

**VES Board Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2022– 6:00pm
Via Zoom Conference**

Board members present:

Jan Adamczyk, Neishaw Ali, Laurie Blavin, Rita Cahill, Colin Campbell (*alternate*), Nicholas Casanova, Mike Chambers, Emma Clifton Perry, Bob Coleman, Lisa Cooke, Dayne Cowan, Michael Fink, Gavin Graham, Johnny Han (*alternate*), Dennis Hoffman, Adam Howard (*alternate*), Thomas Knop, Kim Lavery, Brooke Lyndon-Stanford, Arnon Manor, Andres Martinez, Tim McGovern, Karen Murphy, Janet Muswell Hamilton, Maggie Oh, Susan O'Neal, Robin Prybil (*alternate*), Jim Rygiel, Dane Smith (*alternate*), David Valentin (*alternate*), Bill Villarreal, Joe Weidenbach, Richard Winn Taylor II, Philipp Wolf (*alternate*), Susan Zwerman

Board members absent:

Himanshu Gandhi (*alternate*), Josselin Mahot

Guests and Section Members present: Zach Bell, *Co-Chair, Georgia*; Tavia Charleton, *Co-Chair, Toronto*; Steve Garrad, *Co-Chair, Vancouver*; Marine Lelievre, *Co-Chair, Montreal*; Jose Marin, *Co-Chair, New York*; Jeff Okun, *LA Section*; Justin Porter, *Co-Chair, Australia*; Sebastian Sylwan, *Chair, Technology Committee*; Paolo Tamburrino, *Co-Chair, Toronto*; Rob Wright, *Chair, Georgia*

VES Staff present: Shannon Carmona, Jeff Casper, Naomi Goldman, Debbie McBeth, Eric Roth, Ben Schneider, Jim Sullivan, Nancy Ward

Minutes: Lori Bowman

Call to Order – Eric Roth

- Eric called the meeting to order and confirmed that there was a quorum. He welcomed the 2022 Board members.
- Announced that all Board meeting discussions are internal and **confidential**.
- Announced that the November 2021 Board meeting minutes were approved online.
- Eric noted that the first order of business is to elect this year's Board officers known as the Executive Committee. The EC's role is to make determinations as to which items may need Board attention, approval, or clarification. Only individuals who are currently *full* Board members are eligible to run for the EC spots. Alternate Board members and Section Chairs are not eligible.
 - **Chair:** The only nominee is Lisa Cooke.
 - **Motion: Dayne Cowan made a motion to elect Lisa by acclamation. Emma Clifton Perry seconded. Vote taken. All in favor. Motion passed. Announced Lisa Cooke as the 2022 Chair.**
 - **First Vice Chair:** The only nominee is Emma Clifton Perry.
 - **Motion: Dennis Hoffman made motion to elect Emma by acclamation. Colin Campbell seconded. Vote taken. All in favor. Motion passed. Announced Emma Clifton Perry as the 2022 First Vice Chair.**
 - **Second Vice Chair:** Nominees are Brooke Lyndon-Stanford, Laurie Blavin, Dayne Cowan, Susan O'Neal and Richard Winn Taylor II. Dayne Cowan and Laurie Blavin withdrew due to work commitments. All remaining three nominees made comments. Eric gave instructions for voting. All those who are eligible to vote were instructed to send their choice via email to ec@visualeffectssociety.com. The subject line should read "Second Vice Chair". Votes were tallied and it was announced that **Susan O'Neal is the 2022 Second Vice Chair.**
 - **Secretary:** Nominees are Rita Cahill and Gavin Graham. Gavin withdrew his nomination.
 - **Motion: Mike Fink made motion to elect Rita by acclamation. Kim Lavery seconded. Vote taken. All in favor. Motion passed. Announced Rita Cahill as the 2022 Secretary.**
 - **Treasurer:** Nominees are Laurie Blavin, Andres Martinez and Mike Chambers. Emma nominated Gavin Graham. Gavin declined his nomination. All remaining three nominees made comments. Eric instructed Board members to send their choice to ec@visualeffectssociety.com. The subject line should read "Treasurer". Votes were tallied and it was announced that **Laurie Blavin is the 2022 Treasurer.**

