

## BLIND LGBT PRIDE INTERNATIONAL BOARD MEETING

SUNDAY, February 10, 2013

### **Call to Order**

Guillermo called the meeting to order at 4:12 PM CST.

### **Roll Call**

Present: Guillermo Robles, Mark Hanohano, Don Brown, Gabriel Lopez, Kevin Ratliff, George Ashiotis, Connie Torrisi, Mikey Wiseman

### **Approval of minutes**

The minutes were approved as submitted. MSC, (Brown, Wiseman)

### **President's Remarks**

Guillermo thank the board members for submitting there reports timely. Guillermo said that July will be here soon, and we need to communicate more effectively. Most of our efforts will be geared towards convention. All board members should consider themselves a member of the convention planning committee.

### **Public Comment**

Tyrone spoke to the convention planning chair. He said that he should contact or post an invitation to the website of Mariette Panthy Allen who wrote a book called transformations. Maybe she could bring 1 of the persons featured in her book to convention to talk. He also asked if we could sale the BPI logo on pins and buttons for a fundraiser.

## **Policy On External Communication among Board Of Directors during business meetings:**

### Unauthorized external communication

Guillermo said that this was brought up back in October, and it was decided to have the constitution and Bylaws committee look at it and advise the board on the best course of action.

Don said that this is not a constitutional issue. The board has the authority to establish rules with a simple majority vote. This is a board policy. Don said that he recommends the board adopt such a policy. It is common place for organizations to have this type of policy because of the popularity of electronic communication, texting and email. Guillermo read the propose language of the policy.

“During board meetings any unauthorized communication, electronic or otherwise are in violation of Article VI Section A, and may be subjected to disciplinary action contained in Article VI Section H of the BPI constitution.” Don discussed the sections of the constitutional that cover board members’ code of conduct. Mikey said that when this was originally brought up, it was correlated to posting to the list. Don said that he doesn’ t know, because he wasn’ t at that meeting. Mikey said that it was explained to him that board members were posting to the list. This policy seems to go much further and infringes on his rights. He’ s locked in, while on these calls, no texting or emailing. Kevin said that he had some of the same concerns as Mikey. What’ s authorized communication? Don said that unauthorized is the qualifier, and board members should know what is acceptable. Mikey asked more questions about authorized verses unauthorized communication via text during board meetings. Don said that he can’ t think of a solid argument for having unauthorized communication between board members. We are a membership based organization, and members should have access to our discussions. George asked Don where this type of guideline would be written. Don said that is something that Guillermo would have to address. Guillermo said that there will be a transitional board meeting at convention where a guideline handbook can be drafted. Mikey expressed concern that we are traveling down a slippery slope. For now it’ s communication during board calls, but how far will it go? Will it be an audit of all conversations and/or texts? Guillermo said that the problem is board members publishing information to the list. Mikey said that there is a thick line between publishing to the list and communication between board members. We’ re good with the publishing to the list. Connie said that we’ re making it more complicated than it needs to be. The word unauthorized is very clear. There should not be communication between board members about what someone said. If she wants to send a document to don or Guillermo, then that is authorized communication. Board members agreed with Connie. The board members discussed examples of authorized and unauthorized communication between board members. Don and George said that corrections to report should be discussed openly, rather than sending emails or electronic messages with corrections. George made a motion to adopt the policy on unauthorized communications of board members. MSC, (Ashiotis, Torrisi)

## **Treasurer’s Report**

Gabriel thanked everyone for their expressed support during the times of struggle he recently faced; fortunately, everything is going back to normal again with great results. He also thanked everyone for their understanding with regards to some of the delays in presenting the following. However, such delays have not been due to any lack of activity; on the contrary, he has insured that the necessary steps would be taken before moving along. Managing the assets of our organization is one of his

priorities, and he truly believes that it is only safe to make any decisions until the proper due diligence has been thoroughly carried out.

## Account Balances

Checking Account 1413: \$168.13

Note: The current balance reflects the payment to ACB for the expenses of the Convention at Louisville, in the amount of \$1,308.33, and membership dues that have been deposited directly into this account.

Savings Account 8456: \$300.09

Savings Account 3640: \$449.77

Paypal Account: \$655.10

Note: The current balance reflects a transfer that was made into Savings Account 3640 in the amount of \$500.00, to be transferred over to Checking Account 1413, in order to cover the above described payment to ACB. This balance also reflects membership dues that have been processed via Paypal.

## Recommendations for current BPI accounts

Close Savings Account 8456; this account is not serving any clear purpose. BPI is currently not managing amounts that would justify four accounts, as it is. Further more, Wellsfargo will deduct, directly from any savings account a monthly fee of \$3.00 for any balance below \$300.00, which means that there is not much that can be done with this account that has maintained a balance of \$300.09 for about 6 months.

