

# ICELANDIC AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA (IAAMN)

## Minutes from IAAMN Board Meeting held on August 16, 2012, 7:30 p.m. at the Danish American Center in Minneapolis

PRESENT: Örn Böðvarsson, Chris Byron, Harvey Thorleifson, Diane Greenwood, Claire Eckley, Dr. Keith Stinson (guest), Claire Eckley, Honorary Consul General Dr. and Mrs. Örn Arnar, Steingrímur (Stony) Steinólfsson (via telephone).

1. **Claire called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.** She asked for approval of the minutes of the last Board meeting, held on May 17, 2012.

**MSP Harvey/Stony to approve the May 17, 2012 Board meeting minutes as read. Unanimous.**

2. **Claire asked if there were any requested modifications to this evening's agenda.** Örn B., in response to communications received from Harvey, asked that we add a proposed purpose statement and a proposed conflict of interest policy document to the agenda (these documents were sent to the Board for review approximately 24 hours before its meeting). There were no objections to the inclusion of these two documents for review at the meeting.

3. **Treasurer's Report since the last Board meeting:** Claire reported on behalf of Treasurer Doug Rutford that we have \$804.85 left in our account. We've incurred expenses for the Independence Day picnic, insurance expenses, and other expenses. For income since the last Board meeting, we received money from the Hekla Club from picnic reservations + reimbursement for a few other picnic-related expenses.

Discussion: Dr. Arnar asked whether our membership in INL is a financial obligation. Chris responded that the only obligation is our dues to the INL, which are mandatory. Claire pointed out that we get a lot of benefits from a relatively modest dues obligation, e.g. free access to the website.

At this point in the discussion, Claire asked for approval of the Treasurer's report.

**MSP Stony/Örn B. to approve Treasurer's report. Unanimous.**

Following approval of the Treasurer's report, the question was brought up as to whether we need someone in the governing structure of the association to provide signatory authority on financial paperwork for the association in the event that the Treasurer is unable to sign. This was brought up in light of the fact that Doug has upcoming surgery and will need to be away from IAAMN business for a while. Several alternative arrangements were discussed, until the Board reached a consensus. At that point, Claire asked for a motion.

**MSP Örn B./Harvey to assign temporary signatory authority on financial documents to the IAAMN President if the Treasurer is unable to sign. Unanimous**

4. **Sunshine:**

Claire gave the Board a number of updates for various members of the association:

- (a) Glenna (Stony's wife) is doing very well after hip surgery;
- (b) Petrina Cordes is doing very well;
- (c) Pat Allred is doing much better; She had the Snorri West group over for dinner and was described as "amazing" at that event.

#### **5. Planning for Leifur Eiríksson dinner:**

Stony informed the Board that When Doug informed the Board that he would be unable to work on the dinner, hence facilitate making Infinite Campus available, Stony contacted the Mindekirken Church to check on its availability and learned that October 13th is booked solid there. He did make a reservation at the Mindekirken for October 6. The Knights of Columbus facility is available on Saturday, October 6, though. He proposed to the Board that October 6 be the date for the dinner because that date could then be the "kickoff" for Leifur Eiríksson week. Maddy noted that October 6 is when the King and Queen of Sweden are having a big reception at the Hilton Hotel downtown, hence she and Dr. Arnar would be unable to attend. In light of the 13<sup>th</sup> being a very busy time window, the Board decided that the dinner will be on October 6 at the Knights of Columbus in Bloomington. The Board directed Stony to follow up and solidify arrangements with Knights of Columbus. Stony will contact Mindekirken to place the date of the dinner on the calendar of events and their publicity, as well as Knights of Columbus for an October 6 reservation.

