

**Visitor Studies Association  
Board of Directors Meeting  
March 2-3, 2010, Washington, D.C.  
Minutes**

**Present:** Dorothy Chen-Courtin, Rita Deedrick, Kirsten Ellenbogen, Karen Graham, Joe Heimlich, Elisa Israel, Cheryl Kessler, Karen Knutson, Randi Korn, Ellen McCallie, Dale McCreedy, Kris Morrissey, Caren Oberg, Saul Rockman, Beverly Serrell, Jessica Sickler, Matt Sikora, and Robert “Mac” West. Carey Tisdal arrived late.

*Association Manager:* Sarah Cohn

*Guests:* Alan Friedman (March 3) and Erik Ledbetter (March 2 and 3)

**Absent:** Rick Bonney, Cecilia Garibay, Leslie Hartog, Kathleen McLean, and Julie Johnson.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ellenbogen called the meeting to order at 2:08 pm ET. She said that Carey Tisdal’s plane was delayed, and Sara Cohn would be taking minutes until she arrived. She introduced Erik Ledbetter, candidate for the position of Executive Director. She explained that he would attend the meeting, step out during the contract vote, and then return should the vote be positive and stay until 4 pm.

**Conflict of Interest Roll Call**

Ellenbogen proceeded to the conflict of interest roll call. She asked that if anyone had an objection to being recorded to please note that at this time.

Dorothy Chen-Courtin, no, no  
Rita Deedrick no, no  
Kirsten Ellenbogen no, no  
Karen Graham no, no  
Joe Heimlich no, no  
Elisa Israel no, no  
Cheryl Kessler no, no  
Karen Knutson no, no  
Randi Korn no, no  
Ellen McCallie no, no  
Dale McCreedy no, no  
Kris Morrissey no, no  
Caren Oberg no, no  
Saul Rockman no, no  
Jessica Sickler no, no  
Matt Sikora no, no  
Carey Tisdal, no, no [after arrival]  
Robert “Mac” West no, no  
Sarah Cohn no, no  
Erik Ledbetter, no objection to recording

## **CONSENT AGENDA AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ellenbogen explained that brief oral reports from board committees would be included with the Consent Agenda. She asked if anyone had additions to either the Consent Agenda or the Deliberative Agenda. Ellenbogen added the item “Knowledge Management” as the last item on the agenda. This would include discussions of duplicate efforts in reporting, use of Basecamp, and the form of the minutes.

### **Written Items on the Consent Agenda**

Association Manager Report  
Board Development Committee Report  
Conference Planning Committee Report  
Membership Committee Report  
Minutes from the December 2009 Board of Directors Meeting  
President Report  
President-Elect Report  
Professional Development Committee  
Publications Committee Report  
Resource Development Committee Report  
Secretary’s Report & Board Meeting Preferences—Summary of Survey Findings 9/2009  
Treasurer’s Report & New Financial Reporting Format  
Vice President Outreach  
Vice President Organizational Development

### **Board Committee Oral Reports**

#### *Board Development Committee*

Deedrick reported for Garibay. She noted that the Board Development Committee (BDC) has the task of recruiting for board vacancies and running elections. This continues in non-election years. In December 2009, the BDC recruited Morrissey as VP of Professional Development as Beverly Serrell stepped away from this office. The BDC has the upcoming task of recruiting a new Treasurer and Secretary, positions that had been elected for one year terms in the last election. She said that board development training, another charge of the BDC, was being planned for the July Board Meeting.

### **Conference Planning Committee**

Sickler explained that the Conference Planning Committee (CPC) is working across conference tasks focused on the near future, future, and the long-term future. The 2010 conference team had been assembled and was operating very well despite many members new to the work this year. The local host committee in Phoenix had progressed well including success in obtaining in-kind donations. Similarly, the Program Committee had done a good job recruiting a diversity of discussants. She noted that Chicago had been selected as the 2011 host city. For this joint meeting with the Association of Midwest Museums (AMM) considerable effort had been expended exploring details and finances. Recommendations for venues for 2012 and beyond

could be given to Israel. She noted the fine work of Claudia Figueredo on the 2009 evaluation, which has supported a good process for the 2010 conference.

