



Board Meeting Minutes

December 4, 2014

NEFA

Boston, MA

Board Members Present – Larry Simpson (Chair), Byron Champlin, Andrew Cornell, Amy Ellsworth, Jane James, Mary Kelley, Ted Landsmark, John Plukas, Julie Richard, Betsy Theobald Richards, Andrea Rogers, Randall Rosenbaum

Board Members Participating By Phone – Alex Aldrich, Ginnie Lupi

Staff Present – Anita Chan, Summer Confuorto, Elizabeth Epsen, Steven Fenton, Allie Fiske, Daniela Jacobson, Sarah Long Holland, Meena Malik, Abigail Maulion, Deidra Montgomery, Tracey Mullane, Sara Nash, Cheri Opperman, Laura Paul, Adrienne Petrillo, Jane Preston, Dee Schneidman, Quita Sullivan, Ann Wicks

Guests-Chris Dwyer, Cathy Edwards

Notetaker – Steven Fenton

CHAIR LARRY SIMPSON CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 12:31 PM

Welcome & Introductions

Chair Larry Simpson welcomed the board and invited Cathy Edwards to offer brief remarks. Cathy was delighted to join the meeting. She plans to start at NEFA on January 20th, but attended the meeting to listen and learn in an engaged fashion. She hoped to glean a sense of the board's current thinking, concerns, and priorities. In her first month, Cathy intends to speak with everyone individually. She was especially excited to hear about the learnings and outcomes of the New England Programs planning process. She mentioned the previous day's public announcement was a thrilling moment. She received many warm responses and heard countless accolades for NEFA.

Larry also received similar feedback from a number of people. He took a moment to thank Andrew Cornell and the search committee on their outstanding work.

Approval of the July 2014 Board Meeting Minutes

Larry presented the minutes from the July 9-10, 2014 board meeting. Mary Kelley asked for a clarification on the second paragraph of the Finance Report. Andrea Rogers noted a correction she made previously by email. Larry noted NEFA minutes are typically long, and in future would like to see more concise reports.

Randy Rosenbaum made a motion to approve the July 9-10, 2014 board meeting minutes with the mentioned corrections. Byron Champlin seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Finance & Audit Committee Report

John Plukas reported the investments continue to make progress. The market continues to grow with few pauses. The portfolio is weighted toward equities, which are unpredictable in their growth, but invite little loss. The year-to-date performance of the three main managers is fine. NEFA opened a modest small caps account in 2011, but these have since fallen out of favor. The Boston Common account represents a small allocation to international investments, which are down. The US is the only outstanding performing market. Overall, NEFA's investments are doing well and have only improved since July. NEFA will be turned over to Cathy in great shape.

Laura Paul directed the board to the year-to-date spending summary as of October 31st, representing five months (or 40% percent) of the current fiscal year. Spending in programs is considerably variable, with a good deal of spending in grantmaking yet to come. At this point in the year, you can review variances from summer projections. Some carry over from NEA funding was allocated to Creative Economy to boost spending and assist with the Creative Communities Exchange (CCX) in June. Communications and development spending for general NEFA costs is slow at this point, most of this activity is specific to program services and events and is therefore, embedded in the program lines.

Laura invited board members to contact her or John with questions about the previously distributed audited statements. FY15, once completed, will mark the tenth year with the current auditors, and NEFA will request proposals for new partners in early fall. Also of note, NEFA signaled interest in opting for a



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2-year renewal on the current lease at 145 Tremont. Laura expects to get current rates from the landlord soon.

Development Committee Report

In spite of a challenging year, Laura reported, NEFA will have secured three major funding opportunities in FY15: \$1m from the Department of State for Center Stage; \$1.7m from the Barr Foundation for 3-4 years of the pilot program; and the team is in the midst of completing a \$3.3 m, 3-year proposal to Mellon for the National Dance Project (NDP). There was concern about the lateness of the Mellon proposal invitation, but the delay was actually due to Mellon's interest increasing the invitation from the standard two years to three.

The FY14 Annual Fund raised \$43,969 made up of 82 gifts, including 19 board gifts totaling \$30,310. The Rebecca Blunk Fund has reached \$28,300 including 22 gifts totaling \$7,625 in FY14, and 69 gifts totaling \$20,675 in FY15. 14 of those donations were from the board. To date the FY15 Annual has received 12 gifts totaling \$7,640, including 4 board gifts of \$6,100.

Jane James thanked those who have already made annual pledges in FY15 and hopes for 100% board participation by year's end. Andrew Cornell added the purpose of board giving is to support the organization, which has continued to shine in a difficult year. Jane reiterated 100% participation is a more compelling representation of the board's engagement than any dollar amount and is an important benchmark to promote when speaking with board prospects.