Another planning item discussed was the choice of a speaker for the dinner. Dr. Stinson, who graciously made a special trip from Buffalo to attend the Board meeting as a guest, recommended Dr. Robert Johnson, a retired Honeywell geophysicist, who has a Ph.D. in earth sciences and now is an adjunct professor in earth sciences at University of Minnesota-Minneapolis. Keith met him at a mutual friend's house and subsequently became familiar with his recently published book, co-authored with his daughter, titled "The last kings of Norse America." Keith said the book is a "remarkably entertaining story." Keith reported also that he'd heard Dr. Johnson in Gimli, that he was very good in that venue, and that generally he is very keen to speak to Icelandic gatherings. Harvey, who is a professor in the earth sciences group at University of Minnesota, said that Dr. Johnson is a smart gentleman who would be speaking on a fascinating topic, the Norse settlement of Newfoundland.

At this point in the discussion, Claire asked for a motion to approve the issuance of an invitation to Dr. Johnson.

**MSP Örn B./Maddy to invite Dr. Johnson to be the LE dinner speaker. Unanimous.**

**6. Planning for 2012 Jólábarnaball:** Diane had asked for the choice of date to be placed on the agenda and Claire then asked Diane to please update the Board on the Hekla Club's work on planning.

Diane briefed the Board that she and Maddy recently went to the American Swedish Institute (ASI) and had lunch there with an official. The official told them they were really interested in bringing in all Nordic groups to use their facilities and they would welcome an Icelandic presence there, especially during the Christmas holidays. Diane reminded the Board that last year, there were 170 people at our event and it was crowded. We really need more space, which the ASI can provide. Furthermore, ASI will allow us to bring our own food and there is a kitchen adjacent to the hall. ASI will allow us to access the kitchen to plate our food and we can bring our own coffee grounds (we can also purchase pumps of coffee from their cafe). ASI is also willing to cut the rental price for us from \$2,000 to \$1,000. Note that last year the Knights of Columbus charged us \$450 (note: on August 18, Maddy e-mailed Claire to report that this figure is incorrect and the correct figure is \$393.10, with each club sharing that expense equally).

The Board then discussed alternative pricing arrangements. Diane suggested an admission price of \$5 per adult, with all children being admitted for free. Several Board members suggested that we could go as high as \$10, others suggested \$7. There was a consensus that further investigation, which could be done by Diane and Maddy, would be sensible. At this point in the discussion, Claire asked for a motion to approve the arrangements for the event.

**MSP Chris/Harvey to have the Jólábarnaball at the Swedish Institute on December 9, 2012, at Noon with an admission price to be determined by Diane and Maddy. Unanimous.**

#### **7. Planning for the Icelandic Christmas Service:**

Claire reported that Reverend Dan Sæimundson is working on that and that there is a new pastor at Luther Seminary. More information will be provided to the Board later.

## **7. Planning for the assembly of an Icelandic choir:**

Claire reported that she and a few other Board members are in talks with Dr. Steven Self, Professor of Music at Bethel University and who also has an interest in Icelandic music. The hope is that Dr. Self will be willing to direct and accompany the choir. We are also trying to figure out times for choir practice, especially since the choir needs to practice for Bishop Guttormsson's funeral, whenever that might be; not immediate. We're hoping this is a choir that is a mixed Icelandic/Western Icelandic choir, which will be available for all occasions.

## **8. Planning for conversion of IAAMN to 501(c)3 tax-exempt status**

- (i) This discussion began with Harvey reviewing the proposed "Purpose" statement, which was sent to the Board the evening before (Board members, please see your e-mail from August 15), which is required for 501(c)3 status, and which will be incorporated into the Bylaws of the Association. The Board very briefly discussed the text and it was then decided to take a vote on the statement as presented in the August 15 e-mail to the Board

**MSP Stony/Harvey to approve the "Purpose" statement as presented in the August 15 e-mail. Unanimous**

- (ii) The next portion of the discussion pertained to a proposed "Conflict of Interest" policy. Harvey explained that if a member of the Board has a financial interest in IAAMN activities, this policy deals with that. The Board was sent a proposed policy via e-mail on August 15. It was understood at the meeting that the text of the policy, which Harvey graciously drafted, is a boilerplate document lifted from the IRS website. There is nothing unique about the text of this document for our Association. At that point in the discussion, Claire asked for Board approval of the propose policy

**MSP Stony/Örn B. to approve the Conflict of Interest policy as presented in the August 15 e-mail. Unanimous**

- (iii) Following Board approval of the Conflict of Interest policy, Chris pointed out that usually with 501(c)3 status, the organization needs a constitution/bylaws. We do have bylaws, which have been carried forward and the only thing that's changed with the bylaws is the dissolution policy, which has been added.