#### *Membership Committee*

Sikora reported for Hartog. He said that the Membership Committee (MC) has 13 members with about 70% attendance at monthly meetings. New members have brought new life and energy to the committee. Work has included updating new software for the membership database, which will greatly improve reporting. New information about members can be collected and stored in the new system. In the next few months, the MC will begin to include these information items as part of the membership registration.

Sikora described the VSA Listserv, entering its sixth month, as alternating between busy and quiet periods. A new invitation had been sent to join, increasing the number of registrants to over 200. The next step will be to seed discussion on specific topics, perhaps making them week long discussions. The group is looking for moderators and topics.

The Retention Subcommittee has been looking at different ways to retain members. About 100 VSA memberships lapse each year. While this is not usual, it is easier to keep than attract members. This subcommittee has been looking at basic procedure such as reminders. They will be piloting a program to contact lapsed members to encourage renewal.

#### *Professional Development Committee*

Kessler said that the Professional Development Committee had several new members and that the teamwork had been outstanding. The April Awards Committee had increased to four members. The Distance Learning Workgroup has five to six members and will be led by Rick Bonney as of April 1. Stephanie Weaver, who has expertise in this area, has joined this group. There is an opportunity for a distance learning event at the Phoenix conference run by Jen DeWitt from the UK.

Kessler reported that regional workshops had expanded from two half day sessions to three half day sessions and to new regions. Kris Morrissey and Marcie Benne will host workshops in Portland Oregon. She report quick response and good support for April Award Flyers from the Marketing and Public Relations Working Group.

Several VSA members presented a session at the conference of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) with good attendance and a request for another presentation in 2011 and a second demonstration session at the marketplace at the next AEA conference.

#### **Resource Development Committee**

Oberg noted that co-leadership of the Resource Development Committee (RDC) (Oberg and West are co-chairs) was working well. The focus of the committee efforts over the previous six months had been getting the conference sponsorship campaign begun. At the end of February, \$4,200 had been pledged or paid. This amount is on track with previous years.

The RDC worked with the Association Manager to professionalize some processes including sending out tax letters for 2010 for donations of unrestricted funds. In addition, there had been discussions of donations not directly related to conference sponsorship. West reported that the RDC had contributed to work on the development of revenue strategies.

[Carey Tisdal arrived at the meeting.]

#### *Publications Committee*

Knutson reported that several different initiatives of the Publications Committee (PC) were in progress. A subcommittee had begun the search for a new journal editor for *Visitor Studies*. In addition, the PC had been working with the web developer, Ideum, to update the conference section of the site adding layers of information. The group had been developing content for the website, and committees will be contacted about the type of information to include on the site. Another topic of discussion has been how to activate and animate the journal content.

Ellenbogen called attention to the Treasurer's Report and said that if there are questions about the new format, the item could be moved to the Deliberative Agenda. Sikora said that he had a brief question about the shortfall in the report. Ellenbogen said that was due to the timing of invoicing for the Center for the Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE) project. She explained that VSA had now moved to monthly invoicing for CAISE.

#### MOTION

*Deedrick moved that the Consent Agenda be accepted; Heimlich seconded; the motion passed.*

Ellenbogen thanked Oberg, Korn, and Kessler for finding the Board meeting place.

#### **DELIBERATIVE AGENDA**

Ellenbogen asked if there were any additions to the Deliberative Agenda. There were none.

#### **Executive Director**

Ellenbogen explained that the final candidate for the position of Executive Director (ED), Erik Ledbetter, had been approved by the Executive Committee. She explained that at this point in the meeting, Board Members would have the opportunity to ask him questions. Then, he would step out for a discussion and vote. If the vote is positive, he would join the rest of the meeting as a guest.

Ellenbogen introduced Ledbetter. He said that until 5 pm the previous day he had been Director of International Programs & Ethics at AAM. He had been at AAM for seven years. He recounted early experience the museums field, time in academia, and an exciting period in the late 1990s with early distance learning efforts. He summarized his experience with several international programs at AAM including acting chief-of-staff ICOM US. This involved arranging two board meetings per year, processing membership, and planning the programmatic work. He had left AAM to found a practice to provide management support for small organizations such as VSA.

He planned to also provide some consulting in strategic planning, board development, and government relations and advocacy.

[Ledbetter left the meeting for the discussion among Board Members about the hiring process.]

