

Wallcovering Installers Association
November 28, 2017 | Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Michael DiGilio, C.P., President, at 7:40 PM ET.

Roll call was taken by Gary Lucas, C.P., Secretary.

Present:

Michael DiGilio, C.P., President
Steven Kaye, C.P., Vice President
Heidi Wright-Mead, C.P., Treasurer
Gary Lucas, C.P., Secretary
Vincent LaRusso, C.P., Immediate Past President
Susan Macuna, C.P., Central Region Director
Michael King, South Region Alternate Director
Shelly Wilkins, C.P., Mid-Atlantic Region Alternate 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
Pam McCartney, South Region Director
Michelle Corl, Mid-Atlantic Region Director
Jack Egan, Northeast Region Director

President's Report

Mr. DiGilio, C.P., shared that the Denver Chapter has hit the ground running for the 2018 Convention. The Convention Committee will work closely with the Education Committee to ensure we have a strong program. The Marketing Committee and Website Committee will also be tasked with helping to promote the convention to make it successful.

Mr. DiGilio, C.P., shared that the Wallcovering Installers Association is transitioning to a new management company. Due to this transition, we are going to wait till after the new year begins in 2018 to finalize the site of the 2019 Convention. It was noted that storage is being transferred to the new company, and Mr. DiGilio, C.P., shared that he is planning on reviewing our inventory in January 2018. Mr. Lucas, C.P., noted that he visited the WIA HQ two years ago and remembers that they had various old files and materials in storage. It was noted that we also have several VHS educational videos that information has essentially evaporated from after trying to convert them to DVD. It was shared that we would like to digitize all the Winning Walls entries in order to archive those photos. Mr. DiGilio, C.P., shared that the transition is going smoothly and efficiently, and will officially occur as of January 1, 2018. The new management

company will be My Organization Manager with Nancy Terry. Mr. DiGilio, C.P., expressed thanks to Association Executive Kay Lowe and the Advanced Management Concepts team.

Secretary's Report:

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the Board of Directors in-person meeting on September 6, 2017. The motion was seconded and approved.

Treasurer's Report:

Ms. Wright-Mead, C.P., presented the financials. She shared that we made about \$91 per attendee for the 2017 Convention at about 76 attendees. In previous years we've made closer to \$180 per attendee. Our net on the 2017 Convention was nearly \$9,500, and we anticipated a profit of closer to \$29,000 and expected closer to 140 attendees. We were already prepared for about a \$19,000 loss this year in our budget, but are only seeing about a \$14,000 loss at this time. We will have an additional cost of \$9,000 this year from My Organization Manager, since during the transition we had to double-up on fees from MOM and AMC. We are expecting to be at a loss of \$20,000 by year-end. Ms. Wright-Mead, C.P., shared that we have expected this loss and noted that we are not in a hole per-say. We are investing money toward important growth building efforts.

Member Services Committee Report:

Those on the call reviewed the results of the retirement survey included in the board packet. A question was asked about the apprenticeship relationship that is suggested in the survey summary. Ms. Lowe noted that is not related to a certain statistic, but rather inferred from the data as a whole and recognized as something of importance from those who inquire about learning the trade. It was shared that we should prepare retirees on how to recruit and train an apprentice. Mr. DiGilio, C.P., shared that the Chicago Chapter has discussed hiring one or two apprentices to work with all of the members of that chapter, which is about 15 paperhangers. This way, the apprentice(s) could keep busy everyday of every week with various installers in the Chicago area. It was discussed that while apprenticeship isn't the only avenue for new membership, it is an important aspect of growing our organization. It was suggested that a great way to grow the trade and gain new paperhangers is to engage with high schoolers. We could reach out to guidance counselors and work with students who are interested in taking up a trade after high school. It was noted that we would have to pair a training program for young people with membership, though, so that we could make sure that they join after getting started.

