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Board of Directors *Meeting Minutes*

May 1, 2020

Attendees: Veronica, Brad, Elaine, Heather, Linden, and Christi

This regular meeting was called by verbal agreement during the prior meeting, or by intermediate written reasonable notification made in good faith and agreed to by a majority of board members through email or phone, and was held through videoconferencing.

Agenda

- Next regular meeting
- Convention
- Leadership
- Fundraising
 - Convention sponsorship, etc.
 - Fundraisers
 - Grants
- Website and social media
 - Ask an expert
 - Email through our domain
- Advocacy/outreach
 - HUD letter to FTC
 - Reaching out across the pond
 - Interviews
 - AKC "Service Dog Pass"
 - Amtrak SARAs
 - PAWS Act(s)
 - ACAA NPRM
- Revision of emergency card
- Treasury report

• **Next regular meeting**

Friday, July 10th at noon PT/3:00 ET.

• **Convention**

We will cancel the 2020 convention. Any registrant who requests it will be able to get a full registration refund.

The list is available for interaction and folks are encouraged to organize type- or video-chats any time through the list.

The 2021 convention will be at the Hilton Garden Inn in Rock Hill, May 14–17. Registration and sponsorship will close April 9. The early registration discount for 2021 will expire at the end of 2020 and the scholarship deadline will remain January 1.

We have the Manchester room booked, but will try to get the larger Palmetto AB room. We had booked the smaller room for 2021 when we expected lower attendance due to the 2020 convention being rescheduled for September.

Scholarships: The 2020 convention is cancelled and our JetBlue certificates are not valid into 2021 and not transferrable, so scholarship recipients who received these certificates will be free to use these for whatever purpose they'd like.

Scholarship recipients who have already been reimbursed for convention-related expenses will be expected to return the money, according to tailored repayment plans designed not to cause hardship.

Our community members' financial situations may change significantly from year to year, so 2020 scholarship offers will not roll over.

Sponsorships: 2020 sponsors will roll over to 2021.

- **Leadership**

We discussed committee membership.

- **Fundraising**

- **Convention sponsorship, etc.** (no update)

Social media thanks are forthcoming. Sponsorships for 2020 are now open (again) through August 7, including for Apollo.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/resources/convention/2020-convention>

We still have only three Apollo sponsors.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/resources/convention/2020-convention/sponsor-apollo>

We successfully auctioned two JetBlue certificates on eBay and if we get more in the future, we will try to individually assess whether this makes more sense than working within the certificate restrictions for convention scholarships (e.g., travel blackout dates).

- **Fundraisers**

We do not have any specific fundraisers going on now. We are trying to keep in mind how the pandemic economy might impact our finances and ability to carry out our programs like we want to.

For “Giving Tuesday Now” on May 5th, we plan to issue the following message:

“If you can, donate to keep good nonprofits afloat.

“We are an all-volunteer group & don't have as great a need right now. Please focus on groups that are legit and helping with a pandemic response, plus those with programs folks still need otherwise.”

- **Grants** (no update)

We received a small grant for general operating expenses from the Fund for Southern Communities. We are very appreciative and have said so on social media.

• **Website and social media**

- **Ask an expert** (no update)

We are checked in with an expert and plan to initiate the Q&A soon.

- **Email through our domain**

In April, Gmail's settings changed in a way that created a minor barrier to sending from a psych.dog email address through Gmail. We discussed how to fix this issue in Gmail settings.

• **Advocacy/outreach**

- **HUD letter to FTC** (no update)

In early November, the head of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) asked the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to investigate websites that provide assistance animal documentation.

https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/Main/documents/11_06_2019_Letter.pdf

We asked our DOT contacts to connect with HUD folks about this so that we might be involved. HUD has not received a response from FTC. Sometimes an FTC investigation will be walled off from other agencies, so it's difficult to assess what is happening.

Our plan is to contact FTC directly so their officials have the opportunity to hear our input, especially as in "Should we hate online service dog certification?".

- **Reaching out across the pond** (no update)

We plan to contact owner-trainer advocates in the UK to create a broader coalition.

- **Interviews**

On April 7, an internet radio show interviewed Veronica and Brad about how PSDP helps people lead healthier lives. We are waiting for the show to be published.

<https://mindbodyradio.com>

- **AKC "Service Dog Pass"** (no update)

We now have a page explaining how people can resist AKC's wrongheaded idea of a Service Dog Pass". Our Facebook post with the associated graphic was one of PSDP's most successful posts.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/akcpass>

Brad is revising an article about this.

- **Amtrak SARAs**

Veronica is advocating for the creation of service animal relief areas (SARAs) at Amtrak train stops. Just like at airports, these would make long journeys much easier on service dog teams. Comments to DOT are needed by June 14 (the deadline was extended in April); we have a nice walkthrough about this on our site.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/board-of-directors/board-activities/advocacy/rail-relief-areas>

- **PAWS Act(s)** (no update)

We are looking into commenting on the PAWS Act and PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act, which involve funding for service dogs for veterans.

- **ACAA NPRM**

Our flying law NPRM comment is one of our most monumental creations so far. We solicited community support before the April 6th deadline, as well as shared our comment directly with our DOT contacts to ensure they hear us.

We also advised our contacts about the “U.S. Support Animals” registry site that has misrepresented our position and wrongly insinuated our support of them. DOT denied their request to extend the comment period for the NPRM.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/board-of-directors/board-activities/advocacy>

• **Revision of emergency card** (no update)

We are revising our emergency card to be additionally available as a fillable pdf. A draft is in progress based on board input and is being revised.

We are also drafting a first-responder refrigerator notice, and will be doing so based on the 2016 convention's first responder discussion.

• **Treasury report**

The treasury report includes changes to and progress in the categories of: income, expenses, current funds, the budget, earmarked funds, and fundraising.

Upcoming expenses include the increase in 2021 convention room cost when we book the larger room. This will be more than offset by the 2020 convention room cancellation.