Executive Director's Report – Eric Roth

- VES has a number of milestones this year:
 - 25th Anniversary of the VES
 - 20th Anniversary of the Annual VES Awards Show

- 5th Anniversary of the VES Hall of Fame
- 5th Anniversary of the VES magazine, VFX Voice
- Will have many events this year to commemorate and highlight all the anniversaries. Sent out a commemorative edition of VFX Voice earlier this week highlighting the 25th anniversary that includes timelines and a roundtable with reflections from all six of the previous VES Board Chairs.
- The URL for VES will change to **vesglobal.org hopefully** in mid-March. The old URL will still work but the new name is more appropriate for branding purposes. All email addresses will be changed as well.
- The yearly VES organizational budget will be adopted at the March Board meeting. Eric reminded members who are involved with budgets and need funding to submit all budgetary requests to him **by February 15**.
The VES Awards Show is currently scheduled to be an in-person event on March 8 at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills. Since the pandemic is still an issue, Eric went over the options for producing the show.

Treasurer's Report – Eric Roth

- The VES is in very good financial shape. Liquid cash assets are \$2,171,000 and Accounts Receivable are \$277,260 for a total of \$2,448,330 in liquid assets and receivables. There is only \$35,500 in Accounts Payable. The VES has fared very well financially during the challenges of the pandemic.

Welcome to NEW BOD Members and Statement from the Chair - Lisa Cooke

- Lisa welcomed the new and returning Board members and congratulated the new Executive Committee officers. This will be a great year with all the milestone anniversaries. Thanked the Board for stepping up and making the VES such a great organization. Looking forward to continuing to nurture and expand the global community.

Meet the Staff – Eric Roth

- Eric introduced the VES staff members and reviewed their duties and responsibilities with a power point presentation. These staff introductions are presented at the first meeting of every year for the new Board. The VES staff includes:
 - Colleen Kelley, Office Manager
 - Shannon Carmona, Administrative Assistant
 - Debbie McBeth, Global Coordinator and Section Liaison
 - Ben Schneider, Director of Membership Services
 - Jeff Casper, Manager of Media and Graphics
 - Nancy Ward, Program and Development Director
 - Jim Sullivan, Director of Operations (Eric introduced Jim who recently joined the VES staff)
 - PJ Schumacher, Controller
 - Naomi Goldman, Strategy Communications/PR Consultant (NLG Communications)
 - Eric Roth, Executive Director
- Dennis Hoffman requested that the staff power point presentation be shared with the Sections. Eric promised to follow through on this request with Debbie McBeth's assistance.
- Lisa Cooke acknowledged the amazing work and support provided by the VES staff.

Update on Archive Initiative – Lisa Cooke

- Making great strides on this initiative. Encouraged everyone to watch the luminary videos.
- David Valentin assisted Lisa with making the first two luminary videos for the Bay Area Section with luminaries Pete Docter and Ed Catmull.
- Hope to get the Digital Museum in place this year. VES member Sandra Joy Aguilar is assisting with the architecture design of the museum.

Update on Education Committee Activities – Arnon Manor

- The committee was created two years ago with the objective to create educational opportunities for VES members and to find and create avenues to expand the global visual effects talent pool. The goal is to focus on untapped and non-traditional demographics with emphasis on diversity and inclusion. The mission includes finding new talent in the industry as well as creating new opportunities for those who are currently employed in visual effects.
- Some of the committee's activities include:
 - Setting up Peer-to-Peer mentorships whereby VES members mentor other members.
 - Outreach/Presentation to schools.

