemed low and attainable. Joel said they were intentionally low since we had not done a very good job of attracting conference attendees lately. Randy asked about the conference fee of \$450 and Joel reminded him that it included not only conference fees and food but also lodging. Randy said that in that case it was a really good deal. Lisa asked what the dates for the conference were. Joel said that it was April 24-29, 2012. Collin asked if Joel needed action from the board for this to go forward. Joel said that what he needed was to hear if there were any objections to the types of things that had been mentioned such as extending Guild member rates to ILBA members or a possible drop in profitability, but without a lot of risk.

Lisa asked if it was normal for the board to develop a formal memorandum of agreement for a situation like this. Joel said that we had in the past but that he couldn't remember ever having done that for a conference before. Joel said that what he was proposing was to give the ILBA 25% of the profit on any conference registration coming from an ILBA member, and also a percentage of the trade fair income coming from a trade fair vendor who can be identified as coming by way of the ILBA, and the same for the preconference workshops. Joel said that he was prepared to negotiate but he believes that the ILBA is expecting the Guild to do all of the work. Joel also said that he was not prepared to give the ILBA a separate track. He believes that this would only help to accentuate the differences between our two groups instead of promoting our common interests. Collin said that it looked good and it looked like Joel had done a lot of work addressing the financial questions surrounding this possible joint conference. Joel said that after negotiations were complete that the full board would have a chance to review the agreement before everything went forward. Lisa asked if there was agreement from the board for Joel to proceed with the joint conference planning. All agreed.

Joel said that one other thing he wanted to go over was his moral dilemma about providing sign language interpreters at Leesburg. Joel said that his dilemma revolved around the cost of providing the service to the other members of the Guild. This cost (for interpreters for one person) would add 15% to the cost of the conference to every participant. As it turns out this won't be an issue at Leesburg. But it will come up eventually and we need to decide how we stand. Joel said that he talked to our attorney about this and he advised us not to treat it lightly. Joel said that he wasn't asking for action on this now but we should be thinking about it for developing a position at some point.

Joel has sent the 2012 TTRAG conference facilities proposal to the conference committee and has received a little feedback. William Collins is working on the program for the conference including a tour of several buildings in the Delaware Water Gap.

The Apprenticeship Committee is meeting every other week. Ted Benson and Joel had finished working out an arrangement on a \$10,000 memorial contribution from someone in remembrance of a former employee of Benson Woodworking. The donor wanted to make sure that the donation went to support the Apprenticeship program. Joel said that the donor had not yet given permission for it to be mentioned in Scantlings.

Joel said that currently the Apprenticeship Committee was working on assessments for Leesburg. Joel said things weren't proceeding smoothly and so he and Lisa had been in contact with Judy Hayward who runs Historic Windsor in

Vermont about developing assessments and curriculum for the Apprenticeship program. She will have a proposal ready for Joel to present to the committee by September 12th.

Joel said that he was recently back from the compound joinery workshop in Illinois. He felt that it was a success although perhaps not so for Trillium Dell (the hosts). He said that while people seemed to have come away with a good feeling from the workshop, the important thing was the video from the workshop which will be edited in November with the idea of making it available as training material for the Apprenticeship program, the Guild at large, the Business Council, and the public, all for varying price levels.

Joel asked if we had received our membership directories in the mail. Some had and some hadn't. Joel asked those of us who had yet to receive our directories to send him an email when we had, so he could keep tabs on delivery times. Joel also said that Timber Framing 101 was right behind and we should be receiving that soon also. Joel also pointed out that Timber Framing was also available online and that there was a new username and password that we should have received via email.

Lisa asked if there was any progress on the website. Joel said that he and Ben Weiss had been in discussion and that things were proceeding but that it might be time to set up a meeting. Lisa said that the Publications Committee had decided to take a hiatus until mid November. Joel said that we still hadn't picked a printer for the latest Guild publication but we had reviewed all of the printers we were going to review.

