

BLIND LGBT PRIDE INTERNATIONAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SUNDAY, October 14, 2012

Call to Order

Guillermo Robles called the meeting to order at 4:08 PM CST.

Roll Call

Present: Guillermo Robles, Kevin Ratliff, Gabriel Lopez, Connie Torrisi, Mikey Wiseman, George Ashiotis

Absent: Don Brown, Mark Hanahana

Approval of minutes for September 9

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

President's Remarks

Guillermo said that we have an issue that can turn in to a problem if not attended to right away. There seems to be a delay in communication among board members. He realizes that we have thing going on outside of this. However, as the months progress, we're getting closer to planning for convention, and we need to start buckling down and prioritizing and organizing and staying connected and cohesive as possible. Guillermo asked the board for suggestions on how to improve communication. George asked Guillermo to be clearer about what needs to be fixed. He's not sure he understands what the problem is. Guillermo explained that anytime requests for information or a response are sent via email or in a meeting, there seems to be a delay or failure to respond. Mikey asked where we dropped the ball. Where is the disconnect. Guillermo said there is a disconnect in getting back to each other in a timely fashion. There is a sense of frustration expressed by a couple of board members. Mikey encouraged those board members to speak up and be heard. Give us an example, so that we can figure out a work-around or a solution to the problem. Guillermo asked board members what they feel is reasonable, when trying to communicate efficiently. Kevin asked if the sender of the email is allowing a reasonable amount of time to receive a response. He said that it should be about 3 days. Some people check there email everyday, every hour on the hour, and some people check there email once a week. The sender of the email could call the person or put a receipt on the email, so they would know when the person saw the email. He might email Don, who is on the I.T committee, if he needed something, but he would call George, because he might not check his email everyday. Mikey said that he agreed with Kevin. We should just pick up the phone, if something is pressing or urgent. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. Guillermo suggested that board members use their BPI email addresses. That way, there is no confusion about lost or missing emails. Gabriel suggested a CC of all emails be sent to the respective BPI email address. There was further discussion about preferred email addresses and respective BPI email addresses and the best and most efficient way to receive email. George said that we should all just agree to do better, respond to questions and requests for information in a timely manner. Board members said that they agreed with George. Guillermo asked board members how they feel about communicating via text messaging, if there was some crucial. Mikey said that he is fine with receiving text regarding BPI business, but he's not going to go back and forth via text for official BPI business, and he's not going to forward the outreach mailbox to his iPhone either. Kevin said that sometimes you have to use all options when calling a

meeting or needing a response with short notice. Guillermo said that he would like for us to be a little more responsive to communications, whether from him, other board members, or committee chairs. Connie said that she hasn't noticed any of these problems. Guillermo said that it hasn't been major, but he is stopping it now. He's bringing it to an end. Gabriel said that he has had the problem of sending a request for information and the person not responding, yet he sees posts from the person on the announce or discussion list.

Board Expectations Revisited

Board policy on external communications during board meetings:

Guillermo said that he has noticed board members posting to the lists during board meetings. Guillermo read the proposed policy on outside communication during board meeting. Mikey asked what article 5, section A says. Don Wilson said that it's Article VI, Section A. He read Article VI, Sections A and H. Kevin said that 1 of the problems is we don't have any existing policies or rules that address the behavior. There is nothing that says that a board member can't post emails to a discussion list, or send emails to anyone else during a meeting. George said the he thinks that it is unethical and not a good practice for board members to post to the discussion list during meetings. Mikey said that he agrees with George. The proposed language is too broad. It basically says you can't do anything while on a call. Guillermo call point of order on RJ, who started to speak. Kevin restated his concern that the language needs to be updated or added to the bylaws before the policy can be enforced. Guillermo said the some information was posted to the discussion list, and later a correction was sent, because of what happened during a board meeting. That is the reason for the proposed policy. George said that he thinks that Guillermo's concerns are valid, but we should table this and get the Constitution and Bylaws Committee to take a look at it. Mikey said that since we all have an understanding of the policy, in the mean time, we can just agree not to engage in the behavior. The board agreed to table the issue until constitution and Bylaws has a chance to review it.

Unauthorized external communication

During board meetings any unauthorized communication, electronic or otherwise are in violation of Article V Section A, and may be subjected to disciplinary action contained in Article V Section H of the BPI constitution.

Review of Open Board Policy

Guillermo reported that he has a clearer understanding of the structure of board meetings and how to include the public. We will have public comments, and prior to each agenda item, there will be public comments. There is a 2 minute time limit on public comments. Guillermo asked Connie to keep time, when there are public comments.

Public Comment

Don Wilson said that the constitution and bylaws with the Articles he read and the open board policy is on the website. Also the policy, such as the 1 proposed relating to outside communication during board meetings, does not have to be in the constitution and bylaws, so long as is standard operating procedure. Tim Miles said that he is glad to hear that we have a good understanding of our conduct. Tyrone White thanked everyone for extending there help. He said that he will be resubscribing to the email list with a new Gmail account, and he will still access his mail through webmail.

