

Resolve New England, Inc.

Board Meeting March 13, 2023 at 6 p.m. EST

A meeting of the Board of Directors of Resolve New England, Inc., a Massachusetts nonprofit corporation ("RNE"), was held by Zoom at 6 p.m. EST on March 13, 2023.

Upon notice duly given, the following Directors were present by Zoom or phone:

Board President - Jennifer Redmond; VP - Chrissy Hanisco; Treasurer - Lisa Rosenthal; Secretary/Clerk - Mary Zanol

Directors – Catherine Tucker, Jill Kniebel, Meredith Wheeler, LaMone Downey Leonard, LeeMichael McLean, Ben Lannon, Aaron Styer, Dana Solomon

Directors (joined later, after voting items) – Kerry Kavanaugh

Invited guests also present during the regular meeting were Executive Director Kate Weldon LeBlanc, Operations Manager Emily Lindblad, Brandeis Board Fellow Nicholas Greco, and Sarah Glatt and Firdaus Faiz of Paper Crane Associates

Attendees at the meeting could hear, be heard and speak with each other throughout the meeting.

A. Welcome and Introductions: Jennifer (10 minutes)

B. Approve Minutes from November 2022 Board meeting: Jennifer (5 minutes)

1. November 2022 Board Meeting Minutes: **Chrissy made a motion to approve; Catherine seconded; all in favor; none opposed; Meredith abstained**

C. Strategic Plan review, discussion and vote: Kate Weldon LeBlanc, Executive Director, and Paper Crane Associates (50 minutes)

1. [Strategic Plan](#): **Kate did a brief presentation; Sarah/Firdaus available for questions/discussion**

a. **Jennifer provided overview on this plan positioning us well for the future**

b. **Kate emphasized transparent and participatory nature of the strategic plan process throughout.** Now we need to make this operational, which has already started happening. Utilized it to organize our budget for this year, as well as other programming decisions that could not wait.

c. **Chrissy was asked by a prospective board member if any part of the plan would be public; we may not want to share the national Resolve points. Need to determine what is and isn't confidential.**

--Per Sarah: each organization takes a wide range of approaches. Strategic plans are never fully confidential; often included in board packet and grant applications, as well as with key major donors.

--Elements of the plan can be posted on the website, like mission/vision/values. The priorities underneath the goals often won't be included – an executive summary could be

shared more widely. None of the content should be overly problematic. Some graphics may also be posted on RNE website.

d. Key Points:

- Review of new Vision and Mission (first time we've had a "Vision statement").
- #FindYourPeople is hashtag and mantra. Board expressed support for the new statements, which are also concise and easy to understand.
- Our Mission statement does not currently have New England in it, but we may revise it in the future if New England is removed from our name.
- Nick (fellow) asked about any messaging about what RNE does *not* do. There has been confusion in the past w/people who think we are a fertility *provider*, which we need to clarify – we aren't a direct service provider.
- This will not be added to vision/mission, but could be added to website homepage or FAQs at some point. Nick also suggested an idea web to show where RNE fits in during the family building process.
- Our Strategic Goals for the next few years:
 - ***Goal #1:** Continue to offer psychosocial support to individuals and families throughout their family building journey
 - ***Goal #2:** Increase the resources available and generate our own content
 - ***Goal #3:** Strengthen our broader community through partnerships with community-led groups and family building professionals
 - ***Goal #4:** Advance and protect fertility and family building for those who need it
 - ***Goal #5:** Build the capacity and sustainability of the organization
- Chrissy asked about ranking these in a particular order, i.e. placing the capacity building first; Sarah says we do not typically do this, but this goals list does represent a progression. Most of the goals need to come into play before the organization grows and becomes more sustainable.
- Lisa pointed out whether there should be more specific goals tied to a pie-in-the-sky organizational change, like a \$5M donation. This is the only part Lisa sees as missing.
- Sarah said this is high level and what RNE would do with a donation like that is implement these goals, but bigger and deeper – serve more people, reach more communities, etc.
- A large donation could also make operational changes, like paying peer leaders and growing staff.

e. Further feedback/questions: none further

f. Vote: Chrissy made a motion to approve the strategic plan; Lisa seconded; all in favor.

Strategic plan is APPROVED.

g. Top Yearly Priorities for 2023 – highlighted for year #1 of five-year plan:

- Sarah recommends we hone in on most imminent priorities – Sarah sees **growing and retaining our peer leaders** as top priority, in order to also move forward with other goals.
- Kate mentioned **employee compensation and benefits**; we haven't looked at this before. Jill is leading a committee on this so we can make informed decisions in the future.
- Kate said we hired a grantwriter (that was already in the budget.) Kate said she is also serving as a mentor to build funder relationships. These all relate to sustainability.
- Emily recommended **the On Demand platform for our community**. [This includes a podcast; Board members are welcome to be part of it.](#) Also bringing back parent voices.
- A lot of this also hinges on **the name change** (sometimes there is confusion with national Resolve for fundraising, volunteer recruitment, etc.), so this is another top priority.

- Chrissy and Mary agree the name change should come together sooner than later. Now that the strategic plan is approved, we can move ahead w/this.
- Any board members particularly interested in being involved in the name change process should let Kate/Emily or Jennifer know.
- The name change process is already built into budget; hiring Rebecca Moore who did branding project a couple of years ago.
- Identify the organizations with the aligned missions to collaborate with (even though we won't necessarily start those partnerships within this year, we should identify them.) Per Kate – this will be collaborative in every way; some of this has already begun.
- Jennifer will work with the Board/Kate/Emily to determine which of these action items will be Board-led, Committee-led, and Staff-led.