Jane drew the board's attention to the list of upcoming NEFA supported events. She encouraged board members to contact Sarah Long Holland or program staff if they are interested in attending. Larry encouraged everyone to experience art first hand in any way possible, NEFA supported or not. Seeing work solidifies the board's mission. Andrew Cornell promoted Double Edge Theatre, a National Theater Project (NTP) grantee, performing Grand Parade at ArtsEmerson this spring. Double Edge is a good friend to NEFA. They planted a tree in honor of Rebecca Blunk and contribute to NEFA individually and as an organization.

Trustees Report

Andrea Rogers recounted previous conversation about altering the structure of the board and the role of the State Arts Agency (SAA) executive directors as well as discussion of moving toward classes of 8. The Trustees Committee pulled back from this and the bylaws were not changed, so classes remain capped at 6. Currently, the class of 2015 is oversized, the class of 2016 is missing one member, and the class of 2017 is vacant.

The Trustees Committee has recommended a vote on two nominees, Douglas Keith and Carrie Zaslow, for the class of 2017. Andrea thanked Jane James and Randy Rosenbaum for introducing NEFA to these candidates who each have one foot in the business world and one in arts activities and organizations. Both have experience with resource development and philanthropic giving.

Andrea also mentioned Ted Wendell, a new member of the Investment Committee, who has expressed interest in joining the board. Laura Paul recommended a fore-vote to nominate Ted to the board so he may elect to join when ready. John Plukas suggested Ted expressed his committed interest in joining the board in conversation with the Investment Committee. It was recommended to add Ted Wendell to the slate of nominees for the class of 2017.

Byron Champlin made a motion to add Ted Wendell to the slate of nominees. Amy Ellsworth seconded. The motion was unanimous.

Andrea Rogers made a motion to approve the nominations of Douglas Keith, Ted Wendell and Carrie Zaslow to the NEFA Board of Directors Class of 2017. Byron Champlin seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.



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Andrea Rogers confirmed she will contact candidates and share their approval and discuss next steps.

Julie Richard requested she and other SAA Executive Directors be contacted when candidates from their states are nominated to allow the opportunity to meet with them. Byron Champlin agreed this should be pro-forma for future nominations.

ISPA Award Announcement

Jane Preston read a communication she received the day before Thanksgiving announcing NEFA had received the 2015 Angel Award from the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) in recognition of outstanding individual achievement in the performing arts. NEFA was nominated by Mary Lou Aleskie, Executive Director of the International Festival of Arts and Ideas. Cathy Edwards explained ISPA is an important organization in the world of the performing arts and noted this is a great honor.

New England Programs Planning-Continued

Jane recalled the Strategic Plan recommended NEFA should consider its whole portfolio and identify places which could be improved and updated with special focus on the New England programs. Jane previewed the three segments of this conversation: first, a discussion on the new partnership with The Barr Foundation; second, an update on the Native Arts consortium planning; and third, Chris Dwyer will pick up the conversation from the July board meeting evaluating New England Presenting and Touring and Creative Economy programs and services to identify next steps. Jane briefly reviewed the strategies and objectives from the strategic plan adopted by board and staff to guide program development to provide context for the new program goals.

Barr Foundation Partnership

San San Wong, Senior Program Officer for Arts and Culture at the Barr Foundation came to NEFA as a potential partner and found congruent interests in developing funding resources and services for artists and arts organizations. Barr previously funded NEFA's Native Arts and Public Art programs, but San San was interested in creating a more comprehensive partnership which would:

- offer support for artists, especially artists of color to make work (including, but not limited to Native artists);
- work with artists and small artist driven organizations that had not had access to funding through grants;
- and identify and connect artists with a broad range of presenters and venues, including those not previously seen as arts venues

Recently arrived president Jim Canales is driving new interest at Barr in expanding its scope beyond Boston and redefining their identity as a funder. This interest in going beyond Massachusetts was an important signal for NEFA in entering the partnership with Barr to design a new grants program.. While the pilot phase is limited to Boston, we have discussed the potential to leverage new opportunities for cultural development at the regional level with Barr or additional funding at some point in the future. In September, NEFA was awarded \$1.7 million from Barr through FY18 to develop and pilot a program with the following objectives (to align with NEFA's strategic plan):