The Board met in closed session to discuss the hiring process.

[Ledbetter returned to the meeting.]

Ledbetter responded to several questions. He explained that he understood that VSA is contracting with Erik Ledbetter as an individual. He will be starting off with a blueprint to build his firm, but it has not as yet been founded. Currently, he noted that since VSA had not included tasks such as the monthly close, financial planning, and doing the 990, there is not a role for the associate who will be working with him in his management firm with finances. He will be developing a website for his firm, Heritage Management Solutions, as a way for people to contact him separately from his role as the ED of VSA. He assured the Board that he will not contract with another associate without consulting with VSA to explore any conflicts of interest.

Korn asked Ledbetter to reflect on issues in the association he observed during the interview process. He said that he would like to contribute to a healthy and right sized membership with robust products for people. He said he was interested in working with the RDC—supporting the conference but going beyond that. He anticipates the importance of developing distance learning opportunities. He said that the next 10 years could be economically challenging, and VSA needs to look at a diversification of its revenue base and giving opportunities as a means of broadening the revenue streams. He said that finding the right mix of growing membership and services is important.

Korn asked if Ledbetter had questions for Board Members. He replied that as VSA moved from an Association Manager staff support position to an ED position, there would need to be analysis and negotiation to identify in detail where staff is leading with committee support and where the committee really needs to be doing the work with staff support. He also noted that VSA has a very clear strategic plan. But he understood that it got to a place where some roadblocks were encountered. He asked the group to briefly tell him more about this. Several Board Members shared perceptions about orientations to planning, having expertise available to act, and needing clarification before action. The challenges of Board turnover were mentioned.

He also asked about other pressing needs in VSA. Board Members involved in conference planning talked about the desire to get locations worked out several years in advance. The need for an ED to help volunteers not get bogged down in the every day and set priorities was also cited.

[Ledbetter left the meeting for the contract vote.]

## MOTION

*Heimlich moved to accept the EC's decision to contract for one year (renewable) with Erik Ledbetter to be the VSA Executive Director. McCallie seconded.*

The vote was taken via paper ballot. Sixteen members were present and voted aye. Board Members not present included Morrissey (had left the meeting temporarily), Bonney, Garibay, Hartog, McLean, and Johnson.

Ellenbogen announced a break and said that Ledbetter would return after the break. She asked Board members to return in 10 minutes at 4:07 pm.

### **Strategic Planning Task Force**

Deedrick reported that this task force had four members, Hartog, Korn, McCallie, and herself. They had been working since October 2009. She referred the Board to three recommendations that task force was asking the Board to approve and said that the members present (Deedrick, Korn, McCallie) would explain how they came to these recommendations.

*1. Adoption of the Impact Planning Framework as a strategic framework to identify audiences and impacts of VSA now through 2011.*

*This Framework derived from the existing Strategic Plan (Dendros, January 2009) and Strategic Action Plan (VSA, July 2009) and was developed to articulate VSA audiences and impacts as well as strategies directly related to achieving these impacts with these audiences. The Framework is audience focused and is not intended to include all work of the association; a future Operations Plan will flesh out the complete day-to-day work of the association.*

*2. Adoption of the VSA Audiences Statement.*

*This Statement reiterates the audiences and impacts as stated in the Impact Planning Framework, and acknowledges the need for unique strategies for each audience in fulfillment of VSA's mission. This Statement is supported by an Audiences Diagram that illustrates VSA's current relationship with these five audiences.*

*3. Adoption of the Strategic and Operational Planning Process as outlined.*

*This Process includes the development of an organizational Operations Plan as a guide to the day-to-day work of VSA that complements the Impact Planning Framework and includes all work in support of the VSA Mission. The Process also proposes a planning and implementation cycle to align with VSA board meetings and budgeting cycle (assuming a March-July-December board meeting schedule). The Process will be implemented by Committees under the guidance of the VSA Executive Director.*

Deedrick stressed that their charge was not to come up with a new strategic plan. Rather, they were charged with determining a process to continue the strategic planning work of the organization by aligning key pieces including the mission, vision, the strategic plan and an audience statement in July 2009.

The group had looked at planning elements that were not working well to guide action. They reviewed the audience statement and found it did not align. They also found the action plan used previously was helpful, but unwieldy.