It was then suggested that the next step in this process be completion of the writing of the draft 501(c)3 application for submission to the Board for review and approval, followed by submission to the IRS for review. Claire asked for a motion to approve the remainder of the process.

**MSP Chris/Örn B. to complete writing of the 501(c)3 application, submit to Board for review, then submit to IRS. Unanimous**

- (iv) The final piece of this discussion was that Harvey pointed out that we need to conduct a formal vote on the dissolution clause, which the Board approved unanimously via electronic mail, the polls having closed on July 31. To complete that process, Claire asked for a vote.

**MSP Harvey/Örn B. that the dissolution clause be added as a new article to the Association's bylaws. Unanimous**

**9. Snorri West Update:** Claire reported that the Executive Committee just received information on expenditures for Snorri West. The Association needs to send in a full expenditure report by August 24, so Claire recommended that the Executive Committee review and approve the expense report prior to sending in before August 24.

**MSP Harvey/Örn B. to approve the expense report. Unanimous**

**10. Planning for upcoming international visits:** Claire reported that Viðar Reynsson, a prominent Icelandic writer living in Reykjavík, will be visiting Minnesota next month. He has written a biography of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Icelandic Immigrant poet Stefán G. Stefánsson, a \$40 book that's been printed in English. The INL is sending him across North America to talk about Stefansson and to read some of his poetry. Viðar is also the editor of a 5-volume collection of the Icelandic sagas, which is something else he may speak about. The Principal of Minnesota has asked if Reynsson could speak at the high school. He will be speaking in North Dakota, then go to Minnesota and probably go to Southwest State University afterwards. He'll end up in the Twin Cities and the hope is that IAAMN can arrange a Saturday mid-morning or lunch event with him before he has to leave for a speaking engagement in Chicago. Claire is going to talk to Garrison Keillor's bookstore, Macalester College, Hamline University, Augsburg College, and University of St. Thomas, as these schools have classes that may be interested in this topic area. They may also want to co-sponsor his talks. Reynsson will be in the Twin Cities September 28/29. Note also that that University of Victoria (British Columbia) and North Central College (IL) are co-sponsoring his speaking engagements.

**11. Update on Meets and Greets:**

Claire reported a Meet and Greet has been scheduled for Svavar Gestsson (Claire will send more information to the Board about his delegation) on 9/18 and it will be held at Springhill Suites. Svavar and his wife will have 20 people coming along. Dr. and Mrs. Arnar reported that this delegation will come for a special reception at their home. The delegation will also visit Fargo.

**12. Update on planning for Thorrablót:** Claire confirmed that the date for the Thorrablot is February 9, 2013

**13. Update on Icelandic film screenings:** Harvey pointed out that "Dreamland" went very well. Claire reported that we have another Icelandic movie coming to the Twin Cities

**14. Assessment of Independence Day Picnic:** The Board consensus was that the event went extremely well, Doug did a great job, and Stony's family did an excellent job on food preparation.

**15. Snorri West discussion:** Stony pointed out that he really wanted to thank Claire and Mallory, plus all the people behind the scenes, for making Snorri West so successful. The Board echoed Stony's sentiments and wished to express its appreciation as well.

**16. Other business:**

1. Eyglo will be preaching at Mindekirken on October 14 and there will be a Scandinavian coffee held afterwards.;
2. There will be a Scandinavian service and coffee at Mindekirken on October 7;
3. Dr. Arnar informed the Board that on October 14, there will be a reception for a University of Iceland delegation, led by the President of the University, at his home. He will send out invitations.

**17. There being no further business for the Board, Claire adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.**

**Notes taken and respectfully submitted by Örn Böðvarsson.**