

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**April 22, 2024 5:30pm**  
**Brigade Conference Room**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 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, Tim Buhl, Dawn Bolwerk (call-in), Dan Cramer, Rebecca Deschane, Allison Egger (call-in), Becky Ellis, Alex Johnson, Paul Linzmeyer, Tanya Schroeder

Absent: Michael Babbitts, Marta O'Brien

A quorum was established with 10 members present.

**4. Mission Moment**

John Benberg shared with us a couple of stories from the staff.

Marnie had shared an experience she had with a Brigader who was misbehaving and denying that behavior. Our video cameras had captured the incident(s) and through that proof along with communication with parents involved, it was able to be handled the best way possible. Staff handled it well and the Brigader ended the year without further issues.

After an Awards Program, a parent pulled a staff member aside and talked at length about how good the Brigade program is for her son after numerous other groups weren't a good fit for him.

There were twins who were both exhibiting behavioral issues at Brigade and needed to take a break from coming for a bit. Patti worked with their grandma to discuss the issues and the boys ended up signing a contract for expected behaviors and they ended the year very well.

John was returning a banner borrowed from a credit union, and a woman there shared with him her great appreciation for Onaway.

Thank you to staff members for the work they do in creating a positive experience for Brigaders!

**5. Approval of consent agenda items: Financials, Minutes of last meeting** (uploaded to web portal or distributed via email)

-Request from Building & Grounds Committee to add New Blue Pontoon to New Business. Janie Anderson made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. It was seconded by Paul Linzmeyer. A vote was taken and the consent agenda items were approved unanimously.

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

- Audit  
The audit came back with no material issues, it was a strong audit. Audit committee will continue to review and discuss the points that were made in the audit.
- Governance/Executive Committee  
The Bylaw review process has begun and they are catching up to the planned schedule. Janie will send the next set of bylaws to the Board for review before the next Executive Committee meeting. Agenda for this meeting was also set.

- Community Linkage  
EJ Jelinski is leading the Memorial Parade Committee and continuing to encourage more people to march. There will be a launch event (“Brigade: The Sweetest Place in Town”) after the parade at 10:30 – 1:30 with coffee and pastries. We will host an open house and have prizes, watch for sign ups to help. Janie will be meeting with Marnie and Nick to discuss a Volunteer Handbook, new volunteer orientation, and a mentoring program for new volunteer leaders. Volunteer Appreciation events are coming up, Board is welcomed and encouraged to attend. 5<sup>th</sup> grade visits are coming up, anticipating 800+ kids. Camp visits will be happening on Mondays throughout the summer. Janie will resend the sign up list.
- Endowment/Finance  
Planning to have numbers for the 2025 Budget earlier this year, around November. Will be looking for thoughts on the budget throughout the year so the next budget can be put together sooner.
- Executive Compensation  
Continuing to move forward with John's KPI goals. Nothing further to update in public forum.
- Board Development  
Creating a skills matrix of current board members to make it easier to know what skill sets are leaving the Board when Directors' terms are up. Also creating new nomination form questions. Everyone continue to keep new Board member recruitment ideas in mind; hoping to land more people by mid-year. Still working to identify candidates from larger employers in the area.
- Building & Grounds  
Building refresh is in full swing, mid-May launch date is looking good. Will be asking for volunteers to help replace ceiling tiles (May 1?). Bill Vogels and Stephanie Boelter will be co-chairing the work week at Onaway, there is a good list of projects. There are issues with the New Blue boat, to be discussed in New Business. The building sign reveal will occur at the launch following the parade- hoping for a free/very inexpensive “ta-da” reveal, along with press at the event.
- Mental Health Subcommittee  
In a holding pattern while camp registration is happening. Will then touch base with Heather to determine what needs to be addressed for each camp. April 27 is the next Mental Health First Aid training, there are 18 currently signed up. Considering canceling the third date due to lack of participation. Continuing to work on mental health messaging for all camps for camp nurses and leaders.

## **7. CEO Report**

An email was sent out containing the CEO report. Highlights include:

- Brigade held listening sessions last week for anyone to attend. There was sparse attendance, but some good topics brought up: request for bigger guns in the rifle range, and a request for a series of trainings for leaders (3-4/year) regarding how to deal with certain types of situations with Brigaders. Staff agreed with this and would like to reach out to leaders for topic ideas. Janie will include this in her conversation with Marnie and Nick. John also shared his contact information so those who couldn't make it to the sessions can still reach out to him.
- Nick compiled the results of the end-of-year surveys. 291 survey responses (over 50% completion rate) were done on awards nights. Main takeaways: -Many comments on temperature control.
- Negative responses regarding the bathrooms (not cleanliness, but layout/physical facilities). -Younger kids come because of the activities. -Older kids come because of the sense of community. -8<sup>th</sup> grade

girls would not be enthused to come if they were combined with boys. -85% plan to come back next year (usually don't see this actually happen, want to determine why. Hopes to invest more time in calling those who don't return next year) -Based on the results, many youth feel Brigade as their “3rd space”, a place between home and school where they feel safe and that they belong.