Korn discussed the Impact Planning Framework organized around Mission, Vision, Impact, and Audiences. She explained that Mission is what VSA does and Vision is more aspiration as the association moves forward. She said the group identified five audiences, which McCallie will discuss and that the definition of impact used by the group “Changes VSA wishes to see in our world as result of our work.” She clarified that audiences were defined by what they do rather than where they work; some people fall into multiple categories. The Actions were not meant to be directive but to help us think about what we want to do. The plan will move forward through committees.

Deedrick said that this framework is at the association level and it does not specify which committee will do what. The next step will be for a working group made up of the ED, committee chairs, and VP, to identify specific actions. This Operations Plan will be presented at the July Board Meeting. The framework and Operations Plan are designed to open up cross-committee work. Additional work not related to specific audiences will also be included in the Operations Plan. This will allow operations to be planned at the same time as the budget. Then in the following year the Operations Plan would again be in place by July followed by the approval of a budget in December of each year. She noted that this is a cycle that makes more sense for the association. The ED will lead the planning process.

Replying to a question from Oberg, Deedrick explained that a *Work Plan* would be for individual committees.

McCallie said that this framework is designed to make planning documents concrete. She reviewed the five major audiences identified by the group and the major impacts identified for each of these audiences. She stressed that individuals may fit into multiple places.

### *Audiences*

#### **Those who study visitors and/or learning in informal settings**

Impact: Those who conduct research and evaluation strengthen their learning community by continually honing their theory and practice, improving their methods and communication strategies, and sharing their knowledge.

#### **Developers, designers, and implementers of informal learning experiences**

Impact: Data from informal learning studies are used to make decisions about improving informal learning experiences and organizational effectiveness.

**CEOs, Directors, and upper-level managers of informal learning organizations**

Impact: Evaluation is included as a priority in organizations' strategic plans.

**Funders of activities associated with informal learning**

Impact: Funders use visitor studies to set appropriate goals for ILE grantees, inform funding decisions, and measure results of their investment.

**Educational policy-related entities including policy makers and policy advising entities - formally charged and de facto**

Impact: Informal education is recognized and included as integral to the educational infrastructure *and* is considered valuable because of substantiated success.

Kessler asked about measuring the impacts. Korn suggested that we think about that in a year or two as we figure out what we have the capacity to do.

Heimlich reminded the group that the Board should not be discussing this without a motion on the floor.

**MOTION**

*Rockman moved that the report and recommendations be accepted in its entirety. Heimlich seconded.*

*Discussion*

Several questions arose about how the document would function in organizing committee work, setting priorities, and assigning timing to actions. Deedrick noted that Hartog had developed a sample Committee Work Plan that would clarify this for committees. She also pointed out that while some actions in this document were committee focused the Operations Plan may include actions done by the ED, the Board as a whole, or the EC.

Ellenbogen explained that this framework, used in the development of an Operations Plan, would allow VSA to say that some functions serve some audiences more than other audiences. For example, the journal may serve audience one. However, across the Operations Plan as a whole, appropriate actions can be balanced to serve these difference audiences.

Sikora pointed out that committees have had challenges in choosing priorities. Ellenbogen replied that the Operations Planning group will be a place where priorities can be discussed. Decisions may appropriately go back to committees. Ultimately the Board and EC are responsible for setting priorities. Sikora noted that setting audience priorities by year had been very challenging.



Heimlich recommended that one way to make certain this is done would be to add a bullet point to the document under “VSA Planning Process document” that said, “Identify audience foci for the year.”

Heimlich asked if Rockman would accept adding to the VSA Planning Process document a bullet point “Identify audience foci for the year.” Rockman agreed. Ellenbogen called the question.

*The board voted on the motion with one friendly amendment. The motion passed.*

### **Revenue Strategy Task Force**

Oberg drew the Board’s attention to the document entitled “Revenue Stream Chart”, which would provide context to the Board Giving policy. She acknowledged the work of Sikora, Heimlich, and Linda Wilson from the BDC on this recommendation and the Board Giving Policy.

### **MOTION**

*McCallie moved that the Board accept the revenue stream approach recommended by the Task Force as a tool for revenue analysis. Kessler seconded.*

### *Discussion*

Oberg explained that the group reviewed the budget as it exists and realized that main lines in the VSA budget appear to refer to very specific activities. They decided that VSA needed broader description of revenue sources. They assigned broad revenue stream types to lines. This provides a tool for decision making.