- Increase knowledge and skills among Boston artists of how to work with communities, specifically communities of color, and successfully complete the grant application and permitting processes.
- Increase creation of artist-led and experimental new work created in partnership with new venues across neighborhoods and increase public participation and imagination throughout Boston
- A sustainable, flexible and transparent grants program model that has a strong applicant pool of artists, particularly artists of color from across Boston, proposing creative projects



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- Strong networks of artists and venues across the city of Boston to exchange creative ideas, learning and connections to additional resources, as evidenced by participation in convenings and grant applications
- Ongoing learning about public art and community that can be shared with the intent to build capacity and interest in this work more widely

The next steps are to gain deeper knowledge of artist projects already in progress and develop cohorts in Boston to surface opportunities and potential early investments. Built into the budget is the salary for full time manager and part time coordinator positions (in addition to current staffing). NEFA will work with contractors on planning and research until job descriptions are fully developed. Building out the program will involve tapping into networks across NEFA programs and the city. NEFA's access to networks was an attractive asset for Barr in identifying us as the primary partner in this work.

Grantees will be artists or small arts organizations who propose new work that will foster partnerships with public spaces or presenting organizations. The intention is to support art in publicly accessible spaces, including performances, media, temporary public art, etc.

Jane asked Ted Landsmark to provide context on the state of cultural planning in Boston as this pilot takes shape. Ted mentioned Boston's new Mayor, Martin J. Walsh, and Chief of Policy Joyce Linehan, are driving the thinking around new initiatives. NEFA's partnership with Barr is one of multiple parallel processes across the city. A consulting team will work with the city on an 18-month process to develop a comprehensive cultural plan for Boston which will undertake surveys of cultural groups, artists, and those involved in cultural and arts organizations. From this data they will distill what role respondents believe arts and culture should play in developing the city.

Ted spoke with Linehan about potential connections between the Barr partnership and a recent grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. In applying for the Rockefeller grant, the Mayor's Office defined resiliency as overcoming the residual negative effects of busing and racial division in Boston, that continue to influence policy making decisions. The proposal requested \$100k to \$200k to encourage Boston to talk about race and culture in a city which is majority-minority, but with cultural forces which do not reflect that demographic or the dominant age demographic. Mayor Walsh recognizes the definition of culture and arts is not limited to physical geography or shaped by neighborhood boundaries.

Because there are parallel processes among the NEFA/Barr partnership, the Rockefeller grant, and cultural planning initiatives, they need to operate in tandem to best leverage collective resources. Barr understands the city will not have machinery in place to implement changes recommended in the cultural, but does not want to wait until the end of this citywide process to take action. Barr will look to NEFA and others to implement models and test cases of interventions that might be expanded region-wide.

Native Arts

Jane updated the board on the planning process led by Dawn Spears to establish a Native-led consortium to grow from NEFA's Native Arts program. The consortium will provide networking and convening opportunities for Native artists in the region. New England programs and Barr resources will be available to Native artists who Dawn can help to navigate the grants process. In September, Dawn posted an update on the NEFA blog and just announced the Northeast Indigenous Arts Alliance (NIAA) has incorporated and elected officers. Betsy Richards felt this consortium will play an important role in preserving heritage and leading the future of a more diverse and vibrant New England arts landscape.

Dawn will conclude initial planning in January, when she will share her findings. She is working on identifying the next steps in consortium development with potential for NEFA's continuing support and leveraging funding from other resources. Sarah Long Holland is working with her to identify potential funding sources available to NIAA as a Native-led organization. Jane recommended the board read



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Dawn's blog which captures the initial vision and goals for the consortium. NEFA agreed to distribute the link to Dawn's blog post.

New England Presenting and Touring and Creative Economy – Chris Dwyer

Chris Dwyer presented the board with a synthesis of work with NEFA staff and input from the board to date on updating the portfolio of New England programs. Chris, Jane, Adrienne Petrillo and Dee Schneidman have organized the collected information into goals and proposed tactics for meeting those goals to test within the field. Chris asked the board to recommend anyone who may be interested in responding. This focused work could provide an opportunity to organize a board subcommittee around programs as suggested at the last board meeting.

In talking about growing the New England programs, Chris and others reviewed NEA guidelines to make sure that proposed changes to current programs would continue to meet the parameters of this funding source. They also considered the board imperative to not limit aspirational goals within the confines of current funding capacity.

New England States Touring (NEST)

NEST is the most historic program at NEFA, which provides support for New England artists to tour in New England states outside of their own. The goals for updating NEST represent a synthesis of the observed changes in demand for the program, and staff and board input. Chris worked with staff to identify strategies and tactics to test with people within the field. One example would be to allow for some level of in-state touring through NEST, which could also present an opportunity to garner new resources to expand the program. Another goal is to bring in new applicants by setting aside targeted funds for those constituents so they do not have to compete with more experienced applicants.

