

BCA Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 19, 3:00 PM
BCA Studios, 405 Pine St

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

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

Staff present: Doreen Kraft, Sara Katz, Elena Rosen

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:15 pm. Barbara Perry suggested a change to the September minutes, noting that an honorary non-voting board member, had seconded a motion. Michelle Buswell offered to be the second for the motion in the September meeting and made a motion to accept the agenda and amended minutes, Robin Pierce seconded and all were in favor
2. All members of the Board and staff present introduced themselves.
3. Doreen Kraft gave an update on the 405 Pine Street project. She shared that we've raised enough money to keep the construction team working and break ground on the Community Room this fall. We're hoping to complete the Community Room by next summer or Fall so we can invite different populations to engage with BCA in a new way. The Community Room will give our constituents a space to gather in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their needs and learning styles, such as New American communities that have expressed a need for gathering space where they can share food. The City has contributed \$500,000 to the Community Room. Barbara asked for clarification on the funding from the City and Doreen explained that it came through one-time ARPA infrastructure funding, that was distributed across other neighborhoods and projects throughout Burlington. After the fundraising goals for the Community Room are met, we'll have an additional \$3.5 million to raise to begin work on expanding the studios. In recent months we've brought a new generation into the capital campaign as the daughters of our benefactor who left a \$1 million bequest have been engaged with helping us raise \$1 million to honor their mother's legacy of supporting BCA.
4. Sara Katz shared the financial update for the first quarter of our fiscal year. More than in the past, we're able to forecast our revenue projections. Raising class prices to recover all costs as indicated in the City's fee study isn't resulting in meeting revenue goals as registrations are down and use of scholarship funds has sharply risen. We know we won't be able to meet our goals without both reducing expenses and finding more opportunities for earned and raised revenue. We will have to work to find additional resources this year if we want to continue to meet the needs of anyone who needs a scholarship. Dana vanderHeyden asked if other city departments have had a similar outcomes to implementing the cost recovery recommendations of the fee study. Doreen said that other departments have seen some impacts, but

implementing the cost recovery model at BCA has been a more challenging shift since our mission and programs were built to be focused on accessibility, not fee recovery. Sara said that the City is focusing on creating an equitable way of evaluating constituents who qualify for scholarships and subsidies across all city departments that offer them. Doreen said that students have shared that while they can't afford the increased prices, they also don't see themselves as candidates for scholarships, so we are reimagining the way we message scholarships. Deb Wilkenson and Kristina Pentek shared their experiences taking classes and being studio members as class prices have increased and there was discussion of alternative pricing structures that might work better for students and members.

Sara explained how our art sales and leasing program has been impacted by the implementation of the fee study. This program, which brings exhibitions by local artists to public and private spaces throughout our community, saw some of the largest fee increases to meet cost recovery standards and we have lost several longtime contracts as a result. This program is very much a part of BCA's mission, bringing local artists' work out in the community and giving them opportunities for sales and professional development, and we're working to find efficiencies to make it more sustainable in the current budget environment.

Fundraising totals are doing well for this time of year. We still don't have a Development Director, but the position should be posted by the end of the week. Our fundraising consultant tells us that there are currently many open positions in the Vermont development world right now, so it may be a competitive hiring market. Our recent re-org has added more hours to Development, with the Assistant Development Director role. We have seen that adding more hours to our Development team is key to raising more money and increasing our fundraising revenue.

5. Doreen gave an update on the evolution of the programs committee. We're taking a moment to step back as we've realized that the committee can't have a productive discussion evaluating our programs if they don't know the budget context that they happen in. Doreen explained that BCA draws about 45% of our \$3.4 million annual budget from the City's general fund and raises the other 55%. The city is currently facing challenges that include the end of one-time ARPA funding and rising employee benefit costs, which means all departments are being asked to look at reducing their impact on the City's general fund. BCA's senior team have been evaluating programs and looking for the low-hanging cost-savings we can implement now, such as leaving the vacant Gallery Education Coordinator position open for a period of time. We are working to look at budgets and programs more holistically, and not as separate departments or silos. As we do this work, we're also evaluating what the are the most essential services that BCA offers to our community. There was discussion of the history and evolution of BCA's programming.

Doreen shared that in addition to reducing our expenses we're also looking at how we can diversify our revenue. We're working with our fundraising consultant to diversify philanthropy by developing a planned giving program for BCA amongst other fundraising efforts.

Patrick Shank and Kristina asked about plans to collect community feedback and support as we navigate changes to our programs. Sara said that we are expanding our efforts to get feedback from our community via surveys, but we are also looking for a good partner with experience in data collection to help us develop and deploy high-quality, effective surveys.

Lori Rowe thanked Sara and Doreen for the updates and said that the Board is more than willing to help fill a role or contribute in any way during this time.

6. Billi Gosh reminded everyone to rsvp to the Board and Friends celebration by November 27 and that the giving season is an excellent time to send in their annual Board gift.
7. At 5:06 pm Billi made a motion to adjourn, Deb 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.