

# RICHMOND SYMPHONY

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## Nominating & Governance

### Meeting Notes

**Location:** Via Zoom

**Date & Time:** 11/01/2021 @ 4PM

**Attendees:** Cheryl Goddard, Rebecca Horner, Lacey Huszcza, Brennen Keene, Chris Lindbloom, Katherine Whitney, Mark Wickersham, Elisabeth Wollan (Chair)

**Other Attendees:** Frances Sterling, Zoe Thomas

**Regrets:** Elizabeth Cabell Jennings, George Mahoney

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## Agenda Items:

### I. Board Engagement

- Discussion:
  - Reflection on current meeting frequency and departure from previous committee and Board meeting frequency
  - Time demands on the board have been high, contributing to some board exhaustion.
  - It has been uncomfortable to not meet as regularly, but the actual meetings themselves have felt more productive and enjoyable. (Mark Wickersham)
  - **Action:** Provide a list of board member responsibilities to Board members.
  - Katherine Whitney suggested having individual conversations with Board members to get a better idea of what members beyond the committee are feeling about current board engagement.
  - One indicator that Board engagement needs to be improved was the lack of response regarding the Strategic Planning sessions. Less than 50% of Board members participated, and of those that didn't participate, many did not respond in any way to acknowledge they were not available.

- o COVID and Virtual meetings were discussed as potential contributing factors to lessened engagement, but there was overall appreciation of current Board and committee structure. We should continue to have virtual options.
- o Betsy will speak at the next board meeting to remind Board members to respond to emails, whether or not they can participate in a given event.
- Discussion of Annual Fund & Board Giving:
  - o Board giving tends to come in at the end of the year. It would be desirable from a cash flow perspective to have annual fund donations come in during the performance season. Therefore, we will encourage donations to be made in the second and third quarter of the fiscal year.
  - o Shifting the Board habit may take a period of adjustment, but most Board members should be willing to make this shift.

## **II. Negotiating Committee, Timing and Plan**

- Small committee (3 or 4 people) who can commit to attending most or all negotiation sessions.
- Negotiations to start mid - late February.
- Kurt Larkin from Hunton will serve as legal counsel and will speak at February 9th Board meeting
- Lacey suggested several names, including
  - o Elizabeth Cabell Jennings
  - o Patrick Murtaugh
  - o John Walker
  - o Sandra Chase
- o The Nominations and Governance Committee noted that historically, the treasurer has served on our negotiations committee, and recommended that it would be good to include one or two people who have previously done this work for the Symphony.

## **III. Rebuilding our Board Recruitment Plan**

- **Board Recruitment:**
  - o All the people in the current nomination pool are very similar demographically. While not ignoring those we have already cultivated, we should work to develop a pool that meets our

- need for diversity in terms of race and ethnicity as well as experience and point of view. .
- o We have recently lost three Black/African-American board members. “We did not do a good enough job of engaging them and making them feel comfortable.” (Betsy Wollan)
  - o “The way we recruited them was inauthentic and not well thought out.” (Rebecca Horner)
  - o The committee expressed support for additional diversification.
  - o There should be common agreement on what engagement looks like prior to continuing our recruitment process.
  - o **Action:** Review and, if necessary, revise our official Board Responsibilities statement. This will be sent via email and comment before next meeting of this committee
  - o **Action:** One-on-one surveys of board members asking what they think board service should look like to see if there is disconnect in what we expect of board members/potential board members
  - o **Action:** Lacey to send out Board Member Matrix

#### IV. COVID Protocols update

- Basic protocols remain in place.
- Internally, we are considering January for reopening the donor lounge and/or allowing concessions into the concert hall
- Numbers of COVID cases in RVA and VA are going down. We will continue to monitor statewide indicators before relaxing protection levels at the symphony.