Morrissey asked if the group wanted to change the line item in the budget. Oberg said that these types of revenue streams are more conceptual.

Kessler commented that this appeared very similar to the audience framework.

Chen-Courtin asked if McCallie would accept a friendly amendment to add one column to the framework, “What would it cost to generate that revenue?” McCallie said that she would accept that amendment.

Sikora raised a concern that, while this appeared to be a good tool for understanding the sources of revenue, it appeared to send the revenue decisions back to the committees. This had been challenging in the past.

After additional discussion, several people indicated that frame may be appropriately used by the Operations Planning group in setting priorities, similar to the way the audience/impact framework is used to set priorities for action. This way of thinking may move centralizing the revenue focus from the RDC and Membership to additional sources of revenue, some that may be supported by more than one committee.

McCallie said that this discussion was really a second motion that should be considered separately. She called for a vote on the original motion.

Tisdal read the motion:

*McCallie moved that that the Board accept the revenue stream approach recommended by the Task Force as tool for revenue analysis. Kessler seconded. McCallie agreed to accept a friendly amendment from Chen that a column be added called "What is the cost of generating that revenue?"*

*The motion was approved unanimously.*

#### MOTION

*Deedrick moved that the Operations Planning Group will use the Revenue Analysis Tool as part of its planning process. Graham seconded.*

#### *Discussion*

West raised the issues of how existing functions of the RDC carry forward with this new tool. McCallie clarified that the motion just passed as asking that committees use this language and this approach in creating their Work Plans. This would not necessarily change the work of the RDC. It asks that all committees use this language relative to revenue.

Ellenbogen clarified that the second motion points out the tool is to be used in the Operations Planning Group.

*Ellenbogen called for a vote; the motion passed.*

Ellenbogen asked everyone to join her in recognizing the excellent work and tremendous efforts that Sara Cohn had performed working as temporary Association Manager. Board members agreed loudly.

The Board recessed at 5:58 pm until 9 am on March 3.

#### **DELIBERATIVE AGENDA CONTINUED....**

Ellenbogen reconvened the meeting at 9:11 am ET on March 3. Alan Friedman joined the meeting as a guest.

#### **Review of CAISE and Its Activities**

Alan Friedman gave an overview of the work of the Center for the Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE) and VSA's role in this resource center funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). He also provided a summary of the activities going on at the CAISE Summit in the three days following the board meeting.

He explained that at NSF informal science education includes areas such as television, radio, after-school programs, and experiences in museums and science centers. NSF decided that these groups could learn from each other. CAISE is now in the third year of a \$5 million continuing agreement. This means that NSF has been involved in running the project as well as the project partners. NSF can end the project at any time.

Friedman reviewed the efforts of the first two years including a landscape study that showed people are “siloed” in sectors. He noted that VSA has played a significant role, presenting workshops and producing articles. Two years ago 250 people attended the summit and this year 450 people are present. Starting the second year, each PI had led an inquiry group. These groups brought together people from different sectors to work together to document evidence and integrate thinking in the field as a whole.

Friedman explained that VSA has an oversight committee, which Ellenbogen chairs. Friedman is a consultant working for VSA. VSA receives overhead of about 15%, and the project keeps VSA’s name at the forefront of informal learning.

Friedman report that an NSF Reverse Site Visit was scheduled in about three weeks after the summit. NSF includes the research directorate and K-12 education; not everyone is entirely supportive of informal science education. He noted some concern among the PIs about the upcoming reverse site visit.

Morrissey asked what the major goals were of the CAISE agenda. Friedman said that the CAISE Leadership team and evaluator are convinced that the sectors have much in common and that learning occurs across a lifetime. If CAISE were to be dropped by NSF there may be interest among some major private foundations. Currently, ASTC is the fiduciary agent for NSF funding.

Korn asked if NSF had clarified the type of impact CAISE is supposed to achieve. He noted that the goals of the project have changed over time moving toward acculturating people into the field and developing community.

