October 8, 2014

Minutes

Present: Jo Ellen, Joseph, Maureen, Rory, Antoinette, Lisa R, Shannon, Maya

Absent:

Check-in:

Making Contact got two SPJ North California award, one for a piece by George Lavender on surveillance, the other by George Lavender on the World Cup (put into the arts and culture category)

1**. Questions re: Financials**

Everyone was positive about the draft budget. I will present the final budget at our meeting on December 1. This is your time to raise any lingering questions.

2. **Conference Planning Update**

Antoinette and I will update you re: the conference. Please don't share yet, but we have great keynoters: Allison Kilkenny & Jamie Kilstein (#newsfail) and Cara Swisher (Recode) are confirmed!

Discussion: JGK: worried there aren’t enough slots for panels. Maya: It’s better to have fewer panels and have them be really good No one ever goes to every slot that panels are offered. Sharon: I want networking time. Maureen: this is also a transition period, so networking is important. Lisa: agrees—good to sprinkle breakout sessions.

3. **Strategic Planning: Merger**

The merger is becoming real; I flew to Colorado Springs last week to discuss it with the AAN board. They have set up a committee to dig deep into the pros/cons for their organization; to do due diligence, including looking at our budget, our members, and generally, how healthy we are; and to assess the costs of merging.

We need to do the same. **I need your help.**

Please spend time at the AAN website before our meeting (www.altweeklies.com). Let's work together to ask an initial set of questions we would like to have answered. I also need some of you to volunteer to be on our planning committee to find the answers to these questions.

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**I. Financial Report**

**Attachments:**

**FNP Financial Report thru August, 2014 attached**

**New budget attached**

**Bottom Line:** $138,000 in the bank. $60K of that is tagged for metrics project. We spend about $10k per month.

**II. Development Report 2015**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grants in Hand** | **Amount** | **Restricted?** | **Notes** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total In Hand** | **0** |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Grants Expected** | **Amount** | **Restricted?** | **Notes** |
| Wallace Global | $30,000 | No | $30,0000 to general expenses |
| MDF/ Media Policy | $25,000 | Yes | Includes $15,000 project management |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total Expected** | **55,000** |  | **$45,000 to project/ general expenses** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grants in Process** | **Amount** | **Restricted?** | **Notes** |
| Voqal | 25,000 | Yes | Finish impact project |
| **Total In Process** | **$25,000** |  | **$25,000 to project management** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Grants Prelim Stages** | **Amount** | **Restricted?** | **Notes** |
| Merger | 10,000 | Yes | Seeking funders |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total Prelim** | **$10,000** |  | **$2,000 to TMC salary/overhead** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total in Development** | **$90,000** |  | **$72,000 to TMC salary/overhead** |

External Revenue Expected 2015

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Amount** | **Notes** |
| Membership Dues | $20,000 | Less expected due to anger re: conf reg |
| Member Reg | $7,500 | Conf Reg for first time, $75/person \* 100 |
| Non-Member Reg | $1000 |  |
| Sponsorships | $5,000 | Expect $10K/ splitting 50% with AAN |
| Exhibitor Fees | $2500 | Expect $10K/ splitting 25% with AAN |
| Lab Fees | \*\* | \*\*this # may be hire, but will be equal to expense |
| Services: Collab | 5000 | AAN Foundation collab project management |
| Services: Vocus | 5000 |  |
| Services: What Counts | 4160 |  |
| **Total** | **$42,660** |  |

**See Budget for full numbers.**

**III. TMC Membership Report**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | June 2014 | Jan 2014 | Δ Jan 2014-present |
| Starting # | 71\*\* | 67 |  |
| New Members | 2 |  |  |
| Dropped Members | \* |  |  |
| Total Members | 73 | 67 | 6 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **New Members** | 2 |  |
| **Dropped Members** | 0 |  |

\*\*I am not counting FSRN and RP&E as members because they have budgets under $50K and have laid off all staffers at the moment. Each claims it will return fully; if so, we will put them back on the roster.

\*These members have not paid dues in 2014:

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| American Forum |
| Democracy Now |
| Grist |
| KCETLinkTV (Kim says not to expect anything in 2014) |
| LA Progressive |
| Texas Observer |
| Thom Hartmann |
| Utne |
| Women’s Media Center |
|  |
|  |

**Membership Committee Members are:**

Christa Hillstrom, Yes! **CHAIR**

Andrew Stelzer, Making Contact

Shay Totten, Communications Director, Chelsea Green

Laura Burge, Care2

Alana Price, Tikkun

We are currently seeking more volunteers for this committee!

IV. **Conference Report**

**Logistics**

Dates: Thursday, February 5- Saturday, February 7 , 2015

Place: Hotel Argonaut, San Francisco, $185/night for TMC members.

Website: AAN will create the conference website as a mobile app.

**Conference fee proposal**:

$100 TMC Members in good standing (about the cost of food/beverage)

$75 TMC Members advance registration

$50 Low-income (Members can choose this option without application)

$0 Volunteer option (if you volunteer for a half-day, you get the free rate.

$250 Non-Members

Fee will include all the coffee you can drink, and box lunches on Thursday and Friday, plus one of AAN’s over the top receptions on Thursday night.

**Program Chair: Antoinette June**

Wednesday

4:00 pm Coordinating Committee Meeting

7:00 pm TMC-only get together

Thursday

9:00-12:00 Pre-conference Workshops (including one on Police and Media)

12:00-1:00 Welcome/ Box Lunch

1:00-3:30 Break-out sessions

4:00 Kilkenny & Kilstein (Big Fun Opener)

5:00 Reception

Friday

8:30-9:00 Speaker

9:00-11:00 Break out sessions

11:00-12:00 Plenary: Cara Swisher

12:00-2:00 Networking Box Lunch (AAN TMC)

2:00-4:30 Unconference

5:00 Speaker + Impact Awards

Saturday

9:00-11:00 TMC Biz Meeting/ Vote on Merger!!

11:00-11:30 Joint TMC/AAN discussion/event??

11:30-1:00 Lunch on your own

1:00-3:00 Breakout sessions

3:00 Goodbye!

V. **Strategic Planning**

**Strategic Planning Committee Members**

**TMC Members:**

Steve Katz (FNP liaison, CC member)

Maya Schenwar (CC Chair)

Jay Harris (Hightower Lowdown; on AAN Foundation Board)

Joe Baker (Care2)

Rod Arakaki (Yes!)

Steve Michelson (Specialty Studios)

Susan Mernit (Oakland Local)

Kate Lesniak (Bitch)

Linda Jue (GWW)

**Non-TMC Members:**

Greg Zachary (on AAN Foundation Board)

Alan Searle (former TMC CC chair)

**Calendar**

* **September 27, Jo Ellen + Tiffany meeting in Chicago--done**
* **October 25 Jo Ellen to AAN Exec Com meeting in CO--done**
* **Dec 1-5, Jo Ellen + Tiffany do funder meetings in NYC**
* **February 5-7, 2015: Joint Conference with AAN in San Francisco.**

Vote by TMC members on merger

* An implementation committtee will form to hammer down the logistics of a joint venture or partnership, which could begin with a simple MOU
* **July 2015 Salt Lake City:** AAN votes on merger

VI. **Project Report: Incubation and Innovation Labs + Other Business Projects**

**1) The Metrics Lab** has started its experiment phase.

Abortion

Reproductive Justice

Health Care

Immigration Reform

Education-Vouchers

Education-Teachers

Food/Democracy

So far the following projects have been accepted/ run:

* In These Times, The Progressive/PRWatch, Chicago Reporter: 4 original features on teacher’s unions ($4000)—LAUNCHED April 24, 2014
* Feet in 2 worlds, City Limits, PNS, Making Contact: 3 original features on immigration reform ($6000)—LAUNCHED April 28, 2014
* Earth Island Journal, The Progressive/PRWatch, Making Contact, Grist, Truthout, Orion: 6 features on Big Ag ($10,000) \* (12 outlets involved led to ok of new topic)—LAUNCHED JUNE 11-17, 2014
* Bitch, feministing, Making Contact: 3 original features on media coverage of abortion ($6000)—Launched JUNE 17, 2014
* News Taco, City Limits, PNS: 2 original features on immigration reform and health care crossover ($4000)—Launched July 2014 (not successful as collab)

[pause to rethink the project—July]

* Feet in 2 worlds, Oakland Local, People Power Media, The Nation, others?: undocumented fast food workers—set to launch August 2014
* In these Times, The Progressive/PR Watch, Washington City Paper: Charter School Scandals—set to launch August 2014
* Yes!, Truthout, PNS, Brave New Films, Feministing: Reproducitve Rigths in Fracking Towns—set to launch September 2014
* NAM, Rabble, City Limites, Tikkun, the Nation: Undocumented Child Immigrants—set to launch late September 2014
* NAM, PNS, Sac News & Review, San Diego City Beat, LA Weekly, other?: ACA + Mental Health Care—set to launch October 2014
* In These Times, The Progressive/Pr Watch, Dissent: feature on education tbd—set to launch October 2014

[new protocol to launch October 1]

The researchers say they are finding good results, but there is “too much noise in the data” and that they would need us to produce 30 more collaborations to get good data. That’s not possible, so we are implementing a new protocol which I will be communicating about soon.