-Continuing to talk about future building refresh ideas to take to Building & Grounds. Ideas include the slot car track (currently not operating correctly, having a hard time finding someone to repair), rethinking the Leader Room space, looking to get Alli in a larger office space, and a decompression space/zen den, a relaxing space with low lights, soft furniture, etc., taking a closer look at many of the workshop/hobby club rooms upstairs. Would like to have a larger conversation about the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor gym and how that space can be brightened up and used multi-functionally. Music program would appreciate a larger ensemble room rather than 2 smaller rooms.

## **8. Captain's Report**

Co-Leader work weekend is May 17-19, encourage any 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders (or those under 21) to sign up. This is after the adult work week.

## **9. Old Business**

- Bionic Giant Update

The steering committee did not meet, this committee is wrapping up. The rest of the process is pretty much in the hands of staff to execute.

- 125th Anniversary Celebration Update

Tanya and Amy will be working with this group moving forward. There are 4 subcommittees: gala event, volunteer activities, international guest activities, and community activities. Will likely be talking about at least the gala at Board level soon, the anniversary celebration is the next big thing after the launch.

- DEIB Task Force Update

Did not meet. Next meeting will be to discuss policy, not much will be changing for camp.

## **10. New Business**

- Launch Update

Plans are moving forward fast and furious! Launch event planning is underway and more information will be released soon. Space refresh work is on track: floors, painting, lighting is done. Still completing ceilings and aesthetics. Initial order of branded merchandise and collateral merchandise is on track. Bionic Giant support is still going well and are working well together. Will need volunteers to help with open house/building tours.

- New Blue Pontoon

Last summer we approved the purchase of the New Blue pontoon boat, it was then discovered to be uninsurable. Half was paid for at acquisition, and the other half is yet owed. Have recently found insurance that will cover it, but they want to cover everything of ours and the price of our insurance would increase significantly. It is not feasible long term to keep this boat. It would be difficult to resell as it is a kit boat. We don't truly need this boat anymore; motors have been moved around so we now have a full fleet. Options were discussed as to how to move forward to attempt to recoup the money.

Rebecca Deschane made a motion for those with a relationship with Bill Belke to hold an initial conversation. It was seconded by Tim Buhl. Discussion: Suggested that Tom Hoare, Tim Buhl, and EJ Jelinski be part of this initial conversation with Bill to discuss options, a “softball” approach in an attempt to avoid a “hardball” approach. Should Alex be involved instead of EJ to

keep it at Board level? Alex does not have a prior relationship with Bill. All three agree to this if available, and plan to do this in early May. If this doesn't work, will then decide how to move forward. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

We are fully insured with the current insurance and are good to use everything else for the 2024 year. Will be sure to take a closer look at future purchases moving forward.

Also mentioned the need for a new air buoy at camp soon. Current one functions as it should, but is creating too much heat. Bill is doing research on new air buoys. We have a couple of options to pay for this and/or raise money for it. Popularity for this is growing at camp.

## **11. Public Forum**

There were 2 visitors at the meeting and both spoke during the public forum.

-EJ Jelinski, volunteer at Brigade and Onaway. Shared there are 190 days until Brigade starts. The Board is spending a lot of money in the program with hopes that it generates more enrollment. What if it doesn't? Board meetings are too long, no one from the community with money and power are going to sit through them. There is too much going on, not enough focus, and spending too much money.

Should pick 3 big ideas and take 12 months to really focus and work on those. Not addressing the program or the children, just waiting for the rebrand and hoping it works. Believes those who responded they will return to Brigade next year say yes so they don't have to answer why they wouldn't.

-Joel Miller, volunteer at Brigade and Onaway. Happy that there is discussion about a new/additional air buoy. Maybe do a Go Fund Me to raise money. He is working on recruitment, calling the 5<sup>th</sup> graders who are not yet registered for Anchor Camp. Good enrollment to this point. Happy to hear that there will be phone calls for the winter program. Is still hearing struggles from every camp to find leaders.

## **12. Action Items**

- Follow up as needed for the audit.
- Consider and sign up for camp visits.
- Email Tanya if willing to lead a prayer for an upcoming meeting.
- Review Bionic Giant documents.
- John to update Board on launch events.

## **13. Adjournment**

The motion to adjourn was made by Rebecca Deschane and seconded by Janie Anderson. A vote was taken and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.