McCreedy asked how inquiry groups in CAISE worked. Friedman said that there would be a session at CAISE about this topic. He said that currently the leaders have been one of the Co-PIs. But, anyone could propose a group. There is a budget for travel and a modest honorarium. Once there is approval from CAISE, the leaders are responsible for selecting members. The goal has been to have a report in time for the next summit. The aim is to produce a report and engender conversation. The Policy Group, which Friedman chairs will have report in March.

Sikora asked about deliverables sponsored by VSA. Friedman stressed that next 30 days were crucial for CAISE. His priority was finalizing things for the reverse site visit. After that the leadership for CAISE will have time to respond and the ideas for VSA roles and products may be adjusted.

Knutson and Ellenbogen both noted the tremendous time and effort Friedman had contributed to CAISE, far beyond that compensated. Friedman invited Board Members to contact him if they wanted to participate in CAISE.

### **Board Giving Policy**

Ellenbogen asked Oberg to lead the discussion of the clarified Board Giving Policy.

#### **MOTION**

*Oberg moved that the Board approve the clarified Board Giving Policy, and the motion was seconded by West.*

#### *Discussion*

Oberg drew Board Members' attention to the document entitled "Task Force Recommendation, VSA Board Policy updated March 2010" in the Deliberative Agenda packet. She explained that, in general, the \$300 specified in the 2008 policy had been changed to a total of \$7,200 annually by the Board as a whole. In addition, several areas had been defined and clarified.

Korn raised her concerns about membership needing to be a completely separate part of board giving. Sikora recalled from his time as Membership Committee chair that there had been plans for different levels of benefits which had not been implemented. This had left the situation where amounts above the regular membership had to be considered as donations.

Sikora asked how \$7,200 annually was the amount at which the task force arrived. Cohn and Ellenbogen explained that the individual amounts had been tracked in previous years.

Sikora said that his other concern was what needed to be said to people when recruiting them for the Board. Heimlich replied that a board giving conversation should be held but a specific amount should not be the policy. Morrissey noted that this policy did not reflect what she had been told when recruited by the BDC; she was told that her institutional membership would count toward board giving.

Heimlich noted that in this revised policy the amount tracked would be for the Board as a whole and not for individuals. Morrissey said that she believes that this is a smart way for a professional organization to go in relation to board giving.

McCallie commented that the term "donation" should be changed to "board giving" several places in the policy. There was also discussion about the level of confidentiality surrounding amounts of sponsorships and donations being tracked. After some conversation it appeared that this was not as confidential as some thought it was. Kessler suggested that the extent of confidentiality be added to the policy.

Rockman noted that the previous year he had made a donation of a tangible product. Heimlich said that VSA should provide these statements but that in-kind giving is not included in this particular policy.

The following changes to the policy were accepted as friendly amendments:

- *In paragraph one the line “Board Giving is \$7,200 annually” changed to “Board Giving is a minimum of \$7,200 annually.*
- *Bullets were replace by numbers “1), 2), 3), 4), 5), and 6)” for major sections of the policy.*
- *Section 1) changes included:  
Contributions from ~~or membership~~ for a business or non-profit organization where the board member is not in ~~an ownership or leadership~~ role may not be attributed to a board member who works for that organization. This is considered corporate, institutional, or business contribution only.*
- *In bullet points following Section 3) the wording of the heading was changed from “Noted details on two restricted activities” to “Noted details on two activities.”*
- *Prior to dollar amounts in each bullet point for Section 3) “donation” was changed to “board giving”.*
- *In Section 5), “a donation” was changed to board giving.*
- *Section 7) the following was added to state “Board giving is reported only as a whole: the amount of your board giving is held confidential by the Executive Director, Treasurer, and Chairs of the Resource Development Committee.”*

*Ellenbogen called for a vote on the motion with the amendments. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **2010 Fundraising Follow-Up**

West and Oberg, co-chairs of the RDC, led a discussion of fundraising activities and status. West noted that Board Members have different levels of fundraising experience. He explained that the RDC has been honing the process of making sponsorship connections, tracking contacts and refusal, and progress toward the \$18,000 goal. New prospects suggested by Board Members have also been assigned. For Board Members, he explained that the process of contacting prospects involved understanding them and having a comfortable conversation. He invited Board Members to contact the RDC if adjustments to assignments needed to be made. He expressed the appreciation of the RDC for the Board’s work in this area.

