

VWS Meeting Minutes

DATE: September 16, 2017

LOCATION: Telephone Conference Time - 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS: Tony Conner, Ric Feeney, Martin LaLonde, Victoria Jefferies, Adrienne Fisher, Caitlin Glaser and Loretta Weitzel

Tony Conner opened the meeting. The minutes of the July 29, 2017 meeting, with changes submitted by Martin, were approved.

Financial Statements

The Treasurer is continuing to work on a smooth transition of VWS bank records. Tony reported that there is no official treasurer's report to approve. Prior to the meeting Tony emailed the board with a statement of VWS Financial Position for period May 31 through August 31, 2017; financial statement of VWS Activities dated August 31, 2017 and the VWS proposed budget, which will be further worked on by Tony and Chris (Treasurer). In advance of the VWS fall meeting, Tony will forward by email to the board for approval, the updated proposed budget that will be voted on at the fall meeting by the membership. (See attachments). There is a proposed budget increase for 2018.

Tony stated that the VWS is in good financial standing but noted that membership renewals are behind. VWS has 281 members. For 2017 VWS received 180 renewals. This spring, Tony sent out 101 membership renewal postcards. From the postcard response, VWS received 43 renewals. Two postcards did not reach their destination and 25 people did not respond. Adrienne made the recommendation that we consider asking the hub director and hub leaders to follow up with members in their area. Tony stated that he wants to research the reasons for non-renewal.

VWS Hub Student Member Participation Guidelines

The writing of Hub Student Member Participation Guidelines is meant to clarify the benefits and limitations of minor-age student participation. Tony, Cait, Mark, and a friend attorney (pro bono with an unofficial opinion) discussed and Tony drafted Guidelines proposed 9/3/17. (See attached)

The board discussed the proposed Guidelines. Tony explained the reason for number 2, limiting student member participation to non-juried shows. Number 2 addresses some paying members' concern that there are limited slots for accepted paintings when entering a juried show; acceptance in juried shows impacts VWS members reaching signatory status within the timeframe permitted by VWS. The proposed by-laws change, Article 3, will make it possible for a student, over 18 to

pay for membership, giving them the ability to enter a juried show. Tony also noted that the proposed by-laws lower the age of student membership; a change from 24 to 22, when most graduate college. (See attached.)

Tony pointed out that VWS has been struggling with how to best address some other concerns expressed to the board. It is hoped that the guidelines set forth can clarify our position and encourage participation with some limitations in VWS hub activities, VWS shows, VWS workshops and continue to foster each student member's love of watercolor. Cait suggested we consider giving students a chance to form their own group (hub); Victoria stated the proposed guidelines were a good beginning; Martin stated he liked the changes. Adrienne made a motion to approve and Ric seconded to approve the VWS Hub Student Member Participation Guidelines. The motion passed unanimously.

VWS Proposed By Law Changes – Clarifying Rights and Privileges of Each Member Category

The Board reviewed the By Law changes that will be voted on at the fall meeting in Middlebury. Loretta made a motion to approve the VWS Proposed By Law Changes; Victoria seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Student Membership Discussion

Following approval of the above two motions, the board discussed how VWS can be more welcoming to its students. Cait questioned how many student members we currently have. Tony replied that we have 18 students; 16 in the Montpelier Hub. Cait made the recommendation that someone in a hub area or an adult involved in the I Can Paint program look over the students. Loretta suggested calling it a mentoring program - someone to guide. Tony mentioned that he will speak with Susannah Colby, a VWS member. She is a teacher and coach. Tony is unsure of her availability but will see if she might have an interest in working with students in some way.

Ric expressed an editorial comment that from previous experience, much of a student's work is completed in class or with help of an instructor. A student's work in class or workshop would not qualify for a juried show.

Tony stated that our goal in setting guidelines is to limit our liability and assuage concerns, while seeking a positive program to foster the enjoyment and love of painting and membership in VWS.

Discussion Hub Money – I Can Paint and Supplies

The Board looked at the proposed budget that will be presented. It was noted that postage/ mailing currently shows an increase but this is not applicable and will be reduced. Hubs will receive a general increase. Tony wants to encourage

hubs to take photos, write articles and share what they are doing. There was some discussion on what to do with leftover hub funds. Some suggestions were to give the leftover hub money to another hub that has a request; plan a larger activity; creating a bonus account; retreat/group of hubs gathering together/rolling over the amount. Cait questioned how this would impact the I Can Paint Program. Currently the leftover money is distributed to the I Can Paint Program. Tony believes the program is standing more on its own now. I Can paint, led by Mark and Committee is applying for an Arts Council Grant, and also receives individual donations.