- Communicating with other animation and visual effects organizations such as Rise Up Animation, Women in Animation and Access VFX to ensure that the VES is included in educational activities in the industry.
- Creating a comprehensive resource page that is open to VES members and non-members.
- Creating new initiative to recruit veterans into the industry.
- Developing new high school certification pilot program in California to create apprenticeships leading to employment. Local and federal education units and industry companies (games, visual effects and animation) have committed to take on apprenticeships when the certification is finalized. Expect to put this certification program into place by next year.
- The committee meets one hour on the first Thursday of the month.
- Neishaw Ali added that the committee is looking for five more new mentors to match with mentees.
- The Peer to Peer Mentorship Program had its first cohort pilot program last year and the second round is being developed this year with Neishaw leading the charge.
- Lisa Cooke acknowledged the great work that this committee is doing. She encouraged all Board members to join committees.

Update on Health and Wellbeing Committee Activities – Emma Clifton Perry and Philipp Wolf

- Emma introduced herself and noted that she and Philipp Wolf are co-Chairs of the Health and Wellbeing committee.
- Philipp reviewed some of the committee's important activities:
 - Created a resource page that provides mental health and wellbeing resources available for VES members and non-members.
 - Released a web series about mental health. Includes interviews with high profile professionals in the industry such as John Dykstra and Chris White who discuss the challenges of working in the visual effects field. Three clinical psychologists are working on the series with VES. The series has reached 5,000 people worldwide.
 - Introduced the Member Assistance Program (MAP) that provides help for people who are in distress and need immediate assistance. It also provides legal advice, parental advice, and other related services, etc. All VES members have access to this free and confidential program.
 - Started an Industry Best Practices Sub-Committee to determine ways to provide best practices in the industry relating to mental health and well-being in the workplace.
 - Working on establishing health and well-being discounts for membership – for example on 'Calm'.
 - Negotiating discounts for ex-pat insurance for members who have moved away from their country of origin to work in the industry.
 - Recruiting new members for the committee and interested parties can contact Philipp or Emma.
 - Lisa Cooke thanked the committee for their hard work in providing much needed benefits to the VES membership. She encouraged people to join the committee.

Long Term Status of Work from Home Ad-Hoc Committee – Gavin Graham

- Several Board members expressed interest in coming together to build on some of the work that was started by the Technology Committee early in the pandemic relating to remote work from home. The Technology Committee created a white paper with recommendations, hints, tips and technical solutions for companies and individuals who want to work remotely.
- A meeting occurred before the holidays with Technology Committee members, Board members and other interested parties to discuss the merits of forming a permanent committee to address work from home issues and the future of hybrid working practices in the industry. The formation of a permanent committee would make it possible to take concrete steps to move these issues forward.
- A mission statement was created from the meeting: "The Work from Home and Hybrid Practices Committee exists to ensure that in the current changing landscape of how our industry operates the VES is playing a key role in influencing the future and ensuring artists are enabled to work the way that they want to and studios are able to continue to trust that security and productivity best practices are still being respected if not improved. The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in one of the most fundamental sea changes to how we are doing business and there is much education and communication required to ensure that we are creating an equitable and inclusive environment that is sustainable even once we arrive at our new normal. The VES has a part to play in influencing this outcome and the committee will endeavor to ensure this is to the maximum benefit of all its members".
- Proposed projects for the committee include:
 - Conducting a member survey to determine how the membership wants to work now and in the future.
 - Build on the white paper created by the Tech Committee and focus more on business practices.
 - Facilitate panel discussions to make sure that people are made aware of these issues and potentially connecting with clients and studios. The VES is uniquely positioned to get the right people in the room together and build bridges with industry professionals.