Joel said that he had received today about half of the timber cart inventory. Joel said that the two good things about taking over the assembly and shipping of the timber carts was that the Guild would make a little more money with the carts plus we would be able to bring them to auctions.

We received some pretty good regional coverage of the Wason Pond project but not much other publicity. While the books are not closed yet on the project it should be profitable. Joel was happy to report that the bridge suffered no damage as the result of Hurricane Irene.

It is now possible to register for both of the upcoming regional conferences online.

Lisa asked about any assessment or salvage activities that were going on concerning the Vermont covered bridges damaged from Hurricane Irene. Joel said that he was and that he was meeting with the town manager from Rockingham about the Bartonsville covered bridge which was seen so dramatically on video washing away. He also had a question today from the engineering department the University of Vermont asking if the Guild was available to help with an assessment and/or a proposal concerning an unnamed bridge. Joel said that while it is true that Vermont had many more pressing problems than restoring covered bridges right now, the governor of Vermont did appear on TV recently promising to replace every covered bridge destroyed by the storm. Joel said that while we still didn't know how many covered bridges had been lost, he had ascertained that the Blenheim covered bridge had been destroyed. This bridge had been extensively documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey in the 30's. Joel said that if there were to be any work for the Guild in helping to replace any of these bridges it would likely be a couple of years down the road. Collin asked if anyone was actively pursuing any of these potential replacement projects. Joel said that currently he was talking to people about one bridge. Lisa said that it was unfortunately the case that in the course of cleanup from a natural disaster such as this one, the people doing the cleanup usually were not aware of or concerned with preserving "historical fabric" from structures. We were dependent on state and local preservation organizations and university engineering departments such as that at U of Vermont to give the heads up on the importance of preserving what is possible from historic structures. Joel said that the chairman for the American Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges lives about twelve miles from him and he currently has no phone and his town has no access available because of Hurricane Irene. But Joel said he would be in touch with him as soon as it was possible.

Balloting has begun for three Guild board of director's positions. Online voting is available as well as mail, fax, or telephone balloting if requested. There are five people running for the board

Joel is proposing that we move the F2F to Sunday and Monday after the conference other than Monday and Tuesday

of the week before. Adrian asked if this was to replace the annual F2F. Joel said that the idea was to give newcomers a boost in getting up to speed and that based on discussions at last January's F2F the question had been left open as to whether it would replace that meeting or not. Lisa said that last January's F2F was scheduled to correspond with the north-central regional meeting and asked if there were any late winter or early spring meetings that we could piggy back with. Joel said that there weren't even any on a wish list at this point. Randy asked what the cost of the meetings were and Joel replied that it was somewhere in the \$5,000 range. Randy said at that cost he thought it was well worth skipping the January meeting and making the meeting at Leesburg the replacement. John Mumaw and Lisa concurred. Joel said he thought that the new schedule would be good and could allow us to get an early start on preparing next year's budget. It's possible we could also do Joel's evaluation at the F2F. Lisa said she would initiate the process with the other board members.

Joel said we should all have received the conflict of interest policy by now. Joel said he needed the policy for his application for incorporation of the Guild in New Hampshire. Lisa said she had read it and approves of it and moved to adopt it. John Mumaw seconded it and all approved.

Joel asked if everyone had read July's minutes. Lisa asked if anyone had any comments. Randy said he didn't and moved to approve them. John Miller seconded and all approved.

Joel pointed out that the next executive board meeting would be on Wednesday September 21, and the next full board meeting would be on Wednesday September 28 unless anyone had problems with those dates.

Joel asked if anyone had any further business. Randy said that he noticed that the last financial report for the Poland project lacked any detail and asked if in the future, project financial reports could have a little more detail. Joel said he would do that and would have it ready by the next board call. By then, he said, we should also have the Wason bridge report.

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm

Respectfully submitted by John W. Mumaw