

BCA Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 21, 3:00 PM

BCA Center, 135 Church Street

Advisory Board of Directors Voting Members: Michelle Buswell, Kelly Butts-Spirito (absent), Livia DeMarchis, Billi Gosh, Hannah Lebel, Lisa Lillibridge (absent), 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, Dana vanderHeyden

Staff present: Doreen Kraft, Sara Katz, Elena Rosen, Melissa Steady, Colin Storrs

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:04 pm. Billi Gosh made a motion to accept the agenda and the minutes. Parker Silver seconded and all were in favor.
2. No members of the public were present for the public forum.
3. Sara Katz shared a recent update from the City on best practice for the use of technology as it relates to Vermont open meeting law. Minutes are required with open meeting law, but it is recommended that we also enable recordings and transcripts on Zoom as a backup, which we will do going forward.
4. Lori Rowe welcomed Joyce Cameron, BCA's new Director of Philanthropy. Joyce shared her enthusiasm for BCA's mission and culture of philanthropy and asked any Board members with questions about the future of fundraising at BCA to reach out.
5. Colin Storrs reminded the Board that approval is required for all public art gift proposals before they go to City Council. In the last two weeks we've received two public art gift proposals and one deaccession report that need to be voted on.
 - a. A mural by artist Nancy Katzer has been proposed for the Calahan Park Little League dugout. Nancy will paint the mural free of charge and is asking the City to cover the cost of materials. We've worked with the artist to adapt her proposal to include more gender and body type diversity. The Burlington American Little League is on board with the project. There was discussion about the possibility of changing the public art approval procedure so smaller scale projects like this one don't have to go before City Council. Laura McDonough made a motion to approve that this public art proposal is fitting and appropriate to the function and location. Parker seconded and all were in favor.
 - b. Colin shared that similar to accepting public art, deaccessioning any public art is a process that needs to be reviewed and approved by multiple City bodies. We've been aware for some time that the Chief Greylock sculpture in Battery Park has been in poor condition and an assessment in Fall of 2024 showed there is significant rot in this wood sculpture, making it unstable enough to be a threat to public safety. We've been in discussions to relocate or return the sculpture to the artist, which is challenging because he lives in Florida. The Abenaki community has been involved in this process and we're taking their recommendations seriously, though the artist's rights legally take precedent. Deb

Wilkenson made a motion to recommend to the City Council's Parks, Art, and Culture Committee to deaccession the Chief Greylock sculpture. Kristina Pentek seconded and all were in favor.

c. Colin explained that when we understood that the Chief Greylock sculpture would be recommended for deaccession, we approached the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi and they suggested that we fill the space that Chief Greylock held in our community with a new sculpture. We have worked with them to create a gift proposal for a carved red oak sculpture made by Brandon Wilson. The only concern with this proposal is that we're replacing a wooden sculpture with another wooden sculpture and will expect to have the same condition concerns eventually. As part of the gift acceptance agreement we have made provisions for the timeline on which we expect this piece to survive in good condition, detailed maintenance requirements, and have a deaccession plan in place. Doreen Kraft shared some background, explaining that this proposal had a special path forward that was approved by City Council a few years ago to ensure that this new public art piece would be decided within the Abenaki community. Parker made a motion to approve that this public art proposal is fitting and appropriate to the function and location. Hannah Lebel seconded and all were in favor.

6. Billi gave a Development report and shared that our annual appeal performed very well, with an increase in the number of donors this year. The spring appeal is currently underway. This year we're piloting a mostly digital approach, with only a small segment of our list receiving letters through the mail. 80% of Board members have made or pledged their annual gift for FY25. Billi expressed gratitude for everyone who has given or pledged so far and hopes that by our next meeting we will be at 100%.

The Benefit Bash, our spring fundraiser, will be at the BCA Center on Friday, 5/2. Hannah shared that The Majestic will be catering and talked about auction items the ad hoc Spring Event Committee is soliciting. Michelle Buswell asked everyone to send Elena Rosen names for the guest list and encouraged Board members to be a host. Tickets will be \$100, but if Board members get two people to buy tickets, your ticket will be free. Doreen emphasized the importance of securing host and sponsor support to making this a successful fundraising and community building event when we need it most.

7. Sara Katz shared the financial report through January 31. The report is not complete for February yet, but anecdotally there haven't been any major changes. As we've explained previously, there have been savings in salaries this year while positions have been vacant, but that has also negatively impacted our capacity for fundraising. We're also seeing the impact of having higher earned revenue goals based on the recommendations of the fee study. We're confident with Joyce Cameron on board that we'll be able to meet our fundraising goals by the end of the year. Dana vanderHeyden asked about the professional service line item. Sara explained that is where lots of expenses fall for events, hiring companies like Atomic Pro Audio that are needed to produce our festivals, events, and exhibitions. Billi asked about the merchandise and art sales line item. Sara explained that we look like we're down in this category in this report because an art purchasing project for the UVM Medical Center's new Tilly Drive facility was expected in January but ended up not coming until February. Doreen said that it's great to be where we are given everything that we've been through over the last year and we're still driving hard to meet our goals by the end of the fiscal year.

8. Doreen shared an update on 405 Pine St construction and campaign. We're very excited to be so close to completing the Community Room, a much needed space in the South End that has been in the City plan for a long time. If everything stays on track, we'll be ready to open it in September. We're currently working to meet our next fundraising goal to keep construction moving forward on schedule.

Raising this money now will save us money in the long-term as the impact of expected tariffs will add to future costs.

9. Doreen gave her Director's report, sharing that John Flanagan our Communications Director is moving on to a new position starting April 3. We're hoping to have permission to rehire soon. We're still in conversation with the City about next year's budget and we may have more cuts coming. The City is looking to close their budgetary gap and just like all other City departments, BCA will be asked to help. We'll be focused on informing and educating the administration on the impact of any requested cuts. We'll know more next month and Doreen will send out an update to the Board.

10. Laura moved to adjourn at 4:22 pm, Parker 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