** NEST Board Meeting**

​**September 30, 2021 Minutes**

**Present**: Cris Riedel, Lynn Schweikart, Rona Leventhal (Arrived and then arrived again 50 minutes later due to technical issues), Barbara Aliprantis, ChaChanna Simpson, Linda Schuyler Ford, Stephanie Tassinari

**Meeting Start:** 6:45pm

**Call to Order**

**Motion to approve the August Minutes: Approved (5-0)** Motion by Cris, Seconded by Barbara

**Consent Agenda**

* Reports needed discussion

**President’s Report**

* **Update on Transition**
  + Most of September was spent trying to get Deb off of the bank account and to add current board members to the account. Due to this, Lori was unable to run the financials for the month. Lynn mentioned potentially looking into a new bank account due to the fact that there is not a board member near the current bank and there might be an issue with depositing any cash received from future STF events.
  + Stephanie gave an update on her efforts in getting the bank account set up and adding Cris to the account. She gave Deb a lifetime membership per the board’s request. She had also been helping members renew their memberships for 2021-2022 and continue to learn NEON.
  + Cris updated the Board that there should not be any concern over the
* **STF 2022/2023/24** 
  + 2022-Lynn, Rona, and Stephanie visited the hotel on September 7th and had a productive meeting. They were very happy with the layouts and Rona negotiated the parking down from $30 to $10. Rona updated the board that the Olio group and Workshops groups have been set up. Rona is still working on finding a Keynote speaker.
  + 2023/2024-Hotels are being looked at in the coastal regions of NH and ME. Lynn briefed the board on how findings thus far seemed to confirm that the Portsmouth location for 2023 is the best option so far. For 2024, the Portsmouth venue is holding the date and NEST will let them know after the 2022 STF whether to continue holding it or not. **Motion to move forward with the contract for STF 2023: Approved (5-0)** Motion by Cris, Seconded by Barbara. Lynn clarified for ChaChanna that no other venues found were a good enough deal to switch.
* **Social Justice Committee Request**
  + Lynn received an email from the Social Justice committee group focused on performances. They had scheduled a fundraising performance and were requesting NEST’s assistance in supporting the event. Lynn advised them that NEST has not previously monetarily supported performances from groups or individuals. Lynn also brought up how this was a different circumstance since it was an official NEST committee running the program. Lynn advised that the money requested would be used to pay the performers and tech help. There are still open questions regarding which resources would be given ie NEON for ticketing, Zoom account use etc. Cris advised that membership might have issues without being notified ahead of time of NEST’s participation in the program. Linda brought up the point that for all other NEST events, outside sponsors for the programs were found, and that NEST provided help in the form of tech support for making the programs happening and marketing the events. Cris mentioned how the issue seems to be that NEST does not have a formal policy on supporting programs and that the committee did not leave enough time to get the logistics behind supporting the event sorted out. Lynn discussed how FLY! was a decision by the Board as a way to use benevity funds to help move forward NEST’s goal of reaching new storytellers. Cris and Linda mentioned that a conversation needs to be had on deciding on a process for using benevity funds to support member proposed programs. Cris mentioned how this is something that needs attention due to the fact that STF is bringing in more money than it has in the past.
* **Board Retreat**
  + Lynn brought up how an in-person retreat might not be the best current option due to COVID. Lynn pitched the idea of working through the retreat in sections to allow individual work in between group sessions. The main focus of the retreat is going to be on working through the feedback requested from membership at the annual meeting. The other idea was for each person to reach out to a different storytelling organization and gather some information to bring back to the board. The Board is going to decide offline which questions they are going to ask. Lynn shared a document on what goals the board has and what goals are for membership engagement that the board reviewed.

**Outreach**

* ChaChanna updated the board that on social media numbers. ChaChanna also pitched the idea of a prerecorded NEST Show that can be shared across the social media platforms. Barbara and ChaChanna have been working on a letter that would go out to new members that would introduce them to all of the benefits of NEST and the various groups and offerings. Another idea presented to the board was a quarterly new-member orientation event that updates new members on the upcoming events that NEST has planned. Rona had questions regarding the mentorship program and the limits to what should be expected of a mentor. Lynn tossed out that idea that being a mentor would not need to be the same as a storytelling coach and would be more of a mentor to the organization. ChaChanna let the board know that next steps would be to reach out to the membership about interest in a mentorship program along with a newsletter to present new ideas such as a happy hour to the membership. Rona presented an idea of asking mentors for a three month commitment so that there is an easier barrier of entry and less of a long standing commitment.

**NEST Fest**

* Linda updated the board on her process on working on a NEST Fest for 2021. Last year’s NEST Fest was originally meant as a replacement for STF since it was cancelled due to COVID. Due to these extenuating circumstances, the template for NEST Fest can’t exactly be copied and Linda thinks that NEST Fest should be more of a light-hearted social gathering. The current idea is for two-half day programs. Linda has been in talk with performers that had contracts from STF 2020 about letting out of the contract due to running out of available avenues. There was a discussion around having a new member showcase at the event to help with growing new membership. Rona and Lynn asked about having NEST Fest on a singular day and the board agreed it was better to have it on just one day.

**New Business**

* Cris wanted to remind everyone that the first October WVSG meeting is presenting a special on Asian Storytelling with Robert Jenkins.

**Old Business**

* None to report

Next Meeting: October 28, at 6:30pm

Meeting Adjourned