

QUEST COUNCIL MINUTES

Monday, May 4, 2020

Members present: Steve Allen, Stephanie Butler, Wayne Cotter. Betty Farber, Marian Friedmann, Pam Gemelli, Phil Gisser, Bob Gottfried, Jennifer Jolly, Karen Levin, Frieda Lipp, Carolyn McGuire, Ruth Ward and Michael Wellner

Members absent: None

Note: Council previously requested that all unopposed candidates attend Quest Council meetings on an informal, nonvoting basis until they are officially voted into office. Therefore, Stephanie Butler, Treasurer-Elect, Karen Levin, Secretary-Elect and Ruth Ward, Vice-President-Elect were present for this meeting.

Due to the shutdown, this monthly meeting was held via Zoom call. The meeting was called to order by Quest President Bob Gottfried at 2:30 p.m.

Barbara Bianco

Council unanimously approved compensating Office Manager Barbara Bianco in full for the summer months.

Online Classes in Summer

Council unanimously approved holding online classes through the summer.

Budget

Quest Bylaws (V.C.1.e) require that the President “Prepare and submit to the Council for its June meeting an Operating Budget for the following school year, with the Council to vote on the adoption of the budget at the July meeting.” In view of the current unprecedented circumstances, the Council has unanimously determined that the adoption of a budget should be delayed until the September Council meeting, when we will have a better idea of when 25 Broadway will be able to reopen and what membership fees will be for the year. In the interim, the Council has unanimously approved a budget of \$4,100 to cover expenses during the months of July and August. The President and Treasurer would continue to have the ability to sign off on any unexpected expenditures up to \$500, as provided in the bylaws (VI.B). Any other expenditures above this budgeted amount would be submitted to the Council for email vote.

Survey

Council discussed surveying Quest membership to determine who is likely to attend in-person classes if 25 Broadway reopened in the fall. Council unanimously decided to table this item until July or August.

Tuition Statements

Council discussed the timing of our annual tuition billing statements.

It was determined that the sending of our tuition billing statements will be delayed since Quest is still unsure about CWE opening in the fall and our future rent obligations.

Council did, however, vote that if CWE is closed in the fall, tuition *for the fall semester only* would be set at \$150. Since Council previously voted a \$150 credit to all Quest members due to the partial closing this spring, no tuition billing of current members would be necessary for the fall. If Quest is only open for the spring semester, a \$275 charge (half of the usual \$550) would be charged.

It was further resolved that Bob Gottfried immediately contact CWE regarding our rent obligations. Bob also will be sending an email to membership informing them about these issues.

Elections

Council had previously agreed to postpone elections until September. In light of the fact that Quest may also not be able to meet in September, Steve Allen proposed holding elections over the summer and using our Zoom platform for each candidate to speak and take questions.

Bob Gottfried made the following motion:

There will be two Zoom sessions so each candidate can speak twice. We can record these sessions for any member who missed them. Gloria Peropat, the Nominations and Elections Committee Chair, will work with the Online Learning Committee to arrange this. Quest membership will vote electronically via email.

The motion was unanimously passed. Bob Gottfried will speak to Gloria Peropat.

Summer Session

It was noted that both the Curriculum Committee and the Online Learning Committee will continue the summer session online. The Curriculum Committee will contact the presenters already scheduled for the summer session to see if they are still available to do their presentations online. If not, they will contact other people to see if they are available. Creative Arts Day will go forward in the summer session and will include poetry and prose readings only.

An updated summer schedule will be distributed to all members once it is finalized. A preliminary version of the schedule is currently on the Quest website.

Fall Semester Classes Online

Should CWE remain closed in the fall, the Online Learning Committee proposed the following:

- Monday through Thursday, one live class in the AM, one live class in the PM.
- For A and B weeks, this amounts to eight days of classes
- Additional technical people are needed to help with the increased online programs. Zoom committee members will train support people.
- The Curriculum Committee will manage the course offerings to be scheduled.

Bob Gottfried will speak to Joyce West, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, regarding the proposal.

Some classes may not work well via Zoom. Classes with interactive discussion will definitely be part of the schedule. Zoom has two different presentation modes that Quest classes may employ: “Webinars” and “Meetings.”

It was noted that some members who are not attending online classes may not be comfortable using Zoom. Wayne Cotter agreed that the Online Learning Committee would send a general email to Quest members indicating additional help is available.

Treasurer's Report

- Quest's finances have not changed in any significant aspect from his quarterly written report submitted at the April Council meeting. Quest's finances continue in a healthy state. Our annual revenues from membership fees cover our annual expenses and we have a robust reserve that has primarily been built from charitable contributions that is available for emergencies. This past year has seen outstanding growth in our reserves, due to the enormously generous bequest of \$487,000 from Ken Leedom, and strong operating results due to our growth in membership fees.
- Annual revenue from membership dues will be about \$141,000 this year, about \$7,500 more than currently projected expenses of about \$133,500.
- Quest reserves of about \$800,000 consist of about \$260,000 in our banking accounts, \$500,000 in US Treasury Notes and certificates of deposit deposits in our brokerage account at JPMorgan Chase, and \$40,000 in our account at CWE in excess of budgeted expenses.
- Steve has recently learned from Quest's accountants that the large bequest Quest has received from Ken Leedom necessitates filing a more complex tax return than was previously required (even though Quest is a tax-exempt organization and pays no taxes, it is still legally required to

file a tax return). This change will incur a one-time payment to our accountants of about \$2,500 to cover the increased work necessitated. Steve proposes that proper accounting treatment is to charge this \$2,500 to reserves rather than operating expenses, since it was an expense necessitated by the large increase in reserves.

New Business

A) Independent Group Meetings

Bob Gottfried mentioned that during the current shutdown, there may be some Quest classes that have continued on an informal basis among a limited number of Quest members. Council wants members of such groups to know that Quest's Zoom platform is available to them during the shutdown and that they are encouraged to contact any member of the Online Learning Committee for more information.

B) Scholarships for CWE Students

Quest provides individual scholarships to CWE students. The Ken Leedom and Peter Cott Memorial Scholarship also participates as well as individual donors. There will be a virtual ceremony for Quest scholarships that have been given to CWE students.

The Council's next scheduled meeting is Monday, June 1.

The meeting was adjourned by Bob Gottfried at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Levin

Secretary - Elect