



Board Meeting Minutes

July 8 – 9, 2015
Point Lookout Resort
Northport, ME

Board Members Present – Alex Aldrich, Byron Champlin, Andrew Cornell, Amy Zell Ellsworth, Daniel Forrest, Jane James, Doug Keith, Mary Kelley, Kristina Newman-Scott, John Plukas, Julie Richard, Betsy Theobald Richards, Andrea Rogers, Randall Rosenbaum, Larry Simpson, Ann Smith, Pamela Tatge, Ted Wendell, Marco Werman, Carrie Zaslow

Board Members Participating By Phone – Geoff Hargadon

Staff Present – Cathy Edwards, Steven Fenton, Sara Nash, Laura Paul, Adrienne Petrillo, Jane Preston, Dee Schneidman, Quita Sullivan, Ann Wicks

Guests – Chris Dwyer, Jennifer Hutchins, Aimée Petrin

Notetaker – Steven Fenton

CHAIR LARRY SIMPSON CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 1:07 PM

Call to Order & Welcome

Chair Larry Simpson called the meeting to order and thanked Maine Arts Commission Executive Director Julie Richard for hosting the board retreat in her home state. Larry expressed his excitement to have five new members on the board and was pleased they could all be present for the meeting. He led the room in roundtable introductions.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Cathy Edwards also thanked Julie Richards for recommending a wonderful meeting location and everyone present for making the trip up to Point Lookout. Cathy offered her thanks to the board for leading the organization through a year marked by sorrow, transition, and change. Coming out of that year, NEFA is faced with opportunities to build on the tremendous legacy of the organization and think about what comes next. Cathy has been working thoughtfully and methodically on the board's behalf orienting herself to NEFA's business practices, stakeholders, constituents, and the state of the field. She spent her first six months learning, and sees the next 12-18 months as a chance to set priorities and chart a course for growth.

Cathy commented on the organizational accomplishments she witnessed in her first six months. She acknowledged the work of Dee Schneidman in organizing a robust Creative Communities Exchange (CCX) in Keene, NH in June. NEFA launched Creative City, a new pilot program with funding from the Barr Foundation. Cathy participated in panel meetings for the Expeditions, New England States Touring (NEST), National Dance Project (NDP) programs, and artist selection for Center Stage.

Cathy spent rigorous, thoughtful time with NEFA's major funders. She and Chair Larry Simpson met with the national cohort of regional arts organizations (RAO) leaders at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Cathy reported as NDP approaches its 20th anniversary, NEFA engaged an external consultant to consider how to adapt and make a case for the future of the program. NEFA also hired a consultant to advise on determining a strategy for investment spending.

Throughout all of her travel and conversations, Cathy gained an appreciation for NEFA's standing in the field. NEFA is seen as catalytic and innovative, providing critical opportunities to artists and cultural organizations in the region. NEFA's grants leverage a ratio of investment in the arts not captured by dollar amounts. NEFA invests in artists and trusts them to do their work and offers a tremendous peer advisory cohort that helps artists achieve. Cathy reported there is a great deal of trust in NEFA as a partner, grantmaker, and leader of best practices.

Cathy laid out challenges that are also opportunities for the organization. The first is to diversify funding sources. NEFA is lucky to have loyal, consistent funders, but it would be prudent to bring more partners in especially to expand impact in New England, maintain NDP's impact, and invest in staff. Creative City will present opportunities to be more purposeful as NEFA enters the debate around increased access to art and arts in the public realm. Cathy hopes this program will allow NEFA to study and evaluate the impact on the arts landscape in Boston. Creative City will complement CreativeGround and NEFA's creative economy research.



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Cathy invited board members to offer comments and questions. Many thanked Cathy for her hard work in her first six months and several acknowledged how pleased they were with her clear vision and sense of direction for the organization. One board member was pleased to see relations with the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) were continuing to improve and was glad Cathy included this in her priorities in her report.

On behalf of Cathy and the Executive Committee, Larry Simpson asked the board what they would like to see NEFA work toward in the next 1-3 years. Board members suggested NEFA should:

- Consider new opportunities to involve and re-engage Native artists and Native led organizations;
- Seek out additional underserved and legacy communities in New England and involve them in civic engagement efforts, and rethink touring for non-performance based work;
- Address work around veterans issues and explore fundraising to support creation and touring;
- Deepen the perception of NEFA as a resource for creative economy work, and gather more data to help define New England as a culturally and artistically rich region;
- Explore opportunities for investing in dance development in New England;
- Develop a toolkit for arts leaders working on a case-statement or platform for policy and advocacy;
- And create a succinct story and consistent brand identity for NEFA.