It was also discussed that we need to improve our marketing efforts and get our name out there to professional installers. A great avenue to do this is through local workshops. There are many people already in the trade who are full time paperhangers, but have never heard about the WIA. Mr. Adams noted that he is trying to encourage hosting more workshops and dialing back chapter meetings in the Northeast Region. He shared that the workshops are more jam packed with information and tend to be more interesting for non-members. Workshops also tend to be a stronger membership driver than chapter meetings and events. It was suggested that we create a sub-committee through our Education Committee for a mentorship program. It

was asked that the members of the board communicate their thoughts on this so that we can get a mentorship program started.

It was shared that we should also try to pull in more designers, painters and contractors as members.

It was noted that apprenticeship in some regions isn't the most practical option, as some installers travel more for jobs and the apprentice might not be able to do so. Ms. Wilkins, C.P., suggested offering a traveling educational workshop, especially about commercial installations. Several painters and contractors would be willing to pay for their employees to train on hanging commercial jobs.

The membership retirement rate statistics were referenced again. It was noted that according to this survey that 63% of our membership have plans to retire in the next 5-10 years.

Communications Committee Report:

Mr. DiGilio, C.P., shared that Nancy Proctor, C.P., will continue to co-chair the Communications Committee with Jennifer Curtis, C.P. Having Ms. Proctor, C.P, and Ms. Curtis, C.P., working together in this capacity helps with recruiting articles for the Installer and sharing the workload. It was noted that every Installer article has been archived. It was suggested that we review historical articles to see if we can use them for future Installer issues.

WIAF Committee Report:

Ms. Lowe reported that nearly \$300 was collected during the Awards Dinner at the 2017 Convention for the WIAFund. It was also asked if a check had been sent to WIA HQ from the Connecticut Chapter, and Ms. Lowe shared that the check has not been received to date. It was asked if we have received any requests from members who were affected by the hurricanes in Texas and Florida. Ms. Lowe shared that we have not received any requests for funds to date. It was noted that some members may not be aware of the ability to receive assistance.

Nomination/Election Committee Report:

Mr. DiGilio, C.P., shared that the next elections will be for Region Directors, and the election process will likely begin on February 1, 2018. Mr. DiGilio, C.P., shared that he would appreciate if the current Alternate Region Directors would consider moving up to the Region Director role, and also help in making recommendations for new Alternate Region Directors.

2018 Convention Committee Report:

Mr. DiGilio, C.P., shared that there is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow (November 29, 2017) to discuss the convention. The 2018 Convention will be hosted at a Holiday Inn Resort in Cherry Creek, CO, and have very reasonable room rates. Terri Trapp and Kim Wilson of the Denver Chapter are going to Co-Chair the 2018 Convention. Dave Cook, Greg Laux and a few other local members are also going to help with marketing. It was noted that they already have a plan for building the walls this year. It was discussed that we might organize one night downtown for an event as a group, similar to the group outing in Charlotte, NC. It was noted

that we still have not decided on hosting a three-day or two-day convention yet. It was shared that one of our greatest goals this year is to bring new people to the convention, so those on the call were encouraged to invite someone new to join them. Mr. George, C.P., noted that he heard some concerns for members in the West Region about the location of the hotel. Mr. DiGilio, C.P., shared that he has addressed those individual concerns, and that the hotel is very nice, in a good area and the hotel rooms are at a very reasonable rate. The concern was mainly that the hotel is located on a busy road, but this shouldn't cause any issues for us.

Mr. Laux shared that they are going to explore using more technology at this convention. It is very expensive to invite people to speak in-person, and hard to get them to commit if we do not pay them or cover their travel. The goal is to utilize a platform like Skype to have the speaker present remotely. It was discussed that this way we might be able to get some new speakers engaged, who typically cannot attend due to the time and monetary commitment.

