Wild Animal Initiative
Board Meeting Minutes

17 Nov 2022

In Attendance (sufficient for a quorum):
  ● Cameron Meyer Shorb (Executive Director)
  ● Christine Perry (Board President)
  ● Ignacio Moore
  ● Jason Orlando (WAI Operations Director)
  ● Josh You (Secretary)
  ● Nikolai Vetr

ORDERS OF BUSINESS
  ● Finances
    ○ Wild Animal Initiative (WAI) has $4.9 million in net assets. $4m is invested.
      ■ Excluding funds restricted for grantmaking, WAI has 12 months of
        operating expenses on hand.
    ○ WAI has raised $1.3m in 2022 to date, nearly all of which is unrestricted. This is
down year-on-year due to Open Philanthropy’s large grant last year, but
unrestricted revenue is up 19% year-on-year.
    ○ Net income this year is roughly -$145k. Most donations happen towards the end
of the year, and WAI will do a large fundraising push this year.
  ● Development Director
    ○ WAI will begin hiring for a Development Director soon. Executive Director
      Cameron Meyer Shorb proposes updating WAI’s salary algorithm to allow
      offering up to $100,000 in salary for this position. Since a high-quality
      Development Director can substantially increase revenue, this salary increase
      could easily pay for itself.
      ■ Board voted to approve (3 yes, Nikolai abstained)
    ○ Board also voted on whether to approve a (contingent) recruiter fee to help hire
      for this role, of up to $60,000.
      ■ Board voted to approve (3 yes, Nikolai abstained)
  ● Board Recruiting
    ○ Nikolai is now taking the lead on interviewing for a new board Treasurer, for
      which there are three interested candidates.
  ● Organizational updates
    ○ Grantmaking
      ■ WAI launched its third call for proposals, which will offer fewer and larger
        grants (up to $200k) than previous rounds on a variety of possible topics.
- WAI launched the first round of its fellowship program, which will provide a stipend and research expenses for early-career scientists focusing on wild animal welfare research. The fellowship will help develop the field by supporting researchers, rather than just projects.
- WAI hired Kelly Forsythe as a grants coordinator.
  - Researcher Services
  - Services team is in a planning phase to evaluate strategy, including for how many conferences WAI will attend.
    - Conferences have been good for making connections but cost money.
  - Strategy and research
    - NYU has launched a new wild animal welfare program. WAI Strategy Director Mal Graham is collaborating with them on designing an in-person workshop to set their research agenda.
    - Field naming - WAI ran a survey on different names for the scientific field of studying wild-animal welfare. Leaning towards welfare biology.
  - Operations
    - WAI held its first staff retreat since January 2020.
      - The retreat was very successful — staff had fun, and the retreat helped them bond and build rapport.
  - Communications
    - WAI has unveiled its new logo - an amiable toad!
    - WAI has hired Jacie Woznicki as a visual comms specialist.
    - WAI presented at the Animal and Vegan Advocacy (AVA) summit, and co-hosted speaker sessions with Animal Ethics and Rethink Priorities.
  - Development
    - WAI has a funding gap of up to $750k for this giving season, which will enable maximum hiring and program growth.

**FUTURE ACTION STEPS**
- Nikolai will interview treasurer candidates, and other board members will review their answers and decide on a new treasurer.
- Board will reconvene for board retreat on January 16, 2023.