Larry thanked the board for their comments and offered with Cathy now in place, NEFA is well-positioned to develop the strategy and resources to begin addressing these suggestions.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Larry Simpson presented the minutes from the April 9, 2015 Board of Directors meeting and asked for corrections, but none were offered. He called for a motion to approve.

Randall Rosenbaum made a motion to approve the April 9, 2015 Board of Directors meeting minutes. Byron Champlin seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Larry Simpson presented the minutes from the March 31, 2015 and April 30, 2015 Executive Committee meetings and asked for any corrections, but none were offered. He called for a motion to approve.

Byron Champlin made a motion to approve the March 31, 2015 and April 30, 2015 Executive Committee meeting minutes. Randall Rosenbaum seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Trustees Committee Report

Andrea Rogers thanked Cathy Edwards and the members of the members of the Trustees Committee for their efforts over the past year. The committee has begun to replenish membership and fine-tune procedures. She recognized those members leaving the board, in addition to herself, John Plukas, Mary Kelley, Daniel Forrest, Peter Nessen, and David Bury.

Board Officer & Class Elections

Andrea presented the list of board nominations, term renewals, and officer slate for board vote. Larry Simpson asked for a motion to approve the slate of board officers and director nominations as one vote.

Randall Rosenbaum made a motion to approve the slate of board officers and director nominations in one vote. Mary Kelley seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Byron Champlin made a motion to approve the nominated slate of board officers and director appointments. Carrie Zaslow seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

The board applauded Andrea Rogers for her many years of service to NEFA. Cathy thanked Andrea and reminded the board the Trustees Committee would like additional members as Andrea rotates off.



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Corporate Officer Elections

Larry Simpson called for a motion to appoint Cathy Edwards as Chief Executive Officer and to renew Jane Preston as Assistant Secretary for the New England Foundation for the Arts.

Mary Kelley made a motion to name Cathy Edwards Chief Executive Officer and Jane Preston Assistant Secretary on behalf of New England Foundation for the Arts. Byron Champlin seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Finance & Audit Committee Report

COO Laura Paul reviewed the current process and timing for budget planning and approval as it relates to the board meeting schedule. The new fiscal year starts on June 1. Historically the board has reviewed and approved the budget at the July meeting, which typically falls 5-6 weeks into the new fiscal year. The budget goes through the Finance & Audit and Executive Committees in advance of the board meeting. Laura suggested with the addition of an April board meeting, it will now be possible to work towards a new timeline allowing the board to approve a new budget prior to the start of the new fiscal year.

Laura walked the board through preliminary projections for FY15. NEFA began the year with a budget of \$7.8m. The numbers reflect some not atypical variances. For example, what could appear as underspending in NDP and NTP, is really a manifestation of funding that has been allocated for touring projects deferred until the following year. Because of these nuances, NEFA will come in under \$7m for FY15. A board member commented this flexibility to defer spending is essential to artists, but is worth keeping an eye on over time.

Board Treasurer John Plukas reminded the board NEFA historically takes \$50k from reserves to help support operating costs. In FY15, NEFA budgeted \$85k (\$35k in addition to the typical \$50k) to help offset the costs of the executive search.

Laura Paul drew the board's attention to the proposed budget for FY16 and reviewed the line items under the "Grants & Program Services" heading.

- *New England Presenting & Touring (NEPT):* \$375k funded solely by the New England SAA contributions and the NEA. There is no carry over this year, so this number is lower than FY15.
- *Creative Economy (CE)/Creative Ground:* \$54k representing a baseline level of activity.
- *Public Art:* \$138k, which covers grantmaking and the Public Art Discussion Series (PADS) and is funded by the Fund for the Arts (FFA) endowment at NEFA.
- *Creative City:* \$398k budgeted for a new pilot program funded by the Barr Foundation. This number anticipates projected grantmaking for the year and includes the cost of professional development services.
- *National Dance Project/National Theater Project:* \$2.3m/\$1.2m funded by Mellon and Duke.
- *Center Stage:* \$106k funded by the US Department of State. This number is allocated for a planning year for the third season. Touring activity will happen in FY17, which will bump this number up to about \$800k.
- *Sponsored Projects:* \$76k, includes initiatives like ArtistLink, which is housed at MCC, and will be spent down over the next two years.