D. Treasurer's Report: Lisa Rosenthal, Treasurer (10 minutes)

1. \$11,232 in checking and \$90,912 in savings

2. 2022 Budget vs. Actual:

- Jill asked about the lower conference sponsorship revenue vs. what was budgeted – this is due to conference sponsor dollars going down since it's not in-person (this is happening with many virtual conferences across the country); we will be in-person for 2023
- Lisa also encouraged everyone to text or email if you have questions in the coming days
- Exceeded \$200K in revenue, so will need an official review again
- Expenses were \$20K higher than revenue – but finance committee has not identified any areas of concern; bills that have not yet been paid will be reflected in 2023 revenue
- Mary asked about local meeting cost; Kate confirmed this is for meetings with stakeholders, donors, etc.

E. Committee Reports by Chairs (5 minutes each)

1. Finance Committee Report (Lisa/Kate)

Fulfilled goal of having an approved budget before the FY started. 2023 goals are to do this again and we are on target; file taxes, financial review and other gov't filings completely, correctly and on time (without extensions this year); maintain a minimum of \$75K in cash reserves, which is 3 months of expenses; and put a process in place if we fall below this threshold.

Office move update: office complex has been sold + RNE can stay through March 2024; RNE are tenants at will so could relocate sooner.

Cost-effective solutions since staff is only in the office two days a week: looking into shared workspace options. Board can share recommendations. Will also look into Cummings leasing options.

Lisa also suggested pop-up locations.

Along the 95 corridor in Greater Boston area is still preferred.

Jill suggested Regus where you can rent their office facilities for day; membership-based and includes conference room, A/V, etc. Jennifer suggested another similar company.

LaMone also suggested Commercial Café and WeWork.

What are the 'nice to have' vs. 'have to have.' Also need to determine how much storage space is needed for hard copies/what files need to be kept.

Could also have a P.O. box to direct mail.

Meredith also suggested if we were fully remote, considering what other tools & resources you may need, and build those into the budget.

Finance committee and EC will assist w/all this, and full Board will approve.

2. Marketing Committee Report (Mary/Emily)

We have established our quarterly calls. Our next steps are to review the strategic plan and create marketing objectives off it. We will start building it in google docs prior to our next call; Aprill is planning to start that.

From Emily: social media consultant, Lamplighter Marketing, started week of 3.6 and wants to pull us more into the video content piece. Open to having Board members help w/this - see link below. More engagement with posts than usual last week! And if marketing committee wants us to amplify anything, the consultant will also tag individual Board members in posts so we can share on our social media. Need to compile list of handles (see link below).

Consultant will be on board for six months as a start; ROI to be measured on engagement increase (although no specific metrics built into contract.)

Can also have them join an upcoming call to discuss future content creation etc.

Emily will also share Reels idea spreadsheet (below).

[RNE Board Social Media](#)

3. Nominations Committee Report (Jennifer)

Goal to fill another Board spot by end of Q1. Will also discuss recruitment more at June meeting to fill some additional spots then. Consider members based on the three pillars of Support, Resources, Advocacy. Big priority.

Encouraging everyone to think outside the box when it comes to new Board members. Also looking for VT and ME residents.

Lisa suggested not doing further public posts for Board members; Kate and Chrissy explained that the intention of this is more so to widen the pool – does not guarantee nomination to Board.

4. Development Committee Report (Dana)

Main two items are that we haven't all been together since Tracey started in her role as a new grantwriter – Kate provided the overview that we have 3-month engagement with her, and she plans to get grants out the door during this period and start a library that can be repurposed for other grant opps. Applied for \$62K in grants to date. There will be a larger focus on grants while working with her; she also re-joined the development committee.

This is only budgeted for the three months + existing staff will sustain it after that.

In 2024, there's been discussion around an RNE Gala to commemorate the 50th anniv. Development committee will begin exploring now. **Next meeting is April 3 at 4 p.m. – open call for anyone who is interested in joining to discuss further.**

5. Governance Committee Report (Chrissy)

Continuing to work with Kate and attorney to get docs in place. Catherine's time on the Board is coming to an end, so we could utilize another Board member for this committee (we cannot use non-Board members on this committee, unfortunately.)

The attorney is really doing the heavy lifting – so committee member does not have to be an atty.

6. Advocacy Committee Report (Catherine/Kate)

Something going on in every single NE state. VT does not have an infertility insurance law – we want to change that. Working with a lobbyist there. Committee is currently meeting monthly w/so much going on – Kate expressed appreciation.

Kate: the VT legislative session is very short & is almost over – ending early May – but it is two-year legislative session so bill will remain in the mix for next year. Kate says this is going slow, but that was not unexpected.

F. ED Report, including Walk and Conference updates: Kate (10 minutes)

***Kate encouraged reading the committee reports, if we haven't already. Master calendar will live on the Board site that includes all committee meetings and other major dates that all Board members may want to know.**

***We also want more cross-committee interaction.**

***Board page also notes who is chairing each committee.**

***Other key things before we adjourn!**

--Walk is set for Sunday 10.1 at Warren Conference Center again in Ashland.

--Hiring event planner for walk who will also help logistically the day of.

--Also returning to in-person conference for the 30th anniversary this year.

--Event planner has also been hired for the conference, who is also looking at new venues since The Verve is not available on first-choice date of Nov. 18. Will also hold a cocktail + dessert reception on Nov. 17.

--Potential (dream!) sponsors could be Uppa Baby, DraftKings, Magic Beans and Dunkin'. Aaron and Mary both have contacts at DraftKings.

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m. – Chrissy made a motion to adjourn; Mary seconded.

Sponsorship discussion then continued. Motion failed.

Mary made a motion to adjourn; LeeMichael seconded; all in favor.

Fully adjourned at 7:59 p.m.