Korn said that she had written letters and followed up with phone calls, and West mentioned a Chronicle of Philanthropy article he had found useful. Ellenbogen asked them both to share their materials with the Board by posting them on Basecamp.

McCreedy said that she had contributed names to the list of prospective sponsors and did not know what had happened to them. The RDC chairs said that they would add to their procedures following up with Board Members about assignments for prospects they had contributed. Israel asked if it was appropriate or expected to ask prospects for a specific amount when a Board Member talked to them. Korn suggested that if it were someone who had sponsored

previously they could be asked to step up to a higher level. Oberg suggested pointing out the benefits of the sponsorship.

*At 10:50, the board recessed for a 15 minute break.*

### **Marketing**

Ellenbogen reconvened the meeting at 11:05 am. She introduced McCreedy and Chen-Courtin to update the Board on the recent activities and planning of the Marketing Public Relations Resource Group (MPRRG). McCreedy said that Chen-Courtin chaired this group which now has four members. The group has been very active the past year.

Chen-Courtin summarized that she would go over the MPRRG's charge, make a distinction between levels of plans, then go over the next steps planned by the MPRRG. She would like to ask for the Board's approval to move ahead. She explained that small "m" marketing is all about communications with questions related to objectives and messages. Big "M" marketing is about Mission/Vision, Process, Place/Distribution, Product/ Service, Price/Value, Physical evidence, and People. Each has a role as a subset of association plans: the Strategic Plan supported by a Business/Operations Plan, supported by a Marketing Plan supported by a Marketing Communication Plan.

She summarized the next steps of the group as:

- Expanding MPRRG membership
- Seeking committee representation options
- Partnering in business/operations planning
- Determining communications support/process
- Deciding on VSA Marketing Plan and/or VSA Marketing Communications Plan.
- And a special project: The VSA Brand Image (as the public sees us)

She explained that as a special project. The MPRRG would like to use the Metaphorically Speaking exercise, done at a previous Board meeting, with conference attendees.

Ellenbogen commented that it was good to discuss this and get Board input but that a motion was not needed.

Chen-Courtin and Sickler talked about how the MPRRG supported the development of a flier for regional workshops. Oberg noted that it would helpful to have this support for the sponsorship campaign. Chen-Courtin noted lead time was important when needs were identified.

Sikora asked if the audience statements provided the previous day would be what the resource group needed to develop a Marketing plan. Chen-Courtin replied that this was a good framework but that details are important. Ellenbogen noted that Chen-Courtin, as chair of the resource group, was part of the Operations Planning Group.

Ledbetter noted that there can be challenges in smaller organizations adopting best practices of larger organization. He said that VSA needs to keep the essence to methodology and scale it down our scale to keep flexibility.

Sickler suggested that the MPRRG work with the Conference Committee members managing the evaluation to leverage the metaphor survey effectively. Chen-Courtin said that the MPRRG was assuming they would do the exercise at the conference in July at breakfasts. Ellenbogen asked Chen-Courtin to post a one-page summary of the activities at the conference to the Board section of Basecamp so the effort could be reviewed. She asked for details so all the different parties in the conference could be informed about the process and how it might work.

Deedrick noted the ideas Chen-Courtin presented could be woven into the Operations Planning and committee Work Plans. Sikora cautioned against over-burdening committees with additional plans. Ellenbogen noted that she had not heard the idea for committees to produce new documents. Ledbetter reframed the comments by saying that he heard that the MPRRG intended to work on a VSA Marketing Plan and a VSA Marketing and Communication plan.

Ellenbogen thanked Chen-Courtin for her work and presentation.

### **Knowledge Management**

Given the lateness of the hour, Ellenbogen said that this item would be moved to the next agenda.

### **Advocacy Day**

Ledbetter explained that on March 22 and 23 the American Association of Museums would be sponsoring an advocacy day. He had planned to participate as an individual professional. With approval of the Board, he would be happy to represent VSA.

### **MOTION**

*Heimlich moved that on this advocacy day the VSA Board take a position to support the reauthorization of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and be represented by the incoming ED of VSA. Morrissey seconded. The motion passed.*

### **Adjourn**

### **MOTION**

*Ellenbogen moved to adjourn; Kessler seconded; the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:01 pm ET.*

*Respectfully submitted,  
Carey Tisdal*