

NWAIRS Board Meeting
Thursday, March 31, 2011

DRAFT

Meeting was held in Seattle, graciously hosted by Stephen Lam at the Chinese Information and Service Center. This was our “in-person” meeting for the year.

In Attendance: Wanda Smith (President), Laura Kuperstein (Treasurer), John Dutt (Secretary), Sarah Marshall (Vice-President), Pearl Bruno Bouchard, Stephen Lam, Bill Brackin, Corrie Blythe, Melissa Johnstone, Susan Shepherd, Marina Nazaretyan

Not In Attendance: Julie Johnson (Past President)

1. Minutes were reviewed and approved without modification.

2. Financial Report –

Laura passed out the latest draft of our proposed budget for the current year. We currently have just over \$30,000 in cash – about \$20,000 in a checking account and \$10,000 in a money market account with Wells Fargo. Our money market account has a .05% interest rate. Given this is a non-conference year we shouldn't need to access any more than \$10,000 in the next year for expenses so we are looking into putting \$15,000 into a CD to earn a higher interest rate on this money. One suggestion was to put \$10,000 into a 12 month CD and \$5,000 into a 6 month CD to stagger the cash outflow. Laura had checked with Wells Fargo on their CD rates and they were only .10% for a 6 month and .15% for a 12 month. [The Investment Committee will investigate other options as we are fairly certain there is higher interest rate CDs available.](#)

When the Investment Committee met recently they spent the bulk of discussion on using resources to invest in the membership by providing more training opportunities and well as assisting in getting more members certified by AIRS. One proposal was to put more money into the current “State Training Grants” expense item and then develop a formal training program where NWAIRS sponsored trainings would be offered 3 or 4 times a year at various locations throughout the NWAIRS service area. In recent years we had a budget of \$1000 for State Training Grants and the Investment Committee proposed upping that to \$2000. After board discussion we decided to increase this further to \$3000 for this year and to change it to just be titled “Training Grants”. [The board also decided to form another Training Subcommittee that would work with the Investment Subcommittee to develop the policies and procedures for administering these funds. Wanda will send to the Investment Subcommittee the existing documents relating to the administration of these funds so they can develop some proposed updates to this.](#) Throughout this board meeting there were discussions about training program ideas as we view this as central to meeting many of our goals including professional development of our membership, increasing our membership, enhancing our web presence, etc.

The Training Subcommittee was formed with Melissa as the chair and Wanda, Susan and Marina as the other members.

With regards to AIRS certification we created a new line item in the budget of \$500. These funds could be used to provide scholarships to pay the certification fee as well as provide assistance preparing individuals for the exams. [The Training Subcommittee will work out the details on this as well.](#) Essential Learning offers an online 50 question practice test for \$8 through the AIRS website that has gotten great reviews as a good prep exam.

One other discussion item around finances was a question about whether or not we needed to have our financial records audited. [Laura said she would check into this as well as whether or not there are any legal limits on how much money we could have in our accounts.](#)

There was a motion, second and pass vote to temporarily suspend the rule that the Executive Committee first approve the budget as all Executive Committee members were present as part of this larger Board Meeting. The budget was then passed by the Board (which included the Executive Committee) as amended per discussions documented above.

3. **Second in person meeting scheduled for September 29th.** A revelation occurred during the meeting that we did not open this meeting up to the general membership which we need to do once a year so we will need to hold another in-person meeting at our fall meeting.
4. **Affiliate Council Report** – Wanda, as our chapter president, meets with the other affiliates about once a month. At the most recent meeting they discussed membership and the good news that overall membership is up. There was a promotion that for every 5 new members signed up the affiliate received a free AIRS scholarship. Wanda is serving on a Scholarship Subcommittee that works on the scholarship selection process for the AIRS National Conference. She shared that they use an effective spreadsheet tool to score applicants that she felt might be helpful to us for the NWAIRS Conference scholarship process. [Wanda will email this out to the group.](#) Wanda will not be able to attend the annual affiliate in person meeting which will occur in conjunction with the AIRS Conference in Dearborn Michigan this June and asked for a volunteer from our board to attend in her stead. Bill, Sarah and Susan all volunteered so we held a drawing. Susan's name was drawn so she will attend; Sarah will be the alternate if Susan is unable to attend from some reason.
5. **AIRS Scholarships** - We currently have \$1500 budgeted to send members to the National AIRS Conference. We decided that this year we would allocate this into 2, \$750 scholarships. That would pay for conference registration plus about \$300 to cover some of the travel expenses. [We will get word out about these scholarships to the membership shortly as the conference is quickly approaching.](#)

