

Wallcovering Installers Association
September 6, 2017 | Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Vincent LaRusso, President, at 1:18 PM CT.

Roll call was taken by Bob Banker, Secretary.

Present:

Vincent LaRusso, C.P., President
Mike DiGilio, C.P., Vice President
Heidi Wright-Mead, C.P., Treasurer
Bob Banker, Secretary
Cyndi Green, C.P., Immediate Past President
Susan Macuna, C.P., Central Region Director
Pam McCartney, South Region Director
Michael King, South Region Alternate Director
Michelle Corl, Mid-Atlantic Region Director
Shelly Wilkins, C.P., Mid-Atlantic Region Alternate Director
Jack Egan, Northeast Region Director
Dave Adams, Northeast Region Alternate Director
Dennis George, C.P., West Region Director
Greg Laux, Associate Chair

Absent:

Doug Wenzel, Central Region Alternate Director
Joel Ellis, West Region Alternate Director

Secretary's Report:

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the Board of Directors huddle teleconference on July 25, 2017. The motion was seconded and approved.

Treasurer's Report:

Ms. Wright-Mead, C.P., presented the financials. She noted that as of July 31, 2017, we have 508 members, and by July 31, 2016, we had 494, so we've increased our membership by 14 persons this year.

The International Workshop hosted in the UK and the Central Region Workshop income is listed on the financials under the education section. The International Workshop netted \$4,622 and the Central Region Workshop \$545.

Ms. Wright-Mead, C.P., shared that our income is slightly up compared to September 2016. This is in part due to the fact that we have been collecting dues earlier this year compared to

last year. Additionally, our expenses are nearly even with last years, and we have spent less on our website this year. We are still waiting for some expenses from the 2017 Convention to hit.

The 2017 Convention budget was discussed. It was noted that we will likely make money from the Convention this year, or at least break even. Our profit is unsure at this time until we get our final expenses accounted for.

During this discussion it was suggested that we start advertising the 2018 Convention in the Paint and Decorating Retailer Magazine. The board agreed that we need to increase marketing efforts for next year's convention. It was also shared that the International Tech Tour Workshop may have affected our numbers this year.

Member Services Committee Report:

A question was raised about the Regional Director Retirement Survey. It was noted that each Regional Director went through and called those on their list, but some members in their region never got back to them. It was requested that an updated copy of the survey results be distributed to the board.

ACTION ITEM: Staff will send the latest edition of the Regional Director Retirement Survey results to the Board of Directors.

Communications Committee Report:

It was noted that the process of developing the Installer has been going very smooth. The staff is working in tandem with Ms. Proctor, C.P., and Ms. Curtis, C.P., and is continually seeking ways to make the process of retrieving and editing articles easy and efficient.

WIAF Committee Report:

The board discussed opportunities to support the WIAFund during the Convention. It was suggested to include donation envelopes in each registration packet. It was also discussed to include a "donate" button on registration forms. It was noted that we are trying to go for a more low key approach and encourage members to donate at workshops.

A motion was made to include donation envelopes for the WIAFund in the registration packets for attendees as well as highlight the fund in our meeting scripts. The motion was seconded and approved.

ACTION ITEM: Staff will include donation envelopes for the WIAFund in the Convention registration packets, and add a note about the fund in meeting scripts.

Nomination/Election Committee Report:

Nothing additional was added to the report.

2017 Convention Committee Report:

Ms. McCartney recommended that we reach out to Associate Members earlier in the year about attending the Vendor Showcase. It was suggested to begin advertising sooner and to have the schedule for the Pre-Convention and Convention Education complete earlier as well. It was requested that we develop a save-the-date for the 2018 Convention and post it to our website and social media channels as early as possible.

ACTION ITEM: Staff will update the website and our social media pages with the 2018 Convention save-the-date.

It was noted that we don't need to have the schedule finalized before reaching out to Associate Members. Mr. Laux shared that several Associate Members were aware of the Convention date, so a lower participation rate was not necessarily due to lack of awareness. Reasons for a lower representation from Associate Members were discussed. It was noted that cost is a significant factor, and that Associate Members need to include the Convention in their budgets early on. It was requested that we send information about the date, location and cost to current and prospective Associate Members by October. It was also discussed whether we should offer an early-bird registration rate for Associate Members as an incentive to register early. Additionally, it was noted that we have lower guest numbers overall this year. If Associate Members recognize an overall decrease in participation from installers they may be less inclined to send someone in-person to represent them. It was discussed whether we should consider offering something beyond the in-person Vendor Showcase to engage Associate Members.