The I Can Paint program supplies kits and appears in the budget under the Education Fund. Cait asked that VWS take precautions regarding cadmium and make efforts to purchase non-cadmium or low level cadmium paints for student kits. Cait will contact Claudia re this matter.

BUDGET AND WHAT VWS MEMBERSHIP OFFERS

The preliminary proposed budget figures show a deficit of \$2620 for next year. Tony and Chris (Treas.) will work to reduce this deficit. Ric questioned whether or not the VWS might want to consider a dues increase to \$39 (not \$40 as that looks less affordable). Cait pointed out that we should point out to the membership that hub money is a valuable return that each member benefits by when they participate in a hub activity. Tony talked about encouraging more hub events and gave an example of joint hub activity. Recently White River, Brattleboro and the Bennington/Manchester Hubs joined together. Twelve people participated and expenses were proportioned out. The hub joint activity covered the expense for the model and rental space for the day.

Cait inquired about the funding for the field trip to see Sargeant at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston a few years ago. Tony recalled participants paying for the bus rental and paying a group admission fee. Cait suggested VWS consider a field trip to the Farnsworth Museum in Maine. Currently there is a Wyeth Watercolor Show that our membership might enjoy.

Tony concluded the budget discussion by stating, again, that he will get the proposed budget firmed up and contact the board by email for approval before presentation at the meeting.

NOMINATIONS

There are three positions open on the board to be voted on at the fall annual meeting. VWS needs a Director of Hubs., a Director of Membership, and someone to take the new position as Co-Director of Communications. Currently there are no nominees for these positions.

Cait suggested that the board select a go to person for hub activity financial approval if the incoming Hub Director also remains the point person for his/her region. She suggested the Director of Hubs might select a co-chair hub person for his/her region.

VWS BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE CHANGE

The November 18, 2017 Strategic Planning Meeting of the VWS Board was moved to Saturday, December 2, 2017. This change will also be reflected next year and Saturday, December 1, 2018 has been proposed for the Strategic Planning Session. (See attached Schedule of Suggested Meetings.)

VWS WEBSITE

Adrienne reported that the VWS website needs to be updated to reflect the accepted works. She inquired about getting email addresses for the artists accepted in the Show at the Atrium. Victoria advised that Adrienne should contact Eric Gottsman and he can provide her with the password for downloading info from the Art Manager account. Another method is to use the master database and look up emails.

Cait stated that the website needs to be up to date. Tony reported that he has been working with Vicky, Don and Judith. The slider of old art works will be removed. Vicky Hertzberg is the VWS paid Webmaster and has the responsibility of removing the slider and updating the information. Tony will follow up on this. Adrienne said that if we ever need to find a different Webmaster, she knows of someone that is not a member of VWS that might consider the position. Tony assured the board that in the beginning of the year VWS will be using a new platform that is easier to navigate.

GALLERY OPENING RECEPTION CHANGE

Victoria reported that she changed the drop off for artwork to only October 6, 2017. The opening reception has also been given a time change. Both of these changes will be reported in the October Snippets. (Victoria will provide a written, detailed change to be attached to these minutes.)

JURIED ACCEPTANCE NOTES

Victoria also reported that there was not a large turnout of submissions to the upcoming show. Everyone submitting received acceptance of one watercolor entry and some had two works accepted. The board discussed the \$25 entry fee and whether some members have felt discouraged because it has been hard to be accepted in past shows.

The board talked at some length about how VWS compares to other watercolor societies. Tony pointed out that VWS offers hubs that are unique. VWS is open to anyone. People all over the world can join VWS. VWS encourages all artists, and welcomes amateur painters just starting out. VWS has loose by laws, no quorum specified, at times there is no official documentation on why something is done! Tony stated that he wants to see VWS maintain professionalism and clarify some of these areas, being specific about member responsibilities. Victoria gave the American Pastel Society as an example of an association which is very specific and clear on their website about membership responsibility. Tony suggested that VWS benefits can definitely be made clear and new member packets (influenced by a business model) might help. Tony would like to establish a By Laws Review Committee. Ric shared that membership in Niagara Frontier Watercolor Society has no time limit for signature status. Ric pointed out that this does not reduce or water down the quality of work; some members of NFWS have work published in Splash. There was some board discussion on whether VWS should consider lifting or changing its time limit for members to achieve signature status. Tony will form a Committee to review membership status along with the by laws review.

In summary, it appeared the general consensus of the board was to proceed to find ways to make all VWS members feel good about the society. Tony will write a President's Letter in the October newsletter and continue to seek nominations for the open positions on the board.

A motion was made by Adrienne and seconded by Cait to adjourn the meeting ahead of schedule. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Loretta Weitzel, VWS Secretary