



# executive council minutes

---

## **The Meeting of the Executive Council of the Grateful Dead Studies Association, Conference Call, July 28, 2020.**

Minutes by Jan Wright and Nicholas Meriwether. Minutes approved November 19, 2020.

The meeting was held via conference call and called to order at 11:02 a.m. (PST), with the following members of the Executive Council present: Nicholas Meriwether, President; G. Ganter, President-Elect; Kurt Torell, Vice President; and Jan Wright, Secretary; Beth Carroll, Treasurer, was unable to attend.

### *1. Incorporation*

Meriwether reported that the final step in the Association's incorporation in California was now completed, with confirmation by the Secretary of State that the application had been received and was under review; COVID19 may be delaying the process. Meriwether also filed state and federal taxes, which have to be done regardless of income.

Council expressed its appreciation for the work of Andrew McGaan and Andrès Cantero of Kirkland & Ellis in handling the

incorporation of the Association. Meriwether suggested that the Council elect Andrew McGaan to the Board of Advocates in thanks for his efforts, which was unanimously approved. Meriwether will draft letters and send.

## *2. Board of Advisors*

Meriwether reported that he had fulfilled Council's request to formally invite Alan Trist, David Lemieux, Mark Pinkus, and Bernard Cahill to the Board of Advisors; all agreed, though one needs to receive corporate approval. Council approved the nominations and asked Meriwether to send out formal letters of appointment.

## *3. Popular Culture Association*

The Popular Culture Association held a conference call for area chairs in June that Meriwether participated in. He drafted a CFP for the area that will be published on the PCA website (<https://pcaaca.org/conference/2020>) on August 1. It is likely that the conference will be virtual due to COVID19. Discussion followed about holding the first Association meeting online and Council agreed that this would be necessary.

2 | Though not ideal, a virtual meeting allows the Association to decouple the meeting from the conference, since they will be separate, web-based meetings. The Association meeting will be held in approximate conjunction with the PCA conference, but need not be tethered to it, which is appropriate but preserves our autonomy. It was noted that the virtual format will also allow the Council to better plan for the meeting. Planning will commence in the fall.

## *4. Finances*

The Association checking account has been established, though Meriwether reported that the process had been unusually protracted. Checks and deposit slips need to be ordered and an initial deposit made as soon as possible. The Association will use an online bank for donations via the website; that account has been created and linked to the Association's checking account. The investment account for the endowment and other designated donations requires a cancelled check in order to be established. Meriwether will complete the application once checks arrive.

## *5. Database*

Discussion with Microsoft Access programmers and consultants affirmed the validity of the basic structure of the Association database project but revealed several issues in ongoing maintenance and integration with bank accounts. Wright confirmed that her work with Access made clear that required ongoing updates complicated maintenance.

Those concerns prompted research into an off-the-shelf solution and QuickBooks emerged as a more economical alternative that can accommodate the Associa-

tion's financial and reporting needs. QuickBooks is also a platform that CPAs respect and that will sustain IRS and other external scrutiny, including grant reporting requirements. Council asked Meriwether to implement immediately.

#### 6. *Website*

The first draft of the logo had aesthetic issues that have now been addressed; Meriwether will share the new version for Council's approval and update website. Meriwether created a template for meeting minutes that will facilitate consistency and allow for PDF download; all earlier meetings have been updated and will be shared with Council for final review before publication online. Special thanks to Wright for her proofreading. The donation function for the website has been installed and linked to the Association's online holding account. The constitution and bylaws have also been added to the site and reflect the recent revisions. The membership form is now online, using a Wordpress plug-in; the download option caused technical problems that the online form avoids. Council will review the website July 29–31 with the formal unveiling and public announcement scheduled for August 1. Council members agreed to serve as testers for site functions, including membership invoicing.

#### 7. *Membership*

Discussion of membership fees followed. In order to adequately address costs, Council agreed to set the initial fee for regular membership at \$65.00 per year, which reflects real costs of \$30 dues, \$35 journal subscription (a 50% discount of the cover price) and complimentary copies of the newsletter and *Proceedings*. Charter membership is \$325.00 (five times regular rate), a one-time payment that reverts to regular membership after one year. Lifetime membership is \$1,625.00 (twenty-five times regular rate), a one-time payment that provides for lifetime membership, including all publications. Discussion clarified that all Lifetime membership fees will be deposited into the endowment account and all Charter fees will go into the regular checking account. Council agreed that all new members, regardless of status, will receive a print copy of the current volume of the journal, volume 4. Meriwether will share links to the proposed award for Charter members.

Applications for membership received through the website will be vetted by Council and, once approved, will be invoiced; prospective members can elect the type of membership they wish: Regular, Charter, or Lifetime. Payments will be via Paypal invoice, which deposits payments directly in the Association checking account.

Discussion followed about initial recruitment efforts and Council agreed that all participants at the organizational meeting who indicated a desire to join will be pre-approved for membership. Council will create a list of professional scholars who have contributed to the discourse and invite them to join; all targeted invitations are

pre-approved for membership. Discussion noted that Council approval ensures that membership is seen as an honor and ensures that election to membership is a democratic process. Meriwether will send out email invitations to those who attended the organizational meeting and create a shared document for the Council to add additional candidates.

#### *8. Development Plan*

Meriwether explained the rationale that guided the creation of the first draft of the development plan, which begins with funding the work of the Association and culminates with the endowment of the Association's principal roles. Each step can be funded at a range of levels, from minimal to optimal, and the pace of the campaign can be adjusted to fit with the realities of fundraising in a post-pandemic economy, with flexible milestone dates. The level of detail provided is designed to fulfill the expectations of experienced cultural heritage patrons and development professionals. Once appointed, the Chair of the Board of Advocates will also have significant input, so this draft of the plan will likely undergo additional refinement before the campaign is launched in 2021.

Council agreed to provide feedback on the draft via a shared document. Following Council review, Meriwether will flesh out and format the plan for print; following Council review and approval, that booklet will be shared with the Chair of the Board of Advocates for his review.

4

#### *9. Board of Advocates*

Discussion followed over potential Board members and the first choice of Chair; Council unanimously agreed with the proposed Chair and requested Meriwether to make the initial overture, once the plan has been approved. Council members will review and contribute additional names to a list of possible Board members via shared document; those names will be suggested to the Chair, who will have the right of first refusal in the composition of the first slate of candidates for the Board. Terms are three years, renewable, which correspond to the milestones for each phase of the campaign.

#### *10. Press Release*

Torell suggested that a press release accompany the launch of the Association websites and Council unanimously agreed. Torell and Meriwether will draft one; once approved, it will be included on the website.

Meriwether thanked Council members for their willingness to meet on short notice. The next Council meeting will be scheduled for late fall. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m. (PST).