It was discussed that the format for the vendor showcase will change this year. Mr. Laux shared that we are considering offering more "commercial" like options for associate members, rather than the traditional vendor reception. It was noted that we are checking with the hotel to make sure that they have the bandwidth technology wise for what we need. Once the agenda is formalized we will review it with the hotel to make sure everything can be accommodated. It was asked whether vendors who typically sell items, such as The Paint Store Online, will still be able to sell their products during the convention. It was noted that we still plan to incorporate an opportunity for vendors who sell items to participate, but are planning to offer additional ways to participate beyond selling product. It was shared that it is very expensive for associate members to join the convention between time and travel, so we are considering alternate options to keep them engaged.

Craftsmanship Awards Committee:

It was noted that we are beginning to send out messages to members encouraging them to submit their projects early. It was suggested that we share the testimony of past winners and highlight the value of the prize and publicity of your winning entry. It was mentioned that Region Directors and other leaders need to personally encourage members to submit an entry. Some paperhangers don't think their projects are special enough to submit, so we need to respond to those who post about their projects on Facebook and encourage them to send it in.

Awards Committee Report:

It was noted that we should avoid using the word "national" in our organization, since we are an international organization. It was suggested that instead we call the awards programs the Wallcovering Installers Association Awards.

It was discussed whether we should leave the names of potential nominees out of official reports. It was also requested that the board be able to review a listing of nominees from previous years, and it was asked that this be made available at the next huddle meeting. It was discussed how we can encourage voting between every member, instead of depending so much on nominations submitted by Regional Directors.

National Associate Member Committee Report:

Mr. Laux shared that we have seen associates move further into the background. With this in mind, we have made efforts to listen more to what associates need and are going to put together a survey from them in January. It was noted that we will use the survey results to make changes to associate member engagement at the convention, so we're hoping this will improve their experience in Denver. It was asked if we would still offer opportunities for vendors to sell product at the convention. Mr. Laux shared that we are still planning to offer something to those associates who sell product. It was noted that many of our vendors have high shipping expenses due to the weight of their products. It was suggested that we reach out to local reps from big companies to attend the convention, and also to invite reps from local showrooms. It was mentioned that some companies have a hard time justifying the cost of attending our convention.

Education Committee Report:

It was noted that we have asked Bob Banker to join the Education Committee.

The Certified Paperhanger accreditation was discussed. It was mentioned that we need to make this course more well-rounded and able to be followed by a novice installer. It was suggested that we develop a packaged educational course that we could eventually market. We would need to find someone willing to write the class, and have members of the Education Committee willing to lead the project. It was mentioned that it could take up to a year to develop this course, but that there is a market for certifications. It was discussed that we consider making an educational class that is portable, and that this should be on our radar.

It was discussed that some installers are set in their ways with certain techniques, so it was questioned how we would offer a myriad of methods. It was noted that there typically isn't only one way to install something, and that everyone has different techniques. The course would take a while to develop because of the many types of ways to install. It was mentioned that Mr. Adams and Ms. Wilkins, C.P., should offer their suggestions and perspective to the Education Committee.

It was discussed that we explore offering a packaged educational class over a period of several days, so that the classes aren't so hodge podge. We should pursue offering a more cohesive educational class that more novice installers could join. It was mentioned that Bob Kelly might be willing to help with writing the courses.

Website Committee Report:

It was mentioned that the reports we receive from Lucca aren't providing us much information. It was discussed that although we know that almost 2,600 people have visited key pages, such as the "become a member" page or "contact us" page, we don't have any data on who is visiting. We do not have anything in place on the site that requests for the visitor's information, and Lucca currently doesn't have a way of telling us this. We have previously discussed having a pop-up window that asks for the visitor's information, but it has not been revisited. It was requested that the website committee make a recommendation to the board about how to proceed with gathering visitor data. It was noted that once we receive it we need to make

regular touches to those prospects. It was mentioned that the new marketing firm will be able to assist with this. Our website is just one aspect of our broader marketing needs that require attention.

