

Board of Directors Meeting

December 19, 2023, @ 5:30 pm - Brigade Shattuck Room

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Alex Johnson

2. Prayer

Janie Anderson led the group in prayer.

3. Roll call & Quorum count - Secretary

Board Members in Attendance: Janie Anderson, Dawn Bolwerk, Rebecca Deschane, Becky Ellis, Dione Gagnow, Jody Hoppe, Alex Johnson, Paul Linzmeyer, Marta O'Brien (call-in), Tanya Schroeder
Absent: Steve Foster (excused)

A quorum was established with 10 members present.

4. Mission Moment

Jensen Haese, a 2022 Brigade grad came and spoke to us of her Brigade career. She came with a friend in 6th or 7th grade. She was hesitant, but came and loved it! She also was not excited to attend Onaway, but did and love that as well! She has since returned to Brigade/Onaway every year and is now a leader at Onaway. She also went on the International Trip. Her favorite part of coming to Brigade is the people she met and the friendships she created and continues. She found role models, who she still reaches out to now that she has moved away for college.

She was shy and didn't want to participate in much at first. But because the programming at Brigade "forced" her to participate, she did and became more and more comfortable and started to step up on her own. She says the variety of experiences are important because everyone can find something. She noted that while she was learning to lead, and then became a leader herself, there are always other leaders around to look up to for support.

What does Brigade mean to her- it's more of a feeling rather than words... "home." She learned how to be comfortable and uncomfortable in different situations, how to step up and down as a leader. It feels like home whenever she returns. Her long-term goal includes returning to Neenah for employment and being able to come back to Brigade.

She hopes Brigade can continue to put kids in situations where they are uncomfortable over and over again to help them learn to become comfortable and open up.

Board members and all in attendance enjoyed hearing your story Jensen!

5. Approval of consent agenda items: Financials, Minutes of last meeting

(uploaded to the web portal or distributed via email)

Janie Anderson made a motion to approve the consent agenda items, it was seconded by Becky Ellis and approved unanimously.

6. Items not in consent agenda - Questions/feedback/action on Committee Reports

- Community Linkage – The group has not met as a whole, but Janie has met with some events volunteers. Met with EJ Jelinski and Llahoma regarding regarding a leadership role with the Memorial Day Parade Committee. She also met with Steve Lenz regarding his leadership role with the Community Fest to get the planning process rolling early. One priority for all event committees is getting more information down on paper to better transition as needed. Janie is talking with Llahoma about possible changes to our Awards Banquet and Leader Appreciation events.

- Endowment – Dione reported the endowment to be in good shape at \$7.1 million. She feels she is leaving it in better shape than it was found 6 years ago. Dione is willing to work with the incoming Treasurer. She noted the importance to schedule a meeting with Associated Bank around March 1. Thanks to Dione for all of her hard work and dedication over two complete Board terms!

- Executive Compensation – Nothing to report.

- Governance/Executive Committee – Alex reported that the committee met in person and had a productive meeting. The project to update the Policies is complete. Thank you to Janie for shouldering a lot of the documentation work and to John for information. The update to the Policies was moved and seconded for approval, and emailed to the Board. One major change of note is the transition of Building and Grounds from an ad hoc group to a committee based on recommendation by John. Thank you Paul for drafting a new committee charge!

- Nominating – Becky introduced the 4 nominees that the Nominating Committee agreed to move forward with:

 - Dan Cramer – Long-time Brigade/Onaway volunteer, former Captain. Brings IT experience and project management experience, plus strategic planning skills.

 - Allison Egger – New to Brigade. Was connected through her employer, Employment Research Group, which handled the most recent Executive Director search. She brings experience in HR and recruiting, and is involved in other community organizations.

 - Tim Buhl – Long history with Brigade/Onaway. Has experience in finance, accounting, marketing and organizational performance.

 - Michael Babbitts – Brigade volunteer and former Onaway summer staff. Is a teacher/advisor in the Neenah Joint School District. Brings experience in youth development and DEI.

Thank you Becky for keeping this committee rolling this year!

7. CEO Report

Report was included in the Board packet that was emailed out. Highlights include:

- Brigade accountant Ellie Jackson is doing a great job. She is working well with auditors and learning our practices. She's been with Brigade for about a year and we thank her for her work thus far!

- There is a mental health work group working together. Changes may be made to the Campwise registration to reflect what the group brings to the table. Additionally, Tammy will be attending the Campwise conference, where she will be able to learn how to add a mental health component to the registration.

- The annual Onaway Summit will take place on Saturday, January 13 in the downtown building. Agenda is finalized for staff and captains.

- Downtown program numbers are right on par with the same time last year, with the possibility of picking up new members with secondary promotional tactics between now and the time we start

back next year.