6. **Membership Report** – Stephen shared an update on membership renewals. There are less than 20 organizations that have not yet renewed. Stephen said that he would contact these individually by phone to check in. Wanda will email the list out to all board members and we all agreed to spend some time brainstorming ideas of other prospective members and get those to Stephen. He will then send them out a letter letting them know of the benefits of membership and how to join.

7. **Board Recruitment** – Pearl shared an update on current board member's terms of service. Julie Johnson's term has expired and she stated that she will find someone to recommend filling her position. Terms run October through September. Wanda is finishing out her final term next year. Susan and Melissa are also in their final terms that will expire in 2012. Pearl, John and Marina will be finishing up their first terms this year but are all volunteering to serve another term. Prior to our September board meeting we will send out a notice to the membership with information on candidates and voting instructions. Currently our board membership is pretty solid but we should always keep our eyes peeled for good board prospects. We also will be looking to recruit board members in the local area of the 2012 conference.

8. **Website Update** – Wanda, Bill and John met a few weeks back as the Website Subcommittee. We went through the site and identified areas that needed modification and updating. We have completed most of those updates. We talked about how the training program piece would be a primary feature of the site. Currently there is not a lot of reason for members to use the site outside of conference years. We also talked about making information accessible to visitors about existing online training resources in addition to our planned sponsored in person trainings. It was also suggested that we could highlight member agency best practices and accomplishments on the site as a means to share information and educate members. The site's membership and certification categories could also use a little more updating to focus shared information on the benefits of membership and certification. The board also discussed that it would be useful to get some site statistics on what visitors are using on the site. Bill will check in with David Landis, our sites primary technician, to see about using Google Analytics for this purpose. The Website Subcommittee will continue to work on some of these other updates as needed.

9. **Newsletter Update** – Sarah shared an almost complete draft of the latest edition ready to go out. There were a few suggested modifications and Sarah will update and send out shortly. For future newsletters, the next one being the fall 2011 issue, Sarah will send out an appeal to us all for articles. We also talked about highlighting featured agency members and training opportunities as we develop that program. There was also discussion about expanding readership. Currently we only send it out to member primary contacts and we'd like to expand our email distribution list. When Sarah sends the coming issue she will include a note to recipients to let us know of other email addresses of individuals interested in receiving the email directly. Sarah also mentioned there was some email tracking tool

that was used in her agency to track subscription emails. She said she would send out information about this to us all to review.

10. **NWAIRS Conference Update** – Corey shared the the Conference Subcommittee had met recently and that they were primarily trying to determine a location. They had defined some criteria – that it be along an accessible travel path (I-5 corridor), that the facility be large enough and ideally able to have accommodations and meeting rooms co-located and that there are enough local NWAIRS members to support the planning duties required to make it a successful event. Some of the primary locations being considered were Bellevue and Tacoma areas. The Hotel Morano is an excellent facility in Tacoma. The Seattle Athletic Club and Bellingham locations were also being considered. The Conference will be held October 3rd-5th, 2012. [The Conference Subcommittee will have a small list of 3-5 vetted options to share with the board by our next meeting.](#)
11. **AIRS Certification Commission** – Bill shared that he is currently serving on this commission. He shared some of the interesting background on how the test is developed and evaluated. The test is not intended to be based solely on the ABCs of I&R but rather takes in to account the ABCs and the AIRS Standards but is in the end supposed to ascertain a person's ability to actually perform the job. There are still significant issues with language and learning disabilities being an obstacle to individuals being able to pass the test even though they are competent to perform the job.

Next meeting will be via phone conference on June 30, 2011