Meeting was held at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Annapolis, MD.

PURSUANT to notice, a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay was convened by Ginny Snead, Chair, on Friday, March 1, 2019 at 10:00 AM.

Board Members Present: Chris Sigmund, Andrea Field, Jim Elliot, Jack Detweiler, Paula Hamel, Gregory Wims, Sally Horner, Susan Johnson, Bill Gill, Brian Macnamara, Ginny Snead, Jennifer Troy, Dennis Chestnut, Tara Scully, Don Boucher, Bob Paul, and Jan Jarrett.

Members Not Present: Kelly Gutshall, Shawn Kimbro, Stephan Levistky, Steve Pattison, Naomi Young.

Alliance Staff Present: Kate Fritz, Jeanne-Marie Leroux, Abbi Huntzinger, Suzanne Martin, Jenna Mitchell, and Marissa Spratley.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order by Ginny Snead at 10:00 AM, followed by introductions. Ginny thanked Bob Paul and Don Boucher for their service and presented them both with gifts. Ginny welcomed everyone to the first official meeting with her as Chair, and explained that as a leader she likes to facilitate. Her goal is to have an engaged Board and to help guide them.

Three new Board Members were welcomed and were given time to introduce themselves – Chris Sigmund, Susan Johnson, and Naomi Young (not present).

Ginny highlights Board Members for their recent accomplishments – including Shawn Kimbro for publishing a new book, Greg Wims for being recognized by Montgomery County during Black History Month, and Dennis Chestnut for being selected as the 2019 River Hero by River Network.

SETTING 2019 BOARD GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Ginny presents what she has identified as the goals and priorities for the Board in 2019: 1) Determining strategic priorities – aligning programs and organization strategy, 2) Operating the most effective Board for the future, 3) Increasing our visibility (telling our story), and 4) Increasing growth capital available to invest in the Alliance (increase unrestricted funding).

Discussion between the Board about goals and priorities:

- Jim Elliot
  - While these are excellent goals, we may want to prioritize and hone in our focus.
  - What is the low hanging fruit? What will take years to implement?
• Bill Gill:
  o Whichever goals we choose, we should track and measure the growth.
  o Where are we with our goals? What is working and not working?
• Tara Scully
  o Are we tracking how many Board Members are coming to meetings or calling in? How much they’re giving? What connections/sponsors they are bringing in? Anything else?
  o Can we track how trainings help?
• Susan Johnson
  o There has to be actionable items for each goal to make sure we are accomplishing them.
• Kate Fritz
  o This is the very beginning of the priorities, and Due East will be helping to hone in and create tracking mechanisms.

PRESENTATIONS:

Executive Director’s Report – State of the Alliance (Kate Fritz)

• We’ve had a very busy, packed year with a lot of new opportunities
  o Cheers to the Chesapeake event in VA
    • Increased visibility
  o 13th annual Chesapeake Watershed Forum in conjunction with the Board Meeting
    • This November Board meeting will also be coupled with it in 2019
  o 2018 Taste of the Chesapeake
    • Great event with 400+ people in attendance
  o Wild & Scenic Film Festival (January 2019)
    • All four locations on one evening
  o Beneficiary of $2 million from NFWF
    • $1 million to PA for Turkey Hill and Perdue partnerships
    • $1 million to VA for prioritizing restoration in VA
    • Huge win for our visibility and impact
• Organizational structure is a challenge
  o About 34 people (a couple part time)
  o Management team structure
    • 11 people currently report to Kate
    • This is a challenge for the organization and for Kate as an Executive Director
    • Will work with Due East to find a solution
  o Board organizational chart
  o Financially
    • Looking a lot into unrestricted funding
    • Extraordinary Give
    • Giving Tuesday
    • Trend in unrestricted funding
    • Most of the unrestricted funding we get is from indirect from our grants

