



**AAEA – The Agricultural Communicators Network
SPRING BOARD MEETING AGENDA
Friday, April 13, 2018 | 8 AM – 2 PM | BENTON A – Sheraton KC Hotel at Crown Center**

Board of directors present: Jill Loehr, Mindy Ward, Bill Spiegel, David Ekstrom, Julie Deering, Christy Lee, Mike Wilson, Pam Caraway, Josh Flint, Jim Patrico (not present- Ryan Ebert)

Guests Present: Amy Roady- AAEA Membership Chair, Kelly Schwalbe – PIF Trustee Chair, Greg Horstmeier- Ethics Committee Chair, Member of AAEA Membership Taskforce, Holly Martin – AAEA 100 Committee Chair

Staff Present: Samantha Kilgore, Courtney Jackson

8:00 AM – Call to Order-- J. Deering

Julie Deering called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM with introductions from all.

Presidents Update- J. Deering

President Julie Deering gave a brief update to the board regarding the state of AAEA and its programs. The board should continue to focus on creating brand awareness for AAEA the Ag Communicators Network through new programs and promotion of membership. The membership taskforce has been working diligently to find the right path for AAEA membership. Julie is opening up nominations for the 3 opening board slots to the membership for nominations via email/phone call by May 4th. There are openings for 2 directors at large –Ryan Ebert and Jim Patrico rolling off- and one vice president.

Review Minutes from November 2017 Meeting - S.Kilgore

pg 2

There was a revision from Samantha to add the board approvals that occurred after the Fall meeting for increasing writing contest limits. There was a motion to approve minutes with revision, it was seconded. Without discussion, the motion passed.

(Mike/Christy)

ACTION NEEDED: Approval

AAEA Financial Update – HAND OUT - Christy Lee/S. Kilgore

Samantha gave an update on AAEA's financials. Overall YTD income at \$130,069. Overall expenses \$126,820 for a net income YTD of \$3,249. Total checking/savings for AAEA is \$89,379. The board continues to focus on increasing sponsorships and revenue for the association. There was a motion to approve the financial report, it was seconded and approved by all.

Pam/Jill. Samantha send sponsorship language to board. Consider increasing job post fees.

Advisory Committee – Christy Lee

No report.

AAEA Strategic Plan Review – HAND OUT - S.Kilgore/J.Deering

President Julie Deering reviewed the AAEA Strategic plan and goals and encouraged the board to continue to use it as a map to guide future programming and decisions.

8:25 AM -- Old Business & Committee Reports/Review

1. Member Services – Joann Alumbaugh

a. Subcommittees

i. Special Interest Groups

1. Assoc. Comms | Young Pros | Photography | Freelancers | Editors

Special interest groups will continue to be the program to help new AAEA members find a home and a purpose within a national organization. Active SIGs include Assoc. Comms, young professionals, photography, freelancers and editors. There is a SIG Leader Training Webinar scheduled over the next few weeks.

Next step, SIG leader training.

ii. **Communications – Byline in Brief & AAEA Podcast** – Holly Spangler **pg 5**

Courtney Jackson reviewed the communications report, citing that although overall clicks percentages for AAEA byline are slightly down, readership opens remain in the mid-30's, which is well above industry average for nonprofits. There was some discussion on frequency of byline being too much (4x month). The AAEA podcast is nearly ready to launch. Communications committee suggests alternating podcast with Byline email every other week. Podcast team to create a storyboard or schedule with topics for the next several months and send to the board for approval. Pending approval of the podcast topics, there was a motion to alternate podcasts/bylines during the month – two bylines for every 1 podcast before the full byline in review. Motion was seconded, no discussion and approved by all.

Should we continue to send every week? Jim- slow down frequency.

Podcast should be more of a personality-based program and less association announcements.

Pull articles from newsletter and post on social media.

Newsmaker part of podcast. Ask them for sponsorship. Personality one month, newsmaker another month. Company's should tweet the byline.

Survey in byline about the podcast. What content do you want to listen to?

Establish listening base before we offer sponsorship opportunity

Communications group put together proposal for board. Story board.

Byline, podcast, byline; aggregator. Jim/Bill.

iii. Ethics – no update

iv. Mentoring Program Update – *Samantha gave update. Roughly 7 mentoring pairs from Sept. 2017 – August 2018. Been successful so far, as long as pairings continue to have a good mix.*

v. Potential Future Programs

pg 9

Samantha walked through two ideas for potential programs for AAEA the Ag Communicators Network. The board discussed doing research on the AAEA master communicator certification program with current employers and members to see if this valuable. Small committee to work on exploring these programs includes – Samantha, Julie, Kelly Schwalbe, and Josh Flint.

Is it worth it to bosses to fund it? Include Ag 101 course within the certification program. More for marketing/pr as opposed to ag editors. More valuable to

younger members. Research in membership survey to see if valuable to members.
Julie, Pam, Josh would like to volunteer.

