

Timber Framers Guild
Board of Director's Meeting

May 12, 2011

Meeting opened at 8:12pm

In attendance:

Joel McCarty – Executive Director,
Lisa Sasser – President, joining via Skype
John Mumaw – Clerk,
Clark Bremer,
Randy Churchill,
Adrian Jones,
Gabel Holder
Collin Beggs

Missing were John Miller, and Chris Gunn

Joel pointed out that we have a member meeting tomorrow morning. We should bring up auction news, etc. Collin said he would like to speak at the meeting about what the board is trying to do with conferences as far as bringing down the price of admission while retaining engaging content.

Joel said that he would like board members to coordinate their own transportation back to SEATAC after the conference and he would like us to get our reimbursement requests in as early as possible to close the books on the conference.

Randy asked what the registration numbers looked like. Joel responded that we had 160 registered for the Fort Worden conference.

Joel began the financial discussion by reviewing the budget spreadsheet. It has been modified by adding a column to represent where we are currently to contrast with what we had projected in our approved budget. Joel pointed out that the Poland project had impacted the budget in a very positive way. Adrian asked about advertising which appeared to be below expectations. Joel said that he is projecting that advertising will have to be adjusted downward as the year progresses based on the last two years' trends. Joel said that we will continue to revise the "Budget Modified" column in the spreadsheet each quarter as new information increases the level of our certainty for any item with significant impact. Returning to advertising Gabel asked about the decline in revenue. Joel said that we haven't increased our prices, changed our product, or increased our discounts but more and more advertisers are finding that they either can't afford the advertising or it's not effective. Lisa asked if there was any indication that clickable links in the online version of Scantlings was being productive. Joel said that it was already reducing production costs and we were seeing increased electronic memberships every month, but that he was not yet making any real effort to sell linked advertising specifically. Joel said that he would speak to Laurie Sloan who is giving a seminar at the conference about new media and who has sold advertising for Homebuyers Publications for 25 years. Joel said that he would report back. Lisa said that she would be very interested to hear what she had to say.

Joel said that production expenses for this conference would likely go down along with income but the final report will bear that out. Gabel asked what the target attendance at Leesburg was. Joel replied that in budgeting for conferences he budgets numbers for 150, 200, 250, and 300 and makes sure that the numbers work for each. The model for conferences the size of Fort Worden would be five pre-conference events, one keynote, and three and a half tracks. Gabel suggested that that might be too much for 150 attendees. Joel said that the board needed to be open to perhaps fewer tracks and perhaps fewer conferences in the future.

Our budget at this point this year looks promising because of the size of the Poland project. We spent some time discussing the budget, and the current and potential impact the Poland project will have on it. With a budgeted retained earnings of 17% and a contingency of 15% we mostly agreed that while there was always the potential for something(s) going badly; all in all the likelihood was that this would be a profitable project. At this point Joel shared the transaction report for the project as of May 11. All of the travel expenses for the project have already been paid. Half of the lodging and food have also already been paid. Also none of the materials and site equipment are in our scope to provide. Remaining to be paid are some housing payments, stipends, etc. as well as a fair amount of shipping expenses for tools and equipment. It looks like our expenses will come in under budget. We did have a little bit of time when it looked like airfares would be very expensive but the price came back down just in time. Joel said that he would update the budget spreadsheet for the project in a couple of weeks so we could see how things were progressing.

Joel then shared the TTRAG budget spreadsheet. Attendance was 35 or 40 fewer than the year before. TTRAG expenses outweighed income by \$1,163.07 Lisa pointed out that we had very good potential for next year's TTRAG at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area with National Park Service and USDA Forest Service involvement. Lisa also said that the lodging for next year's TTRAG should be reasonable.

Collin said that even though the attendance was low at TTRAG it's good to see an example of a pared down single track conference that could be used as a model for the eastern and western conferences should we ever have to. Gabel brought up the idea that possibly TTRAG should not be a separate conference but one track of a major conference. He feels that having TTRAG as a separate conference weakens the larger Guild and possibly keeps the TTRAG group from growing. Collin and Lisa pointed out that there were quite a few TTRAG members who would be unlikely to ever go to a larger guild conference. Lisa said that the Shepherdstown venue was one that could possibly work as a major guild conference pared down to a TTRAG like experience. Gabel said that he would like to know how many TTRAG attendees attended larger guild conferences. Joel will compile a list to show how many TTRAG members attend the regular conference.

Gabel continued to press on about consolidating the TTRAG and larger conferences. He suggested that we continue to discuss how it could be done and possibly float the idea to some TTRAG members. He sees it a way to strengthen the major guild conferences.

We discussed the advisability of giving the business council a platform to advertise their organization. Randy asked if we give the business council time would we be asked in the future to give the engineering council or other groups the same consideration. He wondered if pitching was something we wanted to include in a members meeting. Gabel suggested that moving it to the end of the meeting would be best. We all agreed to this.

Joel is leaving Wednesday for the Poland project to welcome the participants. He will be back on the 28th of May. Joel is considering going back at the end of the project depending on his schedule and the budget at that time. We have proposed to the museum to install the finished roof system in the museum but we are waiting on answers to pertinent questions to finalize the proposal. Whether the museum decides to go ahead with the proposal may affect Joel's travel plans but will not affect the existing contract.

Joel is expecting to release the next round of financials on or about the 23rd of May. It may be complicated by the fact that Joel will be in Poland. Joel is proposing an executive board meeting on the 1st of June. After that he is proposing that we then revert to the regular schedule of third and fourth Wednesdays. Collin asked if any board member could join in the executive meetings. Joel said there were no rules. Joel said that it was also time to decide whether we actually needed to have a separate executive committee meeting. Joel said that the board made the rules. Gabel asked whether Lisa thought that it was useful and productive to have an executive board meeting. Lisa said that it would depend on the time and the makeup of the board but that frequently it has been useful to have an additional week to ask for more input.

Randy asked about the status of thinking about staff health insurance. Joel said that it was currently \$0.00. Lisa said that there was a statement made at the face to face that we would like to reinstate as soon as it is financially reasonable. Randy said that based on the revised financials was it time to revisit the item.

Lisa said that she hoped we wouldn't have too much fun without her.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm

Respectfully submitted by John W. Mumaw