Due East Partners – Growth Capacity Assessment Preliminary Findings and Key Recommendations
• What does it mean to be a sustainable organization?
  o Having the resources and approaches needed to regenerate and remain relevant in the community, and successfully carry out the mission over time
• 5 Drivers of Growth and Sustainability
  o Vision
  o Visibility
  o Leadership
  o Constituency
  o Organization
• Growth Capacity Assessment
  o A lot of data and information gathering → deep dive analysis → findings and recommendations
• Findings and recommendations:
  o 1) Define strategic direction, focus, and role
  o 2) Build organizational capacity for growth (staff, infrastructure, systems)
  o 3) Differentiate, elevate and amplify brand with consistent messaging and measurable impact
  o 4) Transform business model to generate flexible capital for growth and permanent capital for sustainability
  o 5) Create active, engaged board champions to lead transformation
• 1) Define Strategic Direction, Focus, and Role
  o Define vision that is clear, compelling and urgent – using simple language that appeals to a broad constituency
  o Own your space; revise mission to differentiate the Alliance and clarify essential role(s)
  o Align values with culture needed for success
  o Articulate a clear focus and set of priorities that will advance shared results (Strategic Plan refresh)
  o Leverage strengths, engaging agricultural and corporate partners in collaborative solutions
  o Lead, follow or step out of the way
• 2) Build organizational capacity for growth (staff, infrastructure, systems)
  o Evaluate, prioritize and align programs with vision and role
  o Build ‘backbone’ capacity as an intermediary between systems reformers (funders, advocates) and local watershed groups
  o Create shared systems (collaboration platform, communications, CRM) across offices with consistent policies and protocols
  o Invest key leadership roles (Deputy Director or COO, Development, Communications/Outreach) and empower Management Team to build internal capacity
  o Plan for 12-18 month “warming phase” prior to a major fundraising campaign to prepare the organization, broaden the donor base and cultivate individual donors
    ▪ The Board’s job in this step is to set the strategic direction of the organization, the staff then coordinates this work, and the Board helps to fund/fundraise for the work
• Utilize a “warming phase” to really work on this for the next year to two years, and then step into the 50th anniversary campaign

• 3) Differentiate, elevate and amplify brand with consistent messaging and measurable impact
  o Unify and amplify the Alliance’s voice
  o Use visual and verbal brand identity to differentiate the Alliance’s value proposition and connect the dots among its many programs
  o Align messaging for the Alliance and key programs and build an “echo chamber” of partners and champions to extend reach
  o Measure and promote Alliance’s regional and local impact

• 4) Transform business model to generate flexible capital for growth and permanent capital for sustainability
  o Generate growth capital via flexible (unrestricted) funding while steadily reducing restricted funding
  o Increase raised revenue (donations, sponsorships, operating grants)
  o Build 4-6 months of operating reserves
  o Raise permanent capital (endowment) for sustainability

• Create Active, Engaged Board Champions
  o Develop board as visible, effective champions
  o Use board matrix and Governance Committee to diversify board (sectors, geography, race/ethnicity, age) and build a recruitment pipeline
  o Engage board in fundraising and guiding growth through board committees
  o Achieve 100% board giving
  o Plan for succession

• Summing up:
  o Vision needs some work – low performing and low capacity
  o Visibility is low performing but has high capacity
  o Leadership is high performing, but has lower capacity
  o Constituency was a strong point – median performance, high capacity

• Comments:
  o Don Boucher
    ▪ The assessment is right on point
    ▪ Large constituency because we are currently everything to everyone. How do we hone in our focus without alienating some of our constituency? How do we find a balance?
  o Ginny Snead
    ▪ Completely agrees that Kate has too many direct reports
    ▪ But this will definitely be a process and a transition
  o Chris Sigmund
    ▪ We could do this again for each individual office/region
    ▪ In his experience in working with the Lancaster office, he believes they are all high performing, high capacity
  o Brian Macnamara
    ▪ Its great that we have a large constituency
    ▪ If the vision was clearer, all offices could function at a higher level
- Andy Field
  - If the visions get clarified, but it ends up not embodying our work in PA and VA, then a clarified vision will not help us empower our constituency
- Jenn Troy
  - We need to make sure that we are evaluating the true success and impact for each program and see what is working
  - We can focus on the local impact, but need a regional vision
- Bob Gill
  - Is there an opportunity or challenge associated with the restricted grants?
  - Can we maximize the use of restricted grants, while also raising more restricted funding?

* Plotted the Alliance against other organizations on a scale of strategic focus and role
  - Bob Paul – correct placement for us being in the middle
  - Tara Scully – boots on the ground should be action advocate, and advocacy should be political advocate
  - Ginny Snead – James River Association should actually be on the opposite side where advocacy is
  - Jan Jarret – distinction between political lobbying and political relationships
  - Where do we want the Alliance to be moving forward?

* Constituency Gathering Information
  - Board + Staff Survey (57 participants)
  - External Constituent Survey (164 participants)
  - Key Informant Interviews (9 participants)

* Interview Key Themes
  - Top three issues facing watershed restoration are storm water, climate change, and urban and population growth
  - Positive impression of the Alliance’s staff leadership; limited familiarity with board but perception exists that there is an opportunity to expand the board with people from different backgrounds
  - Desire to see the Alliance clearly and boldly define itself and “step out front” as a convener and capacity builder
  - Participants agreed the vision needs refining to be more clear, concise and compelling
  - The Alliance is well-positioned to engage a broad constituency; key players include businesses, farmers, local government, and funders
  - Strategic priorities are on track overall. “Evaluate impact of programs and prioritize future programming…” was top priority to define the Alliance’s focus and achieve strategic impact; however, some questioned whether this was more an operational priority than a strategic one
  - Opportunity for future or increased support among participants based on redefined strategic vision and direction