Committee Chair Appointment

Guillermo reported that Eric Smith has resigned as Convention Committee Chair due to personal issues. He will still lend his support to convention planning. He will help wherever he can. Guillermo appointed Mark Hanahana as convention chair, and he appointed Will Burley to the committee. Guillermo encouraged board members and members to get involved with convention planning, because it is a huge undertaking.

Treasurer's Report

Account balances
Checking: \$872.14
Savings: \$300.09
Savings II: \$449.75
Pay Pal: \$867.25

Revenues

\$490 for Mark's room.

Expenses:

ACB invoice: \$1308.33

Gabriel recommended that money be moved from the Pay Pal account to the checking in order to pay the ACB convention expenses. Don Wilson said that the web hosting fee of \$9.95 comes out of the Pay Pal account. Mikey asked why we have 2 savings accounts. Don explained that 1 is the endowment fund, which is in the constitution. The other is just a savings account. Mikey made a motion to close the savings account and move that money in to the checking account, and pay ACB. Gabriel said that we would still need some money from the Pay Pal account, because that would only give us about \$1321. We would still be a little short. George asked if it might be wise to contact George Abbott about the history of the accounts and if they can or can not be merged. Gabriel said that he would be meeting with George Abbott and Guillermo to discuss the accounts and other matters. Connie said that since the Pay pal account does not draw interest, it might be better to move the money from the Pay Pal account. George made a motion to table the discussion and decision until the meeting with George Abbott. Mikey offered a friendly amendment that the questions that the board has raise be asked in the meeting with George. There was further discussion about the checking and savings accounts. Gabriel voiced concern that the payment to ACB should be issued before a vote at the next board meeting. George suggested we vote by email, once we have the information from the meeting with George Abbott. MSC, (Ashiotis, Wiseman) Guillermo asked for public comment on the Treasurer's report. Gino said that if there are a lot of fees for using Pay Pal, the we should close that account, and get a savings account for paying bills. Gabriel and Connie stated that there is only a fee when transferring money from the account. The Treasurer's report was accepted as read. MSC, (Ashiotis, Wiseman)

Membership Report

Member List Revitalization Project Update

George reported that we have 198 members. A couple have gone; A couple have joined. 51 letters have been sent out, asking people if they are still interested in being members and how to proceed if they are and how to proceed if they are not. Responses are trickling in. 161 emails have also been sent out to members of the discussion and announce lists, as well as those who receive the Inside Out newsletter, but haven't paid dues in a long time.

Expulsion of Hugh Butch Arnold

George made a motion to expel Hugh Butch Arnold from the membership roster with a letter saying that he is no longer a part of the organization. Mikey asked if we do this, will we have to return his lifetime membership money. The board members said that he has already taken his money. George said the he has already taken himself off the email lists. Kevin said that we don't have a policy in place or a protocol for removing or expelling paid members, especially lifetime members. He understands the reactionary nature and emotions behind such a motion, but we don't have the authority to take this kind of action. BFLAG then and BPI now, has not accepted our responsibility in this matter. We failed to make the necessary corrections to the accounts, knowing that he was primary signer on the accounts. There was further discussion about the money that Hugh Butch Arnold took from the account and the unethical actions. Connie suggested that since he has removed himself from the email lists, we just ban him from BPI, and do nothing else, no letter or communication otherwise. Kevin suggested that George withdraw his motion, and we move to the next agenda item. George asked who are the signers on the account now. Gabriel reported that the signers are Gabriel, George Abbott and Guillermo. Don Wilson reported that we have to send a copy of the minutes to Pay Pal to have Hugh Butch Arnold's name removed from the account. He was the original contact person. Connie suggested closing the Pay Pal account and reopening it to get his name off of it. George withdrew his motion. George reported that we have 197 members.

Convention Committee Report

Guillermo read the Convention Committee Report submitted by Eric Smith.

There was not a committee meeting in the last month, but Eric, Mark and Guillermo were in touch via e-mail and telephone. A brief survey was composed and submitted via the fall newsletter and then posted to the BPI web site. Notices were sent to membership requesting they participate in the survey via the mailing list and Twitter. The goal was for a broad look at the plans to attend the ACB convention next July and interests in activities BPI might sponsor during the convention. The survey drew very little participation with incomplete response. Perhaps that was the fault of the survey composition or method, although there were no criticisms or suggestions along those lines. If such a small sample can mean anything:

Most have not attended a convention in the past. There was an even split among those planning to attend next summer, no plans to attend and uncertain at this point. It would seem most hope to be in Columbus Monday through Friday. It was recommended that affiliate business be conducted earlier in the week, but allowing time to meet candidates and discuss issues.

