

BCA Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 21, 3:00 PM

BCA Center, 135 Church Street

Advisory Board of Directors Voting Members: Michelle Buswell, Kelly Butts-Spirito, Livia DeMarchis, Billi Gosh, Hannah Lebel, Lisa Lillibridge, Laura McDonough, Ryan Mortiz, Bryan Parmalee, Kristina Pentek, Robin Pierce (absent), Lori Rowe, Sarah Rogers(absent), Parker Silver, Patrick Shank (absent), Deb Wilkinson

Honorary non-voting board members present: Rachel Kahn-Fogel, Barbara Perry (absent), Dana vanderHeyden

Staff present: Doreen Kraft, Sara Katz, Elena Rosen, Melissa Steady, John Flanagan, Colin Storrs, Heather Ferrell

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:06 pm. Laura McDonough made a motion to accept the agenda and the minutes with the correction of the spelling of Dana vanderHeyden's name. Lisa Lillibridge seconded and all were in favor.

2. No members of the public were present for the public forum

3. Colin Storrs explained the Public Art Committee has not met yet and will share an update on their January meeting at our next Advisory Board Meeting in March.

4. Billi Gosh delivered an update from the Development Committee, sharing that Board giving is going very well. More than two-thirds of Board members have made their gift and we've already exceeded our fundraising goal. In order to make progress towards meeting our special events category goal we'll be having a spring fundraiser at BCA in early May. We're planning an event for 75-100 attendees with the goal of raising \$40,000 through hosts, sponsors, ticket sales, and a small live auction with an online auction before the event. Please let Elena Rosen know if you're interested in joining the ad hoc committee for this event or have ideas for potential hosts and or sponsors.

5. Sara Katz shared the financial report as of December 31. Nothing in our year-to-date is that far off from what we expected, but we are looking ahead at the projected gaps in meeting our budgeted goals in revenue. We have seen some recovery in the class registration revenues but we do not expect to meet our goals in this category, which were set considerably higher due to the increase in class prices recommended by the City's fee study. Due to vacant staff positions we will be under budget in several salary line items, which will help us fill some holes in our earned revenue categories. Those savings will also help as we look ahead to FY26 and the end of pandemic-era ARPA funding. Evaluating the mix of recued expenses and decreased revenues we're seeing in several categories we'll need to raise \$100,000 in revenue before the end of the fiscal year to meet our overall goal. We don't plan to lean too heavily on savings for fundraising goals because it's critical that we continue to grow our donor pipeline, increase our number of donors, and reflect how much our community values our programming.

Lori Rowe asked about plans to adjust class fees. Melissa Steady explained that we have rolled prices back a little bit for Winter/Spring from the initial recommendations of the fee study in Fall. With lower prices we have seen registrations go up and scholarship use level out a little from the high of over 50% of students requiring financial support to participate this Fall. Melissa also shared that we have increased the price of summer camp. We are feeling better about reactions to this change because camp pricing hasn't been increased in a long time and these rates feel in line with the market. We will also be piloting early registration and a reduced rate for Burlington residents this year, which Parks, Recreation & Waterfront do for their summer camps.

Doreen explained that we will be compiling a report on the impacts of the pricing changes as a result of the fee study for the mayor. In addition to impacts on our budget, we've also had many constituents be upset by these pricing changes. We're continuing to be very mindful about communicating with our community and making sure they feel heard.

6. Doreen shared that exciting things are happening at 405 Pine St as construction continues to progress on the Community Room. Lili Ruane's family has continued to fundraise a match to her legacy gift. We do also need to raise an additional \$400,000 to finish the Community Room. We plan to complete construction on the Community Room in summer and ready to open by Fall.

7. Doreen shared her Director's report. We have two wonderful staff members moving on from BCA, Abra Clawson, Event Manager and Keirsten Williams, Adult Programs Coordinator will both leave at the end of January. Along with the already vacant Gallery Education Coordinator position, we will be going into February with several open positions. Rehiring positions in the current city budget climate requires us to justify the role, which is making us think more creatively about our organizational structure going forward. We're currently holding off on rehiring the Gallery Education Coordinator and are looking at adding some of that body of work to the Adult Programs Coordinator which will allow our Gallery and Education teams to collaborate more effectively.

8. Sara shared BCA's service inventory, a document we were asked to compile by the City outlining all of the services we offer, the staff time and resources they require, the audiences served, and the program outcomes. All City departments shared this information in this format and this information will be used to help define the methodology for making budget decisions. This is the first draft and Doreen explained this process will be iterative.

There was discussion on collecting demographic information from program participants and how we show audience impact on the greater Burlington area. Sara explained that we distribute surveys after classes and events, although we know we need to improve our survey delivery methods. Because so many of our programs are free, we don't get contact information for participants to follow up with after the event. We are doing work refining our surveying methods so we're doing a better job of connecting with gallery visitors, festival and event attendees, artists, and more. We understand that we will need to allocate more resources to this effort to expand our reach. There was discussion of how we can better show the positive economic impact of BCA's programming on the greater Burlington area, how our events promote safer public spaces, and how we contribute to making our city a desirable place to live and visit.

9. Billi Gosh moved to adjourn at 4:35 pm, Hannah Lebel seconded, and all were in favor.

BCA's mission is to nurture a dynamic environment through the arts that makes quality experiences accessible regardless of economic, social or physical constraints. We do this by:

Supporting and promoting Vermont artists and advancing the creation of new work

Offering a wide spectrum of arts education and engagement opportunities

Presenting exhibitions and events that place Burlington in a global context, promote critical dialogue and encourage local participation

Serving as the City of Burlington's cultural planner by making the arts integral to the area's economic and civic development, urban design, and livability