* The Alliance playing a capacity building role for smaller organizations
  - Challenging because those groups are often behind the seasons (Jenn Troy)
  - Something to really consider, the role we play at the Forum (Dennis Chestnut)
• Roles of the Alliance – Due East lead an activity involving groups that reviewed descriptive words and phrases as the applied (or didn’t) to the Alliance. There were four categories that the words/phrases were to be placed in, as it relates to the Alliance: Core, Adjacent, Aspirational, or Out of Bounds.
  o Group: Jim, Jan, Andy, Tara, Greg, Marissa
    • Advocate, neutral voice, and evangelist because we couldn’t come to agreement about what they meant
    • Grassroots organizer – yes, in the sense that we organize people in a grassroots way but no in the political sense
    • Coalition builder – yes, in the sense that we bring groups together to get work done but no in the political sense
  o Group: Brian, Jenn, Susan, Don, Jaja
    • Struggled between what we’re doing and what we should be doing
    • Core and adjacent seemed to blend sometimes
  o Consensus around:
    • Core: grassroots organizer, coalition building, deal maker, boots on the ground
    • Adjacent: technical assistance provider, capacity builder, expert, educator
    • Aspirational: influencer, backbone organization, leader, innovator
    • Out of bounds: researcher, policy analyst, litigator, watchdog
  o How this will be incorporated into the process:
    • Take this to the strategic planning committees and look at it through the lens of how we can define this through strategic results and then how do we get there?
    • In May when we come back together, what roles do we each need to bring as Board members to help further the strategic vision
    • Not everyone will be good at the same things, people won’t be good at everything
    • For staff this comes down to the management dashboard
    • Need to hone in on these descriptors and prioritize our focus
  o Meeting on March 19th that will go into a level of depth for development and communications/marketing – if anyone would like to join

Break for lunch and field trip

Approval of Minutes from November 15, 2018

Ginny Snead motions to approve the January meeting minutes, Jim Elliott seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously without any amendments.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

Governance Committee Update – Andy Field

• Please fill out the conflict of interest policy
• We tweaked the language of the mission of the governance committee
  o The main mission over the next two years is to find new Board members
• You can be on more than one committee
  o Looking for some new members
• Skill set survey to determine what skills we have on the Board, and what we need to recruit for
• Addition to the Board of Deborah Lucas
  o Met with Deb at the beginning of the year and she came to the dinner last evening from Great Falls, VA
  o Going forward, we will have a more systematic process for conference calls so more people can join
  o She has a focus on strategic planning, marketing, etc. that would be a great addition
  o In a past job she was responsible for working on the strategic plan process and executing/tracking progress
  o Deb is the Vice President of Customer Satisfaction for Salesforce
    ▪ She makes sure her customers are happy with Salesforce and using it to their best advantage
  o One of the opportunities to having Deb join the Board is that we use Salesforce and she can help provide some pro-bono services and trainings to the Alliance
  o Motion to have Deb join the Board – Susan Johnson
  o Second to have Deb join the Board – James Elliott
• We need to continue to bring new names to the Board for potential Board members
  o Expertise we need as we recruit:
    ▪ Communications/marketing is number one need
    ▪ Finance is another strong need
    ▪ Legal assistance is a need
    ▪ Philanthropy/fundraising/development

Program Committee Update – Sally Hornor
• Sally, Kate, and Abbi met to discuss Maryland programs
• Strategic plan will lead the effort to prioritize our programs
• We still need more data from the staff to help us have the information we need to do the prioritization
• Trying to get the qualitative data for number of people impacted is difficult to get
• Evaluate the funding source for programs, the partnerships for programs
• Having some parameters for saying yes or no to grant opportunities, and will continue to define that

Development Committee Update – Jenn Troy, Susan Johnson, Suzanne Martin
• The message as a fundraiser is that there is no new way to raise money – it’s about relationships
• With Due East’s help we will learn our story and how to tell it
• Board Giving goals:
  o 2017: $9,980
  o 2018: $8,815
  o 2019 Goal: $15,000
  o 80% $1,000+ gifts 80% or more give $1,000 or more
• Annual Giving goals:
  o 2017: $65,046
  o 2018: $69,381
$76,300 is 2019 goal (10% increase)

- Major Gifts ($1,000+) goals:
  - 2017: $19,462
  - 2018: $25,336
  - 2019 Goal: $30,000
  - More about the relationship
  - Who will we continue to cultivate and bring into the fold?
  - We have to define major gifts and major donors as an organization
  - Caution to look at individual and corporations differently (Don Boucher)

- Business/Corporation Sponsorships (Includes B4B, Project Clean Stream)
  - 2017: $118,167
  - 2018: $124,193
  - 2019 Goal: $200,000