Several board members suggested small tweaks to the language throughout the goals and tactics. Mary Kelley felt more intentional language was needed in “clarify guidelines with more examples to encourage diversity/breadth of applications,” the word “encourage,” could be replaced with something more incentivizing. Julie Richard asked to see more language that was inclusive of the visual arts. Randy Rosenbaum requested more explicit wording regarding partnering with State Arts Agencies. Betsy asked for more expansive language concerning diversity. The goals are clear about inclusivity around ethnic and culture diversity, but felt there could be clearer, stronger emphasis on the diversity of the work. Appealing to new constituents may require translating “arts language” into something more universal to demonstrate NEFA's desire to expand its boundaries.

Andrea voiced her discomfort with supplanting the goals of interstate touring by adding intrastate touring and taking on more of the work of the SAAs. She wondered if a matching incentive might be more compatible with current structures. Chris thought this was a perfect example of the responses this process is seeking.

Expeditions

Expeditions supports artists from anywhere to tour in multiple communities within New England. The application process asks presenters to collaborate, with the annual Idea Swap playing an important role in developing partnerships. The themes in updating Expeditions are similar to those for NEST, but with a few twists. To expand program constituents, NEFA can identify presenters with capacity and encourage them to partner with first time applicants. Another goal for Expeditions is to a concerted effort to support New England based artists.

Some of the tactics to be tested include adding smaller or first-time presenters onto already developed tours, potentially with scaled-down presentations that could work for smaller venues.. Mary Kelley and Randy Rosenbaum likened these tactics to the jazz touring program, which established larger presenters as mentors to small presenters interested in getting more involved. It allowed flexibility to continue involving more constituents. Cathy Edwards further suggested building in leverage for matching funds.



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CCX, Creative Economy Network, CreativeGround

Planning for these programs continues NEFA's history of promoting the importance of arts and culture in New England. CreativeGround.org focuses on professional creative sectors across New England. The site is able to count, quantify and highlight creative businesses and arts and cultural nonprofits in New England. There is interest in creative economy projects in communities that are not initiated by artists or cultural organizations, but by mayors' or other city offices among others. With the Creative Economy Network (NECEN) and Creative Communities Exchange (CCX), organizations and individuals are able to gather, communicate and mobilize around mutual interests. The goal of these programs is to connect those in other sectors with NEFA and other entities within the creative sector.

Goals for updating these programs include: creating and leveraging connections with other regional groups and entities; attracting more diverse types of communities to participate in CCX and NECEN activities; and highlighting NEFA and the region's creative economy work on a national scale. All of these goals require additional funding.

One tactic to consider is for NEFA to spotlight community revitalization which goes beyond economic outcomes. Only thinking about the economy and jobs may not always be attractive for some constituents, so opening the conversation up to other outcomes may garner new attention. There may also be the possibility of providing grants for interested parties to pilot or replicate programs that were successful in other communities. This could be an attractive prospect for funders.

Creative Economy Research

Research is an area that would require more information from staff and board to determine the value of NEFA's role. As part of the national dialogue, NEFA must deduce what information is needed. Cathy Edwards added creative economy data itself, unless connected to other measures of revitalization, is just another form of gentrification. It needs to grow into a next phase.

Updating NEFA's creative economy research requires assessment of the needs-how are people using and depending on this research? NEFA should investigate what other researchers in the region are doing, how the data can be packaged more effectively, and who could be new audiences. NEFA receives regular requests from New England organizations and communities for more localized assessments.

Larry Simpson asked whether NEFA receives feedback from news organizations or political/policy groups attesting to how this aggregated research has contributed to their own decision making. Julie and Randy both offered examples of creative economy research impacting educational, culture and executive offices in their states. Cathy Edwards also mentioned the Arts and Ideas Festival will call upon this data when making the case for state appropriations.

Chris concluded by reiterating her call for suggestions from board members of names of constituents and others to test these ideas and to help move the process into the next phase.

Closing Remarks

Larry Simpson closed the meeting encouraged by the progress of the programs planning and the board's participation, feeling the right questions had been raised. He looked forward to Cathy's arrival on January 20th and wished the board happy holidays.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 PM

Next Steps:

- ***Submit the minutes from this meeting for board approval on April 9, 2015***
- ***Andrea Rogers will contact approved nominees to discuss next steps***
- ***Trustees Committee should connect SAA EDs with board prospects from their state***
- ***NEFA will distribute a link to Dawn Spears' blog on Native Arts planning***