- **Motion: Lisa Cooke made a motion to change the status of the Work from Home Committee from an Ad-Hoc to a Standing Committee. Colin Campbell seconded.**
- Some Board members were concerned that there may be overlapping missions with the Work from Home Committee, Technology Committee, Health & Wellbeing Committee and Education Committee. Sebastian Sylwan noted that there have been previous discussions about the concerns of overlapping goals among several committees. However, he added that there are important considerations and core issues in the Work from Home committee's mission related to technology, security and policy that need to be expressed and addressed that are not covered by the other existing committees.
- For clarification purposes, Eric noted the difference between an ad-hoc and standing committee. An ad-hoc committee is created for a specific purpose and ends when its work is done and it runs its course. A standing committee is a permanent and ongoing concern. He clarified that the Work from Home Committee is requesting permanent official status.
- **Vote taken. Majority voted in favor. Motion passed.**
- Gavin noted that the group who met last month would reconvene to determine who will be on the committee and who be Chair and Co-Chair and present those recommendations to the Board for approval at the March Board meeting.
- Eric reminded Gavin to submit a committee budgetary request to him by February 15.

Technology Committee Update – Sebastian Sylwan

- Sebastian reviewed four key projects that the Technology Committee is currently working on.
 - Creation of a VES Technology Award. Have created rules and regulations for the award and will officially announce this new honor at the VES Award Shows on March 8. There will be further outreach but want to give the award high visibility by announcing it at the Awards Show.
 - Update on Cinematic Color white paper. The paper was published in 2012 and was very well received. An update of the paper was in process to reflect the workflows around color that have been changing in the industry. It started as an update of a 50-page document and became a 350-page book. There was disagreement with the authors on direction and licensing. It was determined that these issues cannot be resolved but it is an important resource that should be shared with the industry. The Committee consulted with a lawyer and decided to license out the rights that were generated with the contributions from the committee and the rights licensed from Sony and Disney. This agreement includes provisions to use excerpts from the white paper in other VES publications such as the Handbook. The Technology Committee wants to share this valuable resource with the industry even if it will not be under the banner of the VES.
 - A survey was conducted across the industry regarding the Linux system. A report based on the survey results was published that makes a call to action recommending the formation of a working group to discuss and influence the providers of the Linux operating system for the desktop. The goal is to form the working group and obtain feedback before March 10, which is the date of the Linux Academy Software Foundation Open Source Forum. Hope to have a specific discussion at the Forum about the direction and focus of the working group.
 - Ben Schneider has been working on a virtual production glossary that was created in collaboration with ASC, Netflix and Epic Games. The glossary is a great resource for common terminology across the virtual production workflows. It is located at vpglossary.com. Planning to announce and launch it in the near future. The Technology Committee will maintain and update the glossary by checking with industry experts on an ongoing basis.

New Business

- Brooke Lyndon-Stanford suggested that the multiple time zones of the global membership be considered when scheduling Board meetings to make it easier for others in different regions to attend the meetings. He asked that this item be included in an upcoming Board meeting agenda.
- Jeff Okun announced that VES will start working on the 4th edition of the VES Handbook soon. Four additional people are needed to serve as sub co-editors and editors. Interested parties can contact Jeff or Susan Zwerman.
- Per Richard Winn Taylor's comments, Lisa Cooke noted that Naomi Goldman is working on a number of events this year to commemorate the 25th Anniversary milestone.
- Jeff Okun acknowledged Richard Winn Taylor for designing the VES 25th anniversary logo.
- Eric noted that the next Board meeting is scheduled on March 9 but that is the day after the Awards Show. The meeting may be rescheduled and will be back in touch if the meeting date is changed.
- Brooke Lyndon-Stanford congratulated the new officers of the 2022 Executive Committee. He added that it is a milestone to have an all-female EC this year and this news should be celebrated in the media.

Eric reminded the new Executive Committee officers to stay on the zoom call for a brief check-in.

Lisa adjourned the meeting at 7:40pm

Next BOD meeting: March 16, 2022

Submitted by Lori Bowman

*Submitted by Rita Cahill
Secretary, VES Board of Directors*