- Event Giving
  - 2017 Taste Sponsorship $104,000
  - 2018 Taste Sponsorship $107,500
  - 2019 Taste Sponsorship Goal: $140,000

- Private Foundation Grants
  - 2018: $30,000
  - 2019 Goal: $30,000

- Planned Giving
  - Create strategy to further market a planned giving program

- Ginny Snead – at what point do we talk about how we get to that goal?
  - A lot will be driven by Due East
  - Some is Suzanne’s job

- Susan Johnson presents the 2019 Development Dashboard
  - A way to track all of the development efforts, costs, expenses, and income

- Jenn Troy
  - Susan Johnson has agreed to chair the Taste committee
  - Major donor appreciation party took place at Susan Johnson’s house February 9th

- A couple goals:
  - Tracking the donors who attended to see if their giving goes up
  - See if people in her personal circle would give us their contact information so we can send mailings to them
  - For anyone who feels they are not good at fundraising or asking, it’s not about asking, it’s about thanking them and interacting
  - We got a few checks!

- Documented everything for doing these in the future

- Greg Wims has volunteered to host a Major Donor appreciate party in Montgomery County for the DC metro region – April 13th

- Jim Elliott has volunteered to host a Major Donor appreciation party in Pennsylvania

- Ginny Snead has volunteered to host a Major Donor appreciation party in Williamsburg, VA
This model works really well; it is not a heavy lift on staff or any one person; it is intimate and so Board and Staff really get to talk closely with major donors

Think about if you’d like to host one of these events, and please try to make one if its near you

- Taste of the Chesapeake sponsorship soliciting is kicking off
- Project Clean Stream – kickoff event on April 6th in Annapolis, MD with an open house
- Board Development report is on the Board Portal on the website
- Board Pledge – on the Board portal, will email them
- Idea: Negotiate a rate for specific sponsors at the Crowne Plaza to stay overnight
- We’ll be starting to put Board committee reports on the website so everyone can read it in advance, that way we can shorten the time spent on committee reports and maximize meeting time

Finance Committee Report – Jack Detweiler

- Approved budget via email
- Grant income is slightly below target
- Recovered 118% of indirect, which is excellent
- We are at 101% of budgeted expenses
- Now leasing the lower level of our Headquarters building that will offset utilities costs
- We have a surplus of $40,000, but we keep that liquid in case it’s needed for cash flow purposes
- Finance committee is seeking members, please consider joining

Measuring Success & Looking Forward in Communications – Marissa Spratley

- In 2018, we focused on:
  - Telling Our Stories
  - Communicating Data & Impact Numbers
  - Sharing More Unique Content
  - Improving Branding & Consistency of Messaging
  - Expanding Visibility & Recognition
- Telling Our Stories
  - Midyear and year end appeals told stories from each of the regions
  - Blog posts about our programs and projects
  - Social media posts in real time about our work
- Communicating Data & Impact
  - Metrics in the midyear and year end appeal
  - Blog posts about the number of trees planted throughout the watershed
  - Story about the impact of Project Clean Stream
  - Campaigns focused on our impact
- Sharing More Unique Content
  - 65+ graphics created
  - 50+ unique email blasts
  - 32 blog posts
  - 12 newsletters
  - 11 Bay Journal articles
• 8 press releases
• Countless social media posts

• Improving Branding
  • Branding workshop
  • Refreshed logo
  • Worked with Pomerantz Marketing
  • Streamlined process for logo usage
  • Created a culture within the organization where staff know to consider branding & communications

• Expanding Visibility
  • Doubled our email list
    ▪ From 8,000 to 16,000
  • Grew our Facebook following
  • 50+ articles about our work
  • Op-ed articles
  • Facebook advertisements
  • “Heart the Chesapeake” t-shirt campaign
  • The Extraordinary Give
  • Wild & Scenic Film Festival

• In 2019, we will focus on:
  • Building an Internal Communications Structure
  • Improving Branding & Consistency of Messaging Across the Regions in Alignment with Strategic Vision
  • Expanding Visibility & Recognition to New Audiences, and Moving Existing Supporters Through the Donor Timeline
  • Utilizing Storytelling for Fundraising

Wrap-up:

• Next meeting is Friday, May 17th in Richmond, VA
• Meeting after that is Friday, July 19th
  o Look out for an email/Doodle Poll to confirm the date

Action Items:

• Hotel discount as a benefit for Taste sponsorship
• Board pledge
• Conflict of interest form
• Potentially forming an ad hoc committee on business planning

Jack Detweiler motioned to adjourn meeting at 2:50pm, Greg Wims seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Minutes taken by: Marissa Spratley, Alliance Staff
Edited and Submitted by: Marissa Spratley, Alliance Staff, Jim Elliott