-Monicca is leading a new outreach program and has served 319 youth in visits at 16 schools in Neenah, Menasha, and Appleton this year. She has had good attendance with the Discover Breakouts and Mini Series, there were 79 kids who participated in Discover Mini Series activities, 28 of them being non-Brigaders, and the Discover Breakouts activities had 55 participants, 17 of which were non-Brigaders.

-The recent endowment draw was not needed right away, as other funds that came in were used first, so a portion of the endowment draw will be rolled into next year.

Dawn Bolwerk gave an update on the Mental Health work group activity, and advised that their main focus is answering “where do we start to increase well being for our youth/staff/volunteers?”:

-They will be starting with camp. There is a working document floating among the group so they can continue to brainstorm what data/information would be helpful for leaders and nurses to know for camp. That information will be given to Tammy to find out how to include this while at the Campwise conference early next month. Plan is to update at the Onaway Summit in January. Camp registration opens on January 30, so there should be time to get the forms updated.

-Next step will be to breakdown needs into categories/pillars (ie: anxiety, depression, behavior, sexual, etc) and the best practice for each category so they can be consistent at all camps, so everyone can be on the same page when needing to deal with issues that arise.

-The medical policy procedure binder will be updated to reflect mental health items.

-The first Youth Mental Health First Aid training went well. Had about 20 staff/leaders participate. There are two more dates set for this training next spring. These training sessions are just the start to learning about these topics, and we will always be learning. This is a great way to support our youth as well as other leaders and staff.

-Dawn will communicate future meeting dates.

Thank you to Dawn for developing this group and keeping on top of these issues!

8. Captain’s Report

-Friendsgiving event had 30-35 people. A wide variety of Brigade-involved individual and families came. Thank you to Llahoma, John, Bill, Nick, and Annette for your extra help with this!

-Thank you to Janie for inviting Amy and Bill to participate in the International Trip interview day! (Sidenote: International Trip 2026 update from Janie: there were 28 applicants, 20 will be going with 4 chaperones. Planning to raise \$125,000 for this trip starting in January. There are a series of fundraisers already set.)

-Winter Weekends at Onaway are coming up! Registration to open soon. We want to specifically highlight the 10th grade co-leader weekend at the end of January.

9. Old Business

-Bionic Giant Update:

Alex reported that the committee met and vetted work product and launch timing options. Part of the current proposal is the new website, they feel it is looking good, seems user friendly and effectively incorporates the new Board approved designs. The next step is to determine when to introduce this to our community, with January, May, and August being the options. January is not practical due to the time required for full due diligence at the Board level so a later date is needed in order to get it right. Discussion on May vs. August:

-Would May rollout allow for new branding for camp gear? Not much change to Onaway branding, so this may not be relevant... but likely possible. This rebranding in general will result in more

“advertisement” gear being available.

-May could be pushing it for website completion if still under development.

-May would give us all summer to push new branding (Memorial Day Parade, Community Fest, etc)

-Need time to incorporate the new vision/mission/values into our operating model as well as the strategic plan, messaging platform. All of this should go under the umbrella of the launch. Can all this be done well and be ready by May?

-Some staff are so busy with multiple camps once the season starts it would be very difficult to focus on launch work over the summer, but others with key roles have available capacity over summer would like to have those extra months, so the staff preference is August for launch. John specifically noted that the Board should fully appreciate the ‘big lift’ required before a quality launch takes place, but acknowledged this as a Board decision, and said staff would do their best if May timeline was chosen.

-Could have volunteers after programming/before summer to help with updates to the building. Some components of this can be spread out rather than all be done at once.

Paul Linzmeyer moved to set May 15 as the Bionic Giant roll out date. There was no second. Motion failed.

Subsequent discussion highlights:

-If we launch in May, there may not be enough time to workout website kinks.

-They are looking for a “season” rather than specific date.

Dione Gagnow made a motion to tell Bionic Giant to launch in May and be fully rolled out by the Memorial Day Parade, seconded by Janie Anderson, no further discussion and approved unanimously.

-125th Anniversary Celebration Update:

Jody shared that the committee met. Llahoma joined them and they caught her up and shared goals and work done to date. They created pros and cons for types of events. Further discussion in closed session tonight.

-DEIB Task Force update:

Janie shared that the next meeting is January 9 at 5:00. They will be working with Dawn and the mental health group to merge and share ideas a bit more.

-Christmas Giving update:

Wrapped up today! 336 families and 951 youth were served. Everything came in and got sent out smoothly. All packed and cleaned up. Big thank you to Tom Hoare for all of his help with this, it was his 39th year! John shared that this program has a longstanding relationship with Rotary, and they helped a lot this year. Will be needing younger volunteers to help with heavy lifting work, which may be difficult recruiting due to much of it being done during the day. Will brainstorm on this more.