Under the "Administration" heading, Laura Paul pointed out the proposed compensation and benefits, at \$1.7m, reflects a 1.7% cost of living adjustment. The second line item for compensation, at \$50k, represents the first phase of a market adjustment to bring NEFA salaries part way to the market average. Part of NEFA's strategy for hiring and retention involved working with Longpoint Consulting to analyze salaries within the Boston nonprofit market to create benchmarks for NEFA compensation moving forward. The goal is to bring all salaries under average to within 10% below market average. This \$50k represents the first phase of that process. The organization is asking for the board's approval in spending \$50k from reserves for this purpose.

John Plukas recapped the full request is to spend \$160k (approximately a 4% draw) from reserves to balance the proposed budget for FY16. Both the Finance & Audit and Executive Committees deemed this appropriate based on the reasoning and projects described. There was some conversation and questions about NEFA's



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history in requesting to draw from reserves. Laura explained this has happened on a case-by-case basis. John Plukas advised this compensation project and other initiatives over the next two years will likely result in another meaningful but not excessive draw from reserves. The consulting process with Rebecca Thomas will help develop a policy and standard for withdrawal.

There was additional conversation about deferred activity and whether it was necessary for NEFA to defer overhead with that spending. Laura mentioned the committee has discussed this idea and will take a harder look at this with the possibility of renegotiating with funders.

Board Chair Larry Simpson called for a motion to approve the proposed FY16 Budget.

Byron Champlin made a motion to approve the proposed FY16 budget. Carrie Zaslow seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Larry thank the board for their questions and thanked Laura Paul, John Plukas and Geoff Hargadon for leading the conversation.

Development Committee Report

Jane James referred the board to the detailed development report in the board book. She shared the committee focused its work on board engagement. Jane invited comments from board members who participated in NEFA supported or related events. Several members attended a NEFA organized dinner and performance of *The Grand Parade (of the twentieth century)* by Double Edge Theater. It was an opportunity for them to see NEFA's impact, and to interact with the artists.

Byron Champlin spoke highly of the CCX, where he witnessed the results of creative economy projects in the region and leveraging arts as an economic engine. All New England states were well represented at the conference, which is fundamental to its success. NEA Chairman Jane Chu offered closing remarks and met with the state arts agency (SAA) directors and NEFA leadership, which served as a great relationship building opportunity. Jane James added the CCX presentations are online at the NEFA website.

Amy Zell Ellsworth spoke about participating in the NDP panel. She recommended board members should sit in on panel meetings whenever they have the chance.

A board member asked to further discuss diversifying funding for NEFA. Laura Paul mentioned as part of 990 prep and review, they came up against a declining ratio in the mix of public and private funding. The calculation is based on a five year average, where they exclude anything in excess of a certain percentage. This means funding is concentrated so heavily among limited sources, and because of the timing of two grant renewals, NEFA's ratio came down. Laura's projections suggest the percentage will come back up, but the takeaway is to pay close attention to this, as it will fluctuate over time. NEFA must maintain resources not purely concentrated in one or two funders to remain a public charity in good standing.

Several board members felt it was a risk to pursue additional growth and funding, rather than focusing energies inward on current programs. One member asked how other RAOs are balancing their budgets as a comparison. Cathy mentioned the RAO cohort will meet again in October, where she can look into this further. From her understanding, some regions have more robust support from states and many have more foundation and corporate support than NEFA does. Cathy explained to sustain programs, you have to cultivate donors with genuine interest in the work. Interests can change, and NEFA has to plan to be flexible enough to weather those changes.

State Reports

Chair Larry Simpson asked the SAA Directors to report out on happenings in their home states.

Julie Richard was pleased to say after two years of work, Maine Arts Commission launched a new grant site, with new systems for applications and panel review. The state completed the roll out of its first new cultural plan since 2006. The past 18 months were spent working on data gathering, traveling, testing, getting



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feedback, and identifying priorities. Julie happily reported on an increase in state budget for the next 2 years, following much advocacy work at the state house. MAC is working on the Maine International Conference on the arts (MICA), and the 50th anniversary celebration of the organization. MAC received another \$10k from Maine Community Foundation to continue their arts education census. This year they are aiming for 100% participation in every school, which should give an accurate sense for which schools do and do not incorporate the arts into their curriculum, and to what extent. The results of this survey will allow MAC to be more intentional in implementing new programming.

In Rhode Island, Randy Rosenbaum shared the budget came through with a slight increase. Randy and his team are working diligently figuring out how to spend \$30m on capital projects funding. He is feeling excited about the possibility of helping artists with enhanced professional development programs and opportunities thanks to a grant from the Department of Agriculture to extend Assets for Artists into rural areas. There is increased activity in public art as 1% of all money allocated for new construction or renovation shall go toward acquisition of art. They recently celebrated 5 years of the DIG program, which supports innovative projects in design, bringing projects up to scale and making it possible for them to go to market.

The 50th anniversary of the Vermont Arts Council saved the organization thanks to legislation declaring 2015 to be Vermont Year of the Arts (YOTA). There was not enough money in the budget to coordinate anything celebratory, so Alex Aldrich and his team created branded statements for YOTA, and pushed them out. They offered the opportunity for groups to post their events to a statewide calendar to brand each as a “YOTA event.” This was one of their most successful campaigns in recent years. Alex is in the midst of hiring three new team members, which he trusts will bring opportunity for change and growth within the office. Alex mentioned they recently introduced Animating Infrastructure grants to support community enhancement projects that have art at the center of their plan. They received a great variety of applications with 43 project proposals from 33 towns. They also initiated the Vermont Creative Network, which will provide the infrastructure to bring together different sectors that rely on the arts for impact. It’s a network of networks that can help foster connections among educators, community builders, artists, patrons, and presenters.

Kristina Newman-Scott is six weeks into her role as Director of Culture for the State of Connecticut. Her first priorities were listening, learning, and building bridges. She observed her team needs a lot of focus, care, and rebuilding. As a group, they understand what they were doing, but not why. The office had 15 staff members in 2007, but they are currently at 5.5, even though the workload has increased. Her budget was cut by 12.9%, but Kristina feels she has access to more resources and is meeting with committees and departments to find out how to become relevant in their work. She is overseeing pockets of bond funding, trying to make everything transparent to the arts community. Her organization continues to see the usual suspects, while others don’t know how to access available dollars and she’d like to involve them in the process. She is working on a new pilot program that could be replicated across the region, where the state is partnering with private art collectors to house and exhibit their collections in publicly accessible space.

NEFA Programs

Jane Preston gave the board a brief overview of the grants awarded by NEFA programs in FY15, and asked program staff drive the conversation on the trends, assets, and impacts they are seeing.

Quita Sullivan and Sara Nash reported on a major trend they observed in their national programs. NEFA has supported an increasing number of projects by artists who have engaged voices from the military community in creation and touring of their work. NEFA has awarded \$500k toward dance and theater pieces, which have reached 42 communities in 21 states. NEFA is planning a convening to bring together key stakeholders, including artists, health practitioners, and the military, to assess the impact of these collaborations. It will be the first opportunity for a cross-disciplinary conversation to address the experience, best practices, and what’s next for this emerging body of work. NEFA is developing the convening, which is slated for 2016 in Boston.

Research Manager Dee Schneidman reminded the board NEFA is charged with understanding the array of creative assets in New England. NEFA’s online directory, CreativeGround, hosts around 30k profiles, ranging from solo storytellers to nationally renowned artists like Janet Echelman, in addition to cultural organizations



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and nonprofits, like local libraries, museums, and design studios. Adrienne Petrillo, NEFA's New England Programs Manager, added Expeditions and New England States Touring (NEST) grant programs serve the diverse constituency represented on CreativeGround. The programs provide opportunity to creative organizations of varying size and impact.

Adrienne mentioned community engagement is the common thread across all of NEFA's grant programs. One trend that emerged this past year, involved theater artists taking their work out of traditional spaces and creating more site specific or outdoor work. In doing this, artists are reaching different audiences, specifically groups less likely to seek out theater or dance work in typical settings. Removing the physical barrier of the theater space creates new and different community engagement models, to which NEFA programs and funding criteria can respond.

NEFA's creative economy efforts work in concert with the grant programs to continue enhancing community engagement. In addition to quantifying the creative sector NEFA is providing professional development to community Leaders who want to leverage creative work for economic development. CCX offers an opportunity for dialogue among leaders, planners, developers, citizens, and artists to reflect and consider how their creative initiatives impact their local communities.