2. **AAEA Reserves Plan**- S.Kilgore/M. Wilson/J.Flint/P. Caraway pg 10
Reserves ad hoc committee presented plan and written policy for establishing AAEA reserves. Overall, the plan is to cap AMS income to the AAEA budget at \$15,000, and to put any funds above \$15K generated from AMS into reserves until the goal is reached. The goal for reserves is 50% of operating expenses. There will also be a separate cashflow savings account created. Staff team to create and post a full policies and procedures document. There was motion to accept the proposal as written. It was seconded, there was no discussion, and the motion passed.

Create policies document. Motion to accept written proposal. Pam/Mindy.

ACTION NEEDED: Approval

3. **Membership Update & Member Task Force Report** – A. Roady, C. Jackson pgs 11
Flag things from Farm Journal. Need to get members back.

Membership taskforce discussion:

Advantages: A- more inclusive B- more inclusive

Disadvantages: A- what if someone switches positions when it's time for them to be president?

Vice-president? B- doesn't segment members

Are dues the same? Should Partner members have lower dues.

Should we have retirees and students on the board?

Next step, vote on language of constitution this summer.

Jim adopt option A with changes to the language in the membership categories options presented by the membership taskforce. Mindy second.

Mindy moves that we accept option A. Jim second.

Board amending option A.

Board has evaluated the options and considered inclusivity in our strategic plan but for the sake of best serving editors and working journalists and keeping our sponsorships, option A works best.

Send constitutional changes after board meeting.

Amend to approve as changed- Mike. Jill second.

How do members vote on this? Push participation at ag media summit people can be present at business meeting. Consider zoom or skype.

Look at PIF constitution based on changes to membership categories.

Vote on membership categories and vote on constitutional changes.

ACTION NEEDED: Approval

4. **AAEA Sponsorships**- Samantha Kilgore, Lyle O., Jessie Scott, Karen M. pg 15
Samantha reviewed AAEA sponsorships YTD, \$48,000+ committed, and the budget is \$70,000. Board to keep pushing with outward emails to make new contacts for sponsorship.

Reach out to grains council and NGFA. Angus media could sponsor MarComm awards.

Include sponsors on communications (byline, etc.) that they sponsor

5. AMS Steering Committee – 2020 locations – Julie Deering/ S.Kilgore

Ad Hoc Committees Update

- i. 2019 IFAJ and International Committee Update – Kurt Lawton, Carey Brown pg 17
- ii. AAEA 100 – Holly Martin pg 18

ACTION NEEDED: Direction on next phase of planning (with AMS or separate event)

With AAEA100 anniversary celebration approaching, committee chair Holly Martin reviewed options for the in person celebration. There was some discussion on having a nighttime event during 2020 AMS in Chicago. Overall, it was suggested that AAEA host a tour of Chicago with cocktails on Saturday night of AMS. The theme for AMS in 2020 could be ‘celebrating our histories’ – that would allow for AAEA to set up a walk through museum of AAEA history. Additionally, Jim Patrico is in the process of creating a 100 year through the ages book with one chapter per decade. The book will detail what was happening in ag journalism during each decade, with photos and story clips to support. The estimated budget for the book is roughly \$3000. AAEA currently has close to \$15K set aside for the 100 celebration.

Include tools of the trade that we no longer use. Traveling exhibit to universities with ag comm program.

Could offer as Saturday tour?

CME, ADM potential sponsor dollars.

Ask ag publications for sponsorship dollars. Greg, Mike, Holly M., etc. Plug in AAEA sponsorship committee. Ad hoc subcommittees of the AAEA 100 committee.

Ask AMS committee to schedule Chicago tour. AAEA will coordinate.

Josh/Pam.

Ask membership to submit photos for AAEA 100 book. 500 qty

- 6. Future Ag Communicators – Laurie Bedord pg 20
- 7. Awards Overall Update – Jim Patrico pg 23

Subcommittees: Writing | Photo | DSM | MarComm | Design

Clarify what judges should judge. Josh submitted IFAJ Star prize awards. Motion to increase fee for photo awards in 2019. Jim/David

The 2018 AAEA Comms Awards program is running smoothly so far. AAEA staff and committees to help communicate to judges what the correct and accurate judging criteria is for each category. There was a motion to make the photo awards entry fee \$15 for the 2019 awards contest. The motion was seconded, there was no discussion, and it was approved by all.

- 8. Affiliate Advisory – Pam Caraway
MarComm awards- more incentive to repeat.
- 9. Legacy- Larry Dreiling pg 24
Ask Larry to write a call for nominations in the byline.
- 10. PIF – Kelly Schwalbe/Julie Deering/Samantha Kilgore pg 24
PIF has openings on the board. Send any recommendations
Mike/Bill.
Meeting adjourned 1:49 pm