-Wreath Sales update:

Sales are closed. It was off to a slow start, but did recover by the end. Net funds are over last year's sales. Volunteer capacity was good this year. Thank you to Steve Christian for being the primary coordinator, to Linda Ahles for making phone calls about money being owed, and to Ellie for being in the warehouse office a lot and quickly learning the process.

10. New Business

-Camp Onaway 2024 fees:

As has been discussed, everything is costing more in the recent couple of years (food, oil, fuel, staff,

etc.) so an increase may be appropriate. Our volunteer-centric model helps immensely, but everything else is rising. It has been a while since we've increased camp fees, so a small increase to help offset was discussed, and a \$20 increase for week long camps approved. This increase wouldn't even cover food, but if we were to do a bigger increase, it would need to be announced earlier in the year.

Jody Hoppe moved to increase camp fees to \$495 for week long camps, seconded by Paul Linzmeyer and passed unanimously.

-Nominations of new Board members:

All of these nominations have been moved and seconded at the Nominations Committee meeting. All we need tonight are the votes.

Vote for Dan Cramer passed unanimously.

Vote for Allison Egger passed unanimously.

Vote for Tim Buhl passed unanimously.

Vote for Michael Babbitts passed unanimously.

Congratulations and welcome to the new Board of Directors members!

-Policies update:

A revised Policies Manual was sent out via email. At the Executive Committee meeting, there was a motion and second to accept the rewrite. Discussion: Majority of the changes consisted of removing excess verbiage. Also to add Building and Grounds as a new committee as John recommended. Note that updates didn't include renumbering the policies so that we could still reference past rewrites in the future. This will be added as a disclaimer on the policies. Could also leave in past policy numbers and put "(Omission)" for continuity. These changes would be administrative and do not affect the vote. Question on Building and Grounds Committee- why is it only 5 members? It can and already does have subcommittees to support specific work, and anyone can attend the meetings, not just members. Vote taken and passed unanimously.

11. Public Forum

There was 1 visitor at the meeting and did not speak during the public forum.

12. Action Items

- Alex- communicate roll out decision to Bionic Giant
- Executive Committee will make administrative changes to the updated policies and send to Board.
- Treasurer to schedule a meeting with Associated Bank Wealth Management around March 1, 2024 to review endowment performance.

A big THANK YOU to Steve Foster, Jody Hoppe, and Dione Gagnow for your service on the Board of Directors and your continued volunteer services!

13. Adjournment

The motion to adjourn was made by Rebecca Deschane and seconded by Dione Gagnow. A vote was taken and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 PM.

14. Call to order - Bifurcated

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 PM by Alex Johnson.

15. Election of Officers

1. Vice President
Janie Anderson nominated Rebecca Deschane, Alex Johnson seconded. Rebecca accepts.
2. Secretary
Janie Anderson nominated Tanya Schroeder, Paul Linzmeyer seconded. Tanya accepts.
3. Treasurer
Janie Anderson nominated Tim Buhl, Becky Ellis seconded. Tim accepts.

16. 2024 Committee Members

Audit Committee:

Dan Cramer, Paul Linzmeyer, Dione Gagnow

Community Linkage:

Dawn Bolwerk, Tanya Schroeder, Janie Anderson, Michael Babbitts, Marta O'Brien

Finance:

Tim Buhl (chair), Marta O'Brien, Dione Gagnow

Executive Compensation:

Alex Johnson (chair), Janie Anderson, Becky Ellis, Allison Egger

Board Development:

Becky Ellis (chair), Allison Egger

Governance:

Alex Johnson (chair), Janie Anderson, Rebecca Deschane, Tanya Schroeder, Tim Buhl

Building and Grounds:

Paul Linzmeyer, Dan Cramer, Tim Buhl, Michael Babbitts, Tom Hoare

-Committees without designated chairs will determine chairperson at their first meeting. At the next Board meeting, committees are asked to come with a list of goals and share how often they will meet. Committees are unlikely to publish meeting minutes.

17. 2024 Board Meeting dates

-Some discussion regarding changing a couple of the first meetings to Tuesdays. It was decided to keep meeting days consistent to Mondays.

-Last meeting of 2024 will be December 16.

-July meeting will take place at Onaway. Will have dinner, then the meeting. This meeting cannot be open to the public because it takes place during a camp.

-Discussion about having Staff Appreciation Dinner before the January meeting. Decided against it, as it could be an inconvenient time for a lot of staff members. John will put out some feelers to the staff to see what type of event they would most enjoy and report out.

18. Adjournment

The motion to adjourn was made by Paul Linzmeyer, seconded by Rebecca Deschane and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM.