

MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2013
2:00 P.M., MEDIUM OFFICE

1. Call to order

Present: Prithvi Mynampati, Corey Belford, EIC Sawczak, Matt Long, Christine Capewell, Valeria Ryrak, Faris Natour, Nour Hassan-Agha.

Meeting called to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. Adoption of agenda

EIC moved to adopt agenda as presented. Seconded by Long. All in favour.

3. Budget review

EIC says the budget was based on a previous budget two years ago; while some of the figures are accurate, some aren't. For example, the salaries do not match up (approximately \$12,000 more on this budget than previously discussed, perhaps due to tax). The printing and publication expenses (the second-largest expense) are accurate. Professional fees include Gloria's (bookkeeper) fees as charged by her company. The travel expense also appears to be from Gloria's company. Miscellaneous fees cover staff dinners, etc. Supply costs are likely overestimated in budget since most supplies have already

been purchased for the year (microphone) and there are few remaining for the year. The telecommunication expense shouldn't quite as large as it is, although if recent Facebook advertising is included under that heading it's more accurate. The income comes from estimates of what was released in September, and Campus Network (advertising) has been also fairly dependable recently and it looks as though they will continue to offer steady advertisements for the foreseeable future. In summary, the income is accurate, but the expenses are likely overestimated (salaries, supplies, telecommunications).

Question: Does the distribution manager have travel expenses? EIC says no, the only travel expenses are Gloria's.

Christine is able to contact Gloria and find out what the source of higher than expected salary expenses is.

Question: Do we get fees from UTMSU or straight from the university? Straight from the university. There was a question about the fees each student pays for the Medium. There was previously discussion to raise fees slightly. EIC pointed out that we likely don't need to raise the student levy after all, since the budget shows a minor deficit, the draft of the audited statements shows a minor profit from the previous year, and the paper isn't supposed to be making a profit. Capewell suggested adding the actuals from last year's budget to the current one.

The one planned issuance of a gas stipend (for the distribution manager) will be miscellaneous, but could be put under travel. The \$200 stipend that was approved at the last board meeting will only come into effect next year, and some was promised to the distribution manager for this year so there is a single disbursement. Though it appears that the hourly wage is very high simply because there are so few hours required (it works out to approximately

\$30/hour). The distribution manager travels between to the St. George campus and Square One every week.

Is the magazine included in the budget? EIC says it is not. The printing increase in March is due to the five issues being published during that month. We have a quote for the magazine: 70-page magazine, bound, high-quality is about \$8,000 for 5,000 copies or \$11,500 for 10,000 copies; EIC believes 5,000 is sufficient based on previous magazine-printing experiences (2 years ago).

The board reviewed the income statement from last year. It appears the salaries from last year are lower than what it projected on this year's budget so there must be some discrepancy (taxes may or may not account for this, but they seem high). The professional fees appear to have increased since last year (Gloria's expenses). The draft of the audited financial statements was printed for comparison. Last year's expenses also include some bad debts (\$3,000—likely from advertisers who did not pay their final expenses, as well as some unpaid printing bills). This is not included in the budget for this year. Campus Plus may account for some of the unpaid debts. The advertisers who have not paid so far this year will be contacted once Gloria makes a list of open invoices. EIC says most advertisers are regulars (university departments, UTMSU).

Increasing the levy was discussed; EIC points out that we likely cannot pass a referendum on this and this is likely not necessary considering the budget. However, the levy may be raised to account for inflation. Long points out that students are unlikely to approve raising the levy, even though the costs are increasing. EIC suggests campaigning through video (similar to the Varsity). Someone (what's his name? I don't know) suggested advertising the levy as an increase of \$0.16 rather than 2%, as this is more likely to be approved. Christine points out that the small indefinite repeating

increase is a good strategic move as it sets the stage for future changes, and is justified by recent changes having been made.

EIC says the final audit will have to be available before December.

Question: Improve circulation? EIC points out that branding has been improved with the introduction of new stand signs and digital signage.

EIC says online hits have increased by 20% since last year for the same time period so far.

Ryrak asked whether other student groups' levies go up automatically to account for inflation. Should be investigated.

Board generally approves running a referendum in the spring.

Question: Why does the Medium need to increase the levy if it has smaller circulation yet already has one of the larger student levies?

There should be a comparison of levy, circulation, & enrolment at other university papers. Our levy is one of the larger ones (judging by the figures cited in the Varsity's video for their levy increase last year) but we may have a smaller enrolment.

Levy question deferred at 2:30 by EIC; no referendum to be run until the budget is clarified and the final audited statements are available.

4. Approval of past minutes

EIC moved to approve the minutes from the October 28, 2013 meeting. Seconded by Long. All in favour.

5. Other business (staff update, magazine prices, AGM date)

EIC has spoken with the webmaster though he has decided not to terminate the position. A warning has been delivered which states that his performance must improve to avoid termination. EIC says he will recommend a different webmaster to the next EIC.

The board moves in camera at 2:35 p.m.

The board moves out of camera at 2:45 p.m.

AGM date: Set for Monday, January 28 at 5 p.m.

Belford asked whether there has been an increased effort to post on Facebook. No more posts are being made than before, but advertising model has been switched to focus on having posts appear more often in newsfeeds than on directing viewers to the Medium's Facebook page itself. Belford believes this is a good model for increasing readership online. EIC notes that a new model in the distant future could involve actually new articles written throughout the week to remain more relevant, since the current model is just delaying the posting of articles all published on one day.

Following a comment by Hassan-Agha about the success of an opinion piece involving Israel and Palestine last year, EIC says that indeed, a model of examining the articles that get the highest readership and tailoring to them would be ideal. For example, there has been interest in profile pieces in the sports section than in articles covering games.

6. Next meeting

Will be set once the final draft of the audit is available.

6. Adjournment

EIC moved to adjourn at 2:55 p.m. Seconded by Long. All in favour.