Strong support was given to having the BPI suite available for casual socializing. Suggested activities lean toward workshops and discussions, along with mixers and entertainment, both on site and around the city.

The committee will meet to discuss the survey and its results and begin outlining ideas for the July 2013 convention. The goal is to have a rough idea by December so that we can begin outreach to local organizations for support.

Don said the less than 15 people responded to the survey on the website.

Membership Outreach Report

Mikey reported that the Outreach Committee hosted Bpi's first ever telephonic round tables. The open platform was provided for members to call in and share ideas and suggestions. the calls were held on Friday sept 28 at 7pm EST and 10pm EST (7pm PST). There were a total of 5 participants on the first call and 4 participants on the second call. The calls were moderated by Mikey Wiseman.

This exercise proved to be quite interesting. The topics of discussion proved to be as varied as the participants. Suggestions were made for activities at our upcoming convention in Columbus, Oh. Those suggestions will be forwarded to the convention planning board. A common factor in

most participants comments was the feeling of disconnect from other members and the group as a whole. The participants came up with a few ideas that they feel would help foster a better sense of belonging; those ideas were: 1. a telephonic mixer where members can call in and chat with each other, hear each others voices and get to know a little bit about each other. 2. A book club, a book or novel selected through participant recommendation partnered with a post read telephonic discussion and group selection of the next read. A few points were made regarding subject guidelines for posts to the BPI list. there was some concern expressed about the information being shared was not needed /not relevant to a list dealing with Blind Gay issues. Guillermo encouraged Mikey to hold these mixers twice a month. Mikey said he will.

Communications Committee Report

Discussion of Proposed Ballot Prototype

Connie asked for feedback on the electronic ballot prototype. Kevin Said that it looks fine to him. Connie asked how would people put the X next to the candidate of the choice. Kevin explained that when a person sends an email or replies to an email, they are in edit mode, and they can place the X beside their choice. Don said that it would just need to be explained in detail how to complete the electronic ballot.

Social Media Update

The Twitter account currently has 180 followers. The Facebook fan page currently has 45 likes and the Facebook group currently has 41 members.

We placed two different polls on the website regarding possible new forums and blog. It was announced twice on the discussion list. We received a few responses. We also placed on the discussion list an example of a blind nonprofits blog for reference. Today, the committee has not received any comments or suggestions from that post. Also, the committee has not received the questions posed by the membership to the Outreach Committee that we were told about two months ago. This has been requested on three different occasions to date.

Public Relations Committee Report

Discuss BPI Logo and legalities of proposed logo

Guillermo apologized for jumping the gun on the BPI logo. The service of updating the logo was donated by a company called VOTA IP. It is a very sharp looking logo. The logo was put on the website without bringing it to the board 1st, but a contractual agreement has not been entered into. Guillermo asked Tim Miles and Don Wilson to describe the logo. Don described the differences between the old and the new logo. Tim said that the new 1 is much more defined. It's clearer, sharper and well defined. Mikey asked if we own the intellectual property rights of the image. We can't copyright something we don't own. We can't put the cart before the horse. Guillermo said that he has given the image to us, and we can get that in writing from him. Mikey made a motion to accept the new logo. MSC, (Wiseman, Torrisi)

Tyrone White asked if we can now start to make pins and buttons with the new logo. Mikey said that we will have to table that for now. Guillermo said the VOTA IP has also agreed to revitalize our brochure. He will get with communications to start work on that.

Mikey discussed BPI current financial situation. By the time we pay everything, we might have \$1000 left, with no money coming in. He said that he is comparing us to other affiliates, and we are not making an indelible imprint on anyone. We have no scholarship. We have no 1st timers. We have no stipends. We have nothing. He said that we have what should be an award winning newsletter and a great list serve, but none of that make us any money. We need to run BPI more like a business. We need to make some hard decisions. Guillermo suggested that Mikey take part in the fundraising calls, where they will be discussing those issues. Mikey said that the board should come up with the ideas, and pass them on to the fundraising committee. Gabriel invited everyone to join the Fundraising Committee calls. Connie explained that we are not a business. We don't raise money to raise money. We raise money to run the organization. Connie said that 1 thing we could do is raise the annual fee a little bit. Guillermo proposed that we have a meeting to discuss these issues prior to the scheduled business meeting. He said that we need to get out of the mentality of raising funds for convention once a year, and that's it. There's services we could provide to the membership at large. Kevin said that he belongs to other ACB affiliates, and our situation is not unique. He has been a member of BPI for over 10 years, and we have operated on less money than we have now. We're not going anywhere. We need to work on fundraising, but it's hard to do when everyone is so spread out. The board discuss board member's financial contributions. Guillermo will send out a meeting request for the finance and fundraising conference call.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 PM CST.

Respectfully submitted, Kevin Ratliff, Secretary