Use Savings Account 3640 to keep the funds that are processed via Paypal.

Transfer funds from Paypal into Savings Account 3640 periodically. Given that Paypal requires a minimum of \$500.00, a transfer should be made every time the Paypal Account reaches such a minimum.

Transfer funds from Savings Account 3640 into Checking Account 1413 only as needed. Expenses should be anticipated and budgeted in order to avoid any overdraft. In the event of any immediate requirement, the transfer of funds between Wellsfargo accounts would go into effect automatically.

Handle all of BPI's payments through Checking Account 1413. This would include the monthly payment for web hosting, which is currently being charged to the Paypal Account.

Acquire a Square subscription to process payments "on-the-go;" for example, via the use of a smart phone. This would be highly convenient for processing Credit Card payments during Convention.

Note: This list does not exclude any future recommendations from this Treasury. These recommendations are presented in order to optimize the management of BPI's resources. Eventually a new set of recommendations will be presented with a growth strategy in mind.

Kevin asked if the accounts would have to be restructured, because as Don Wilson reminded us in October, the endowment fund is mandated by the constitution. Gabriel said that it wouldn't be a problem, since the constitution does not designate a specific account as the endowment fund. Guillermo said that it doesn't appear that the constitution names a specific account as the endowment fund. Mikey asked which account we would move the \$300.09 to. Gabriel said it would be moved to the other savings account. Mikey asked if there is a charge for such a low balance on the checking account. Gabriel said no. Mikey asked what is out total worth. Gabriel reported that we have a total of \$1300 roughly between all accounts. Mikey asked how much of the money in the checking account came for members pay dues. Mikey directed a question to George about a consolidated way of collecting dues. Members seem to be paying in whatever way is convenient to them, and the money is ending up in different pots. George said that he gets a notification from Paypal every time some makes a payment. Otherwise, he gets a message from Guillermo, who people send checks to. Gabriel said that \$36 in dues was deposited into the checking account. A discussion was had about separating the credit card payment app

recommendation from the rest of the recommendations for the motion. George moved that we accept Gabriel's recommendation to consolidate the accounts. Connie moved to accept the recommendation to close the account. MSC, (Torrise, Ashiotis)

Gabriel apologized again for his extended absence. He said that he welcomes any advice or assistance from anyone who has suggestions or recommendations. He does have experience with working with nonprofits and companies on the government and international level. This is what he does. Connie and Don said that Gabriel gave a great report. Connie made a motion to table action on the Square App. Kevin reminded the board that we have done this before. The treasurer's report was accepted as read. MSC, (Torrise, Ashiotis)

### **Nominations Committee Appointment**

Guillermo appointed the current Constitution and Bylaws committee as the nominations committee. It will be chaired by Will Burley.

### **Membership Committee Report**

#### **Public Comment**

Tyrone white asked to be recognized and considered for the membership committee. He also recommends that we consider and search out associate memberships, maybe with a fee of \$100. He has 2 individuals who might be interested in becoming associate members. Guillermo recommended he email the Membership chair about that.

George reported that membership is at 83, which includes the members from BPI Texas. 31 members have still not paid. Connie recommended that we cut them from the list. George will send a final reminder. George also reported that the new membership reporting system ACB is using is up in beta. He has his log-in information, and he thinks it will work great. It has some features that we could really use. There are some user defined areas. If he wanted to flag certain members as belonging to an affiliate, or separate out ACB Lifetime Members verses BPI Lifetime members, he could use the new online system. George Abbott paid the dues for their affiliate, plus a \$68 donation.

### **Provisional charter of affiliation of Blind LGBT Pride Of Texas**

Guillermo reported that he is please to announce that Blind Pride of Texas has been gathering together a membership. They have submitted there paperwork and elected a slate of officers.

Will Burley – President

Kevin Ratliff – Vice-President

Cynthia Faub – Treasurer

Leah Brown – Secretary

Will said that they have been trying at this for a while now, and Kevin forced him to do it. Kevin has really been a hand in forming this affiliate. There are a total of 12 members, and he spoke with someone today, so there will be 13 members. Will also reported that the first meet and greet was held 2 weeks ago, and there are a lot of exciting things happening in Texas. The affiliate is going to hit the ground running. There is a lot of talent, and he hopes to bring that talent to national.