Marketing Committee Report:

Mr. Laux shared that we have a 5-year window in which we expect to lose about 40% of our membership. In 2014 we changed our website, but didn't have any marketing plan in place to support it. There are several installers out there who don't know what the WIA is. It was discussed that our efforts have to be focused on how we can spend our money so that we can build our prospect lists and put them into an automated program. The type of automation we need is beyond the scope of a management company. It was expressed that we need to invest in what we need to do to grow, as our retirement rate is rising year after year.

It was noted that we are not going to buy lists of prospects, so we need to go out and convince people through social avenues to join. By using pop-up windows, we can gather their information, and then feed them slowly through automated messages to become a member. It was noted that we can afford to invest in this at this time. The plan is that the new marketing company will teach Nancy Terry and her team to do the bulk of the work and learn how to use the automated package, and then the marketing company will serve as advisors moving forward.

A question was raised about when the contract for the blog will end. It was noted that we have a 90-day period from the date of notification to terminate. It was requested that we notify Active Blogs as soon as possible to end our contract.

The new marketing company, High Road Solutions, works with associations and understands that audiences change, and that automated marketing is a strong solution for our growth needs. It was shared that we need to drive revenue through dues, and that we need to find out where new prospect members are and how we can convert them to members. By moving forward with this company, we are getting a guide at our shoulders to take us to the next level.

The cost of the marketing service was discussed. It was shared that we have spent about \$12,000-\$15,000 with Active Blogs, and with this new company we are expecting more services at a lower cost.

A motion was made to discontinue using Active Blogs and to accept the proposal with High Road Solutions. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.

It was noted that we will hope to get things moving forward with High Road Solutions before March 1, 2018. It was requested that the staff contact Active Blogs immediately to notify the termination of our contract. It's been requested that we request terminating our contract in December, rather than March. Mr. Laux will e-mail everyone an update on the status of the agreement shortly.

Region Reports:

It was mentioned that Alternate Region Directors can submit a report, or an additional report, to the board packet in the future.

Ms. Macuna, C.P., had some additional remarks about the Central Region Report. She shared that Milwaukee has voted to shut down their chapter. She also shared that she is planning another Central Region Workshop, and has identified at least 28 paperhangers in Indianapolis, IN, to invite. There is also interest from Dayton, OH. Budgeted money for the workshop was discussed. Ms. Wright-Mead, C.P., shared that we do allot \$500 per region to spend on workshops and events. It was mentioned that Region Directors should not see cost as a prohibitor to host educational workshops.

Ms. Macuna, C.P., also shared that she is planning to send a questionnaire to all the chapter presidents in her region to ask for a year-end report. It was requested that Ms. Macuna, C.P., send the survey template to the other RD's to use for their local chapter presidents.

Mr. Adams shared that they are pushing hard to develop communications with chapter presidents. Some chapters are expressing complications in growing their membership and developing worthwhile meetings. Mr. Adams is interested in coordinating a meeting of all the chapter presidents in the Northeast Region to collaborate and discuss how to improve their chapters. Mr. Adams also shared that they are putting together another regional workshop beyond March Madness to drive up membership. The hope in hosting additional workshops is to take the pressure off of having jam packed chapter meetings and the burden of planning these.

Ms. Wright-Mead, C.P., shared again that there is budget money allotted to supporting Regional Directors, but that most don't take advantage of it. This money is budgeted to invest in growth of the WIA across all regions.

It was suggested that each region plan a workshop, and also that workshop fees should increase. It was also shared that we had some of our most successful workshops this year but a low attendance at the 2017 Convention. It was discussed that some of the attendance was down due to some members choosing to attend the International Workshop in England versus the Convention in Texas. However, this isn't true for all members, as several attended both events this year. It was discussed that our marketing efforts were poor, and that they have to be improved moving forward.

New Business:

It was asked at what time we will notify the membership about the change in management. It is planned to make a formal notification at the end of the year. There will be no more board meetings for the remainder of 2017, but the meetings for 2018 will be scheduled by the end of the year.

Being no further business . . .

A motion was made and seconded at 10:00 PM ET to adjourn the Board of Directors meeting. The motion passed unanimously.