Meanwhile, however, I’ve found very positive results from the collaborations. I attach here my report to our funder, John Schwartz.

**2) Database Integration Lab**

Over 15 TMC members have been working together for 2 years now to find an API or other solution that would merge subscription, membership, donor, and social media/comment data for each unique contact, with the aim of allowing an outlet to develop a deeper relationship with each contact. I am working with Phillip Smith and Mike Maxwell.

Steps Taken:

* Focus Groups at TMC 2013 and 2014 conferences
* In-depth hour-long interviews with 8 TMC members (completed 2014)
* Survey of CRM marketplace (ongoing)
* List of Requirements (in process)
* Mike Maxwell and I to meet with Allen (Gunner) Gunn in November.

**3) Video Journalism: Working with Documentary Filmmakers**

We have begun an initiative with NAMAC to pair filmmakers and journalists.

Steps Taken:

* Pilot project with High Country News
* Focus group at TMC 2014 conference
* Development of videomatch.org concept w/ two page overview
* In talks with Storyhunter on developing their platform to match our need

**4)** **What Counts Marketing Service—a TMC Benefit**

Thanks to Phillip Smith, TMC will now be able to offer members a very cost-effective subscription to the enterprise level What Counts email marketing system.

Here’s how it works: TMC contracts with What Counts to purchase a bulk email subscription, generally 1 M (million) emails per month, at a cost of $220/month. We then resell these subscriptions to member outlets based on the percent of emails they will use, plus a small surcharge to cover our costs.

In 2014-2015, the Media Consortium will reap $1200 in service fees for this service; meanwhile, outlets will get very cheap email. Everyone is happy. Outlets grandfathered into this system include TMC members Yes, Vancouver Observer, and Rabble, plus IFEX, Geist, the New Internationalist and the Tyee. The two latter outlets may be interested in becoming TMC members.

**5)** **Vocus PR Database – A TMC Benefit**

Thanks to the work of Susan Gleason (Yes!), TMC has been able ot obtain an agency subscription to the Vocus PR databse for $5565. Up to 10 TMC outlets may purchase a seat on this database each year for $500 (shared seat)-$1250 (dedicated seat).

TMCers using Vocus in 2014: Alternet, Care2, City Limits, The Washington Monthly, High Country News, In These Times, Yes! magazine, PNS and Tikkun. We also allowed AAN to purchase a subscription as part of our partnership.

**VI. Project Report: Editorial Collaboration**

The Metrics Lab is swallowing up most of the editorial collaboration energy in 2014. However, we have a few projects taking place in addition to the Metrics Lab.

**1) The Media Policy Reporting and Education Project** (MPREP)

This project is now in its fourth year. We recruit 7-10 reporters each year, offering $1000 to the outlets to compensate for the reporters’ time to participate. We ask these reporters and outlets to guarantee they will publish 6 feature media policy stories per year.

Reporters are educated on media policy via monthly briefing calls on a wide range of media policy issues. Each call includes a news hook.

In addition, reporters are given direct access to media policy sources and advance notice on media policy legislation and political actions.

Finally, each year we endeavor to bring reporters to a media policy conference or event. This year, I have set aside travel grant funding so reporters can travel to go to these events.

**2) Pesticide Project, based in Kauai.** We have a major donor who is helping us locate funding to follow the story of pesticide ready GMO seed crops in Hawaii, and to track their use around the globe.

**VII. TMC/ Jo Ellen in Public**

**Legal Briefs.** TMC has begun to sign on to legal briefs on the following issues:

* Protection of journalists’ sources from surveillance
* Protection of journalists from surveillance
* Protection of people committing acts of journalism from arrest
* Broad rulings that impact free speech

Though we care deeply about media policy, we have not ventured into the terrain of signing onto legal briefs about media consolidation, corporate telecom monopolies, or other civil actions

**Jo Ellen Travel**

This year I have been minimizing my business travel in order to save $$. I have been doing a lot of personal travel, and when possible have used my personal travel to meet with members, funders, etc. Below is my official TMC travel.

January 2014

* Los Angeles (to meet with member Todd Cuningham, USC Annenberg)
* San Francisco, moderate panel, AAN Digital Conference

Feburary 2014

* Chicago, TMC Annual Conference

May 2014

* Washington DC (meet with Tiffany of AAN, DC members)

June 2014

* NYC, PDF + (meet with NYC members)

July 2014

* Nashville, present on collaboration, AAN Conference

September 2014

* Istanbul, Global Internet Forum (UN) with MDF delegation
* Chicago, side meetings during ONA (I’m not going to ONA)

October 2014

* AAN Exec Committee meeting, Colorado Springs

November 2014

* Dallas, Facing Race