Sara Nash described several avenues within NDP that support international exchange. FUSED is an exchange program between France and the United States supporting artists and companies touring the partner nation. 2015 is the 11th year of French artists coming to tour or do research in the U.S. NDP has also awarded touring grants to artists from Africa, Asia, and South America. This year NDP made a grant to a company from Cuba to tour the U.S., which is a timely and relevant response to the evolving relationship between the two countries. Adrienne Petrillo added Expeditions regularly funds international artists coming to New England, and the community engagement aspect of the funding criteria is especially impactful when it involves cross-cultural exchange. Additionally, the Center Stage program is embarking on its third season, bringing three ensembles from Algeria, and two from Tanzania and Zanzibar to tour throughout the U.S.

LARRY SIMPSON ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 5:15 PM

Day 2

LARRY SIMPSON CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 9:08 AM

Chair Larry Simpson welcomed the board back for the second day of the retreat and asked Cathy Edwards to introduce the morning's meeting guests.

Maine Arts Panel

Cathy introduced Jennifer Hutchins and Aimée Petrin, who both work with cultural institutions in Portland, Maine. Jennifer Hutchins is Executive Director of Creative Portland, a nonprofit organizations that leverages, grows, and sustains Portland's creative industries, enterprises, and workforce. Creative Portland was awarded a Creative Economy Award at CCX 2015. Aimée Petrin is Executive Director at Portland Ovations, a nonprofit that brings artists from around the world to Maine for live performance and educational and outreach programs.

Jane Preston moderated a conversation between Jennifer, Aimée, and the board. They addressed NEFA's role in the region beyond grantmaking and discussed how NEFA helps colleagues do their best work. Aimée felt NEFA understood long before any other funders what it means to be a partner as a funder. NEFA has always understood partnership is essential to making art happen. Jennifer identified NEFA's creative economy work as a key to her organization's success. CCX provides Jennifer with a connection to peer institutions and colleagues across sectors confronting similar challenges in their work. NEFA's work in facilitating these connections and conversations gives constituents critical access to best practices, partnership, and technical and organizational assets.



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New England Programs Planning

Cathy Edwards asked Chris Dwyer to speak to the board about the recent slate of New England focus groups held by NEFA as part of the program planning process. Chris reminded the board last time they met, they discussed staff responses to the changes they were hearing a demand for. Chris felt the right approach to continuing this conversation was to address the learnings from focus groups and how those outcomes could reshape the New England programs.

The overall goals of the process are to: diversify applicants, attract new audiences, increase visibility, and create a path to national programs. Chris and the staff had these goals in mind and probed around these ideas throughout the focus group conversations. The state focus groups were full of intimate conversation where they heard a full spectrum of ideas for adapting the programs. Across the meetings, staff spoke to 110 participants representing a mix of artists and presenters, some aspiring grantees, and some previously unsuccessful or non-returners. Chris observed the reactions and suggestions were relatively consistent across all six meetings.

There is a general need for resources for development, creation, and incubation of work. Artists expressed need for money, professional development, and mentoring related to building touring capacity and networks. Artists want a better understanding of available resources and funding systems. NE artists are representing increasingly diverse art forms, but presenters aren't keeping up in understanding how to present, articulate, and prepare audiences for new models. Artists need help in learning how to talk about their work in order to connect better with presenters and are seeking more equity in those relationships. With such a large geography to navigate, artists and presenters find it difficult to connect, and require more opportunities to make connections and build relationships between these groups. When they are able to collaborate, they sometimes find the logistics overwhelming to figure out.

Presenters have difficulty meeting the requirements for successful grant applications and committing to the required matching funds. They are looking for more nimble funding opportunities. Presenters struggle with long planning timelines, finding tour partners, and working together remotely. Both artists and presenters want to present closer to home to build sustainable audiences. Bringing in somebody from another state for a one-off does not do that.

Hearing these challenges gave NEFA staff ideas for new directions to make NEFA programs friendlier. Chris shared a list of potential program modifications staff developed following the focus groups.

New Ways to Serve Artists:

- Create an artist advancement cohort to convene regional artists from all disciplines to identify and discuss challenges and opportunities in the field and to create an opportunity for connection and networking.
- Offer grants or funds to artists to support the creation of work for multiple communities, provide longer residencies, or allow multiple opportunities to visit a community.
- Include and involve visual and media arts in the framework of NEFA's grant programs

New ways to serve small presenters:

- Incentivize larger presenters to collaborate with smaller presenters through networks and consortia. Form teams of presenters to collaborate and learn together. Create roster of artists targeted to small markets.
- Create a cohort of small presenters to plan projects that increase access to underserved communities and organize and support small tours for this cohort.
- Consider art in public spaces and offer professional development to build audiences and create deeper impact.