It was requested that each Regional Director reach out to Associate Members and Installer Members in their region to see why they didn't attend this year, whether due to price, location, date conflict, etc.

The status of the letter to ASID was discussed. It was noted that this has not been sent yet, but should be developed because it may help us to reach more prospects.

It was noted that several people who are not attending the 2017 Convention are waiting to attend the 2018 Convention in Denver, Colorado. It was also mentioned that we need to discuss the cost of attending the convention and if this should be reevaluated for next year. It was determined that we will not share the location of the 2019 Convention site so that we don't lose people from participating in 2018.

Ideas to increase marketing for the Convention were to market beyond our membership, share teaser videos and have stronger publicity on the website and on Youtube. It was noted that we should appoint a lead for marketing the Convention as well as a team of leaders that can spearhead marketing efforts. A motion was made to appoint the President and a three person committee to guide the marketing strategy for the 2018 Convention. The motion was voted down and tabled for discussion at the next Board of Directors Huddle.

ACTION ITEM: The board will discuss selecting a marketing team to develop a marketing strategy for the 2018 Convention at their next Huddle Meeting.

Craftsmanship Awards Committee:

Nothing was discussed beyond the report.

Awards Committee Report:

The Awards Committee Chair Anthony Russo, C.P., would love to have at least 25 nominees for the 2018 National Awards. It's very important for Regional Directors and Board Members to nominate or suggest a nomination because they are more aware of who is working above and beyond the call of duty.

General discussion took place about whether a current Board of Directors member should have the ability to be nominated for an award. It was noted that board members who are deserving of the award for doing more than what their title asks should be considered for nomination. It was discussed to determine which awards board members should be eligible for, and which awards should only be considered for general membership.

ACTION ITEM: The Board of Directors will allow time to discuss candidates in each region at their next Huddle Meeting, and continually throughout the year at Board Meetings.

The board took a moment to discuss potential candidates for a National Award. These included:

- Chris Johnson
- Gary Stanley
- Mick Wells
- Gerri Beauvais
- Claudia Castillo, C.P.
- Jennifer Curtis, C.P.

It was suggested that we avoid using the term national anymore, as we are an international association.

National Associate Member Committee Report:

The Wallcovering Association Tech Trac was discussed. It was shared that this is a very beneficial series and that the WA is interested in morphing it into something else. It was proposed to partner with the WA for a Tech Trac in Denver, CO, during the same week of the 2018 Convention. This could be an incredible opportunity for us to partner and collaborate with the WA.

The effectiveness of the Vendor Showcase was discussed. It was mentioned that Associate Members may find offering a "commercial" during the educational sessions as a greater incentive to participate, rather than attending in-person for the showcase. In general it was agreed that we should offer alternative ways to participate with the Convention other than the Vendor Showcase. It was suggested that we speak to Associate Members at the Convention to gauge their interest on alternative ways to sponsor the Convention. We could offer personalized sponsorship/marketing opportunities for each vendor depending on what they want.

It was suggested to connect with associates such as WallpaperDirect to see what wallcovering is most popular and the current trends. This information would help our installers and build an awareness of new papers and trends from the manufacturer.

The board also explored the idea of offering live-streamed sessions that associate members can participate on, for associates who cannot attend in-person. General discussion took place about our capabilities of offering this. Ms. Lowe noted that we do have a platform for live streaming that would work well with this initiative. It was requested that we do a trial of a webinar at the next Huddle Meeting.

The board revisited the topic of partnering with the WA for the 2018 Convention. We would not have a completely joint convention, but would rather have a day that overlapped with the WA. The WIA Convention sessions would take place later in the week, as they traditionally do. It was mentioned that we may save money by moving forward with this option, as we wouldn't have the expense of sending people to the Tec Trac.

Education Committee Report:

It was noted that we have 26 in our Pre-Convention class and we expect it will be a good review for everyone. The instructors are great and well-versed on their topics, so it should be a wonderful refresher. It was suggested that we include biographies of the pre-convention instructors in our marketing for the 2018 Convention. It was noted that people can still register for the class, and it was asked that the staff send another blast e-mail to members who have not registered yet.