Guillermo recommended that we accept BPI Texas as a provisional affiliate. Don made a motion to accept the provisional charter. Mark said that he noticed that there were a few minors on the roster, and he wondered how we felt about that, or what our policy is. Will said that there are no minors on the roster. Mikey asked what does this cost us. Is it a revenue producer? George said that we get \$5 per member. MSC, (Brown, Torrisi)

Mikey asked if we're able to support an affiliate. We're finding out that we don't have the infrastructure and the appropriate documents and handbooks in place. Are we ready to mentor a brand new organization? Are we ready? Are we there yet? George said that we already have 2 affiliates. Will said the Texas has a bunch of LGBT related bill coming before the legislature. We will be taking a part in that. We have to first get through the provisional status, and then we can do a lot more as BPI Texas. Don said that if you check the record, he was the only one who voted against the affiliates 5 years ago. But, now he thinks we're ready. Mikey asked what the affiliate will be presenting when addressing legislators. Will they just be using our name? Will they be using talking points? Will they be representing us? Don said that he took a look at their bylaws, and it is clear; They see themselves as very much an affiliate of BPI. It is in their constitution that they will uphold the laws of the parent organization. Much like BPI is an affiliate of National ACB, but we are not required to have activities and programs approve by ACB. Our job is to support our affiliate. When they grow, we gro. Guillermo reminded the board of the motion on the floor. MSC, (Torrisi, Brown)

## **Communications Committee Report**

Inside Out Deadline

Connie reported that the deadline for the inside Out is March 8<sup>th</sup> for board members, and March 1<sup>st</sup> for non-members.

## Electronic Ballots Revisited

Connie asked who the electronic ballot is sent to for distribution. Don checked, and it's the secretary.

## Constitution and Bylaws Committee Report

### Public Comment:

Harlow said that he thinks we violated our bylaw with our vote on the accounts. The bylaw calls for a designated endowment fund account that is not to be comingled with other funds. The board discussed the bylaw and the endowment fund. Mikey asked if there is a work-around that would enable us to follow Gabriel's recommendations.

Connie moved to rescind the vote on the accounts. MSC, (Torrise, Wiseman)

Don reported that today was there 1<sup>st</sup> question and answer session and there will be more in the future.

## Convention Committee Report

### Public Comment

Guillermo said that he understands the current limitations and financial situation. There will be a closed board meeting, where fundraising will be discussed. George suggested that Guillermo send an email with some proposed dates for the call. Guillermo said that the call will take place sometime in March before the meeting.

Mark reported that there is a tentative schedule of BPI's events that he will send out soon. There are 6 seminars, 3 are in partnership with an ACB affiliate. Mark explained a little more about the different seminars. Mark asked George what proposal he submitted to Peter. George said that he hasn't heard from Peter. George said that there doesn't seem to be a single workshop dealing with LGBT issues. Mark said that some of the workshops deal with LGBT issues. George said that we are a special interest affiliate for LGBT members, and workshops with LGBT themes should be the prime focus. Mark described the suite that we will have in Columbus. The room is small, and will not accommodate a lot of people. He said that we might have to use a meeting room for some of our events, and that's where catering and other costs will start to come in. We can't bring outside food into the meeting room, but we can in the suite. Kevin asked about the

previously discussed overflow hotel. Are we allowed to book rooms there? Do they have larger suites? Mark said that he talked to Janet for a really long time, and based on the estimated number of convention attendees, there is not a need for an overflow hotel. The only problem ACB is having is finding enough hospitality suites for affiliates. The suite is about the same size as the 1 in Minneapolis. Kevin asked Mark if 1 of the workshop doesn't work out or falls through, can we bring the app share (What's Appening\_ Workshop back. Mark said that 1 of the problems is he asked Janet if we could have a meeting room for the whole time, but not only does she not control that, a lot of thing in convention get twist around in the programming. George asked Mark what that has to do with having a What's Appening Workshop. He said that he doesn't understand how Mark's response relates to Kevin's question. Mark said that he thought Kevin was asking about the size of the room again, because the app workshop was so well attended. Mark said that the suite should be the right size for the app share. George asked that a point by point agenda for the special board meeting be sent out in advance. Guillermo said he would send 1 out. The board members said that they were available for the meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. There was more discussion about the size of the suite and how many it will accommodate. Mark said that this year we have to put the first night in the suite plus tax on a credit card. We will be billed for the other incurred expenses at the end of the convention.

## **Outreach Committee Report**

Mikey said that he would like to applaud Will Burley for his outreach efforts. Will has made some contacts in Ohio, and he successfully navigated some hurtles and always made himself available. If his experiences working with him are any indicator of the kind of president he will be, then he is eager to see... He thinks Will will be a great president.

Mikey also reported that Outreach held two telephonic mixers at the end of January: the first was on Wednesday 01-30-13 at 8pm EST and the second on Thursday 01-31-13 at 8pm PST. Attendance was poor. Both mixers lasted for approximately 75 minutes.

Some concerns were expressed by the participating members regarding the overall cost of convention. Participants also shared ideas for fundraising and future programming.

## **Public Q&A**

Kevin asked Mark if he knew anything about the cost of the internet. They are working on streaming. Mark said that the internet is free.

## **Deadline for board members and committee chairs**

Guillermo said that all reports and documents are due by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 PM CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Ratliff,

Secretary