Chris Dwyer arranged board members into groups to discuss and consider the opportunities created by these programmatic ideas. The groups met and reported out on their conversations.



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Randy Rosenbaum's group appreciated the artist and small presenter cohorts as a demonstration of NEFA's willingness to support. They envisioned separate tracks for urban, suburban, and rural constituents. He suggested mining people or organizations who have applied and failed, and seeking recommendations from SAAs. His group thought NEFA's RDDI could serve as a model for this work. NEFA can bring together a cohort and ask them to think expansively. These cohorts could be coordinated regionally or in each state. NEFA could leverage the SAAs to develop programs to sustain professional development in their states, advise agencies on resources and templates, and provide enrichment opportunities for artists and presenters who work their way through. The group sensed bringing people together is a theme for NEFA in general. They were interested in supporting and engaging artists and organizations of color that don't feel well served by NEFA. There is an opportunity to impact this community by convening them and listening to their needs, challenges, concerns, and issues; and offer programs they can share within the region and find ways to help them in that work.

Alex Aldrich explained his group's conversation could be boiled down to the question: what is NEFA's relationship to art? They suggested if it hopes to expand its effectiveness and impact, the organization should consider systemic change. For example, if NEFA wants to expand its support to literary, film, and visual arts, the organization needs to reconsider its use of performing arts language. They identified the low hanging fruit in NEFA's worldview has been contemporary art practice. Living artists creating and presenting their own work, but there are other contemporary artists not in the contemporary art field. They wondered how NEFA could engage in accessing diversity, providing equity to original and new populations. The group moved into another conversation around capacity building and what it means. Organizations need help knowing what and where resources exist. NEFA should develop a set of protocols to engage underserved communities in a respectful way and learn to become a mouth piece for these art forms, artists, or organizations.

Andrea Rogers' group agreed RDDI is a good model for a regional cohort, but warned not to duplicate efforts if the states are doing the same or similar work. Cohorts would serve to connect presenters and artists across state lines at a low cost. They felt using the CCX model to rotate the program around the region would work best, but didn't feel it would draw much corporate interest. Andrea's group thought artist grants and creation funds could work, but suggested NEFA not overload artists with expensive touring obligations.

Chris Dwyer was interested to hear mentions of NEFA models like RDDI and CCX used as prototypes, but not the actual New England programs. She wondered if groups addressed other issues in their conversations not confined to the questions she raised. There was discussion about touring in general, and whether it serves disciplines outside of performing arts and if not, whether that limits NEFA's ability to expand its disciplinary footprint. Larry Simpson added if NEFA doesn't change the framework, the power dynamics in the field will never change. It's the organization's charge to discover where need exists, who the constituents are, and how to talk about and work with them on their terms. If NEFA doesn't pursue this path, then the programs are simply being tweaked and not expanded or improved.

Closing Remarks

Cathy expressed her deep thanks to the board. She came into the meeting understanding it was an opportunity for her to listen. The next step in the planning process is to review the outcomes of the focus groups and return to the board with recommendations for program changes.

The next meeting of the board will be Wednesday, October 28 at the NEFA Offices in Boston from 12:00 – 4:00 PM. Cathy said she will be reaching out to board members to discuss committee assignments and reminded those leaving the board, they will still hear from her regularly. She thanked Mary Kelley, John Plukas, and Andrea Rogers for their long relationships with NEFA.

Cathy shared an update on the Rebecca Blunk Fund, which was established in memory of NEFA's former Executive Director who passed away in 2014. A plan for the fund has been developed with input from Rebecca's widow Marcie Hershman. The fund will provide awards to artists in New England. It was important to Marcie to acknowledge the deep knowledge of the staff, and while external panels decide NEFA's grants, this plan provides an opportunity to give the staff a voice in recognizing good work. The staff are working



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internally to come up with a small slate of nominees and will share with Marcie. The current plan calls for two grants of about \$2,500 for at least 5 years. NEFA will stay in touch with everyone who has donated to the fund and those who want to continue.

Larry Simpson thanked the board for a good two days, and welcomed the new members to the team.

LARRY SIMPSON ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 1:15 PM

NEXT STEPS

- *Submit the minutes from this meeting for board approval on October 28, 2015*
- *Cathy Edwards will contact new board members to discuss committee appointments*
- *NEFA staff will work with Chris Dwyer on the next phase of New England programs planning*
- *Consultant Rebecca Thomas will engage the board in a discussion about capital spending*