Website Committee Report:

Offering a "free trial" to join the private WIA Facebook group to non-members was discussed. The hope is that non-members would see the networking benefits of joining the WIA during the trial period, and it would encourage them to join the organization. It was shared that we originally offered this, but the logistics were an issue. It was discussed to have the staff facilitate the organization of offering the trial to each non-member that would like to participate. The non-member would be sent a message on Facebook explaining the trial period and request that they accept our social media guidelines. This measure would be put in place so that they understand what is allowable on the group page. The non-member would then receive a second message when their term is about to expire that would invite them to join the WIA. The staff would manage the organization of this process and the adding and removal of non-members from the Facebook group.

ACTION ITEM: The staff will work with the Website Committee in developing messages and guidelines for non-members to have a trial period to join the private Facebook group.

It was suggested that board members and leaders post more frequently about their projects on the private Facebook group page, and engage more on this page to have a stronger presence.

A few board members shared that they posted about the Convention on various professional installer and painting Facebook pages to market it. Board members were encouraged to share

such information on other pages, but keep pertinent, member-benefit matters on the private page. It was suggested to treat the NGPP Facebook page in the same manner; to share information and recruit non-members to join, but share about projects and education on the private page. The NGPP page should be used as a tool for us to connect with installers and encourage them to join the WIA.

Marketing Committee Report:

Mr. Laux shared information about hiring a marketing professional to help with our efforts in retaining new members and growing the organization. It was noted that our investment with Active Blogs has provided us with good content, and helped us with our SEO. However, we believe it would be best to invest in a third party marketing company to build our prospect list and recruit new members.

The company that we would work with would provide automated marketing and trickle-down e-mails. The marketing firm would develop the content, templates and strategies. One potential company that Mr. Laux is in discussions with is High Road Solutions. This company works with associations and is familiar with our concern with membership and marketing. If chosen, they will identify our needs and analyze our members so that they can personalize e-mails. For example, they can send a prospect an e-mail with three choices of educational trainings and ask that they click the one that is most interesting to them. After this e-mail they will receive another message with information on that specific topic, and the e-mails will trickle down from there. This will also show us what prospective installers are interested in and what information they want from us.

It was discussed how the company will develop the content, and if we have to provide the videos and information for the marketing. Mr. Laux will work out these logistics with the company to get an idea of who is contributing what.

It was noted that we have to view this opportunity as an investment in our future. For High Road Solutions, we would be charged \$12,500 in the first quarter for them to establish an initial strategy, templates, content, etc. After the first quarter we could stop using their services, or continue for a lower fee per month. If we ceased using their services we would have ownership of the templates and all the content they developed for us. Mr. Laux shared that he will share more details about the company's proposal at the next board meeting. The board expressed general support of investing in a marketing firm to take our marketing to the next level.

Region Reports:

It was shared that there was recently a situation where a non-member worked with one of our members on a job, and that the non-member shared that how the member did a low-par job. It was discussed that in this situation the Regional Director should reach out to the member to see if they would like additional training. This is a great opportunity to offer education and resources to the member to make them a better installer.

Old business:

General discussion about the nomination process took place. Information was shared about the overall nominations policy and communication.

New Business:

The board reviewed and discussed the RFP's for the 2019 Convention site. Cities discussed include Ann Arbor/Detroit, MI, Nashville, TN, and Orlando, FL. It was noted that we should spread the location of the convention site out each year. It was also shared that having the convention in a state like Michigan may encourage our Canadian members to join us. However, choosing a landmark city like Nashville, TN, might draw more people than a suburban city. Mr. Banker took a vote from each board member with which city they would like to choose as the 2019 Convention Site. The votes were:

Ann Arbor/Detroit, MI: 2
Nashville, TN: 7
Orlando, FL: 0

The board requested the right to review choices for hotels in Nashville, TN, at their next Huddle Meeting. The board requested that the staff and the 2019 Convention Task Force, which include Ms. Wright-Mead, C.P., and Ms. Wilkins, C.P., seek some additional hotel options in Nashville, TN, to present at the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM: The staff will work with the 2019 Convention Task Force to seek additional proposals from hotels in Nashville, TN.

Being no further business . . .

A motion was made and seconded at 4:25 PM CT to adjourn the Board of Directors meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Lowe
Association Executive