

MEEA Board Meeting Notes July 11, 2020

Agenda:

9:00 AM Intros and Check-ins

- Introduce Nick
- Introduce ourselves + check-in re: COVID-19, police reform stuff, and other heavy things in the world

Present:

Lesli Moylan- busy!

Jenny Grabner- winding down Americorp year and position with MRCN, son graduated for high school

Karen Keck- in Kirksville, retired this year, taking a teaching job in Alaska, excited and nervous, leaves July 28

Carrie Whipkey- business analyst for Worldwide technology, MEEA treasurer

Erin Graves- high school science teacher from Jefferson county, twin daughters just got married, doing food distribution for 1200 families,

Laurie Duncan- city of Springfield, Education Outreach for Springfield

Jeff Birchler- watershed center educator, hosting school groups at the center, working on Grow Native program with Springfield schools,

Laura Seger- St. Louis Zoo management team, working on managing challenges, looking at plans for preschool, virtual learning

Nick Speed- worked with Gateway Greenway and students (Seed to Stem curriculum), transitioning to Founder of Ujima (Swahili word that means collective work and responsibility)- non profit, food justice, working with kids, planet care, reconnect kids with food, nature, especially in marginalized communities, radical food justice, pop up cafe, just had a baby girl (6 months) The Okra Project

9:25 DEI

- NAAEE/PEEP opportunities
 - New Mexico- Lesli likes their bold commitment to DEI, did listening sessions across the state, hard listening and hard learning, now is a much more diverse organization.
 - North Carolina has good DEI resources
 - PEEPS- midwest + montana affiliates working on JEDI training with Dave
- Laura- What is our goal and what will be the concrete steps?
 - Fully integrated, engaged, empowered
 - It's not just race, it's beyond representation
 - Changing the cultural climate
 - Practicing equity and conscious inclusion
 - Proactively educating ourselves- JEDI training?
 - Speakers, finding resources

- Shift to action instead of blame
- Structure, governance, policies, DEI statement- we need one
- Practices- embedded norms- Zoom, travel for conferences,
- Systems based thinking- paradigm shift, investment in solution
- How do we keep ourselves in check
- Investing time and effort, PD requirement/recommendation
- Spread it out beyond us to our partners
- Karen- can we identify something specific and start with the low hanging fruit
- Sarah- start with ourselves, then share with the group
- Lesli- NAAEE- call people in instead of calling people out, TRUST
- Jenny- trying to get people of color and marginalized groups to be on the board and in the advisory groups
- What are the barriers, why don't we represent diversity?
- Meredith- who do you ask?
- Jeff- making this a conference strand or the entire conference theme, how to?
 - Strand or part of the criteria for any session- Laura
- Lesli- measuring our progress with how we are embedding ourselves with other groups
- Karen- schools need inclusivity, and we are in schools, website training materials, environmental justice lesson plans or resources for the website
- MGS+
- Laura- create a decision tree or rubric that will guide us in making decisions about where we put our resources
- Lesli- draft a statement, catalog what we are doing
- GG's "Action Steps" <http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1110899214824&ca=0f49d983-4923-4dc1-b0bd-19096fb23e06>
- Other resources
- Discussion (idea: board members do 1 individual DEI p.d. annually and share out)
- Document- sharing stories and our individual work or ways that we are learning- resources-
- Part of the agenda for each meeting
- Committee to start working on the diversity statement, Laura, Erin, Carrie, Sarah & Lesli
- Erin- how do you get buy in from black kids, teachers who may be hesitant to even be in nature
- Jenny- fear of sitting on the ground, bugs, related to home life and families attitudes, not unique to one group, most fear and opposition from history of not being labeled as poor, from the country, goes back to shame, deep societal,
 - Use a stick, just look, how do we help people be more comfortable in nature?
 - Pausing and acknowledging the experiences of kids and parents-Jenny
 - "I grew up in the country, we don't put our gardens in the front yard."-
 - So much can happen when we are able to lean into hard conversations!
- Laura- one and done is not effective, real change comes from repeated exposure and relationships

9:55 wrap up--how are we feeling, next steps

10:00 Advisory Board--first meeting on 7/15

- Meredith- people have been invited to be members. (all in St. Louis)
 - Bill Rupert- connected, former boss of Lesli, will help increase audience
 - Nicky Lemley- Lesli met her at a conference, experiential ed, higher ed too, husband on MRR board
 - Leah Cliburn- super busy, works for Sierra Club, interim director of missouri refugee program, spoke at melab,
 - Laura Kozak- fundraiser, interim director and helped with growing budgets
- What is the most important thing that we want the board to tackle is-
 - Laura- Have enough money to function enough to pay Lesli- and grow from there
 - Jenny- Cultivating strong donor base for MEEA and fundraising for MEEA, Jenny would like role descriptions so she can send them to her folks.

10:15 Bylaws--change to reflect dynamic governance? (less hierarchical, consensus-based)

- Overview
 - https://www.kosmosjournal.org/kj_article/dynamic-governance-and-21st-century-organizational-relevance/
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F818QTn6_f8
- Point person on this?

10:25 --Conference Updates and Feedback

- Laurie- planning a virtual conference, sharing of ideas with Laura Downey from Kansas, idea to have a joint conference, software that allows people to do more networking, cost sharing speakers, expand the reach of the conference, we are on track with session proposals,
 - Developing a survey to find out what people want-feedback of what might work best for them
 - Look at survey-
 - Pre- recorded sessions each day and culminating event at the end of the day
 - Still lots of options to work our and explore
 - Fee structure- pay what you can

10:40--Finances (fundraising and COVID-19 challenges, QB training for Carrie \$138, financial report, training by Laura Kozak)

- COVID and teleworking expenses for VISTAs <https://blueavocado.org/hr-and-employment-issues/ask-rita-for-what-work-related-expenses-must-i-reimburse-remote-employees/>
- Logo for MGS? Our bid for MEEA logo came in at \$500 (committee likes the firm, it is black-owned and STL-based)
- \$8500 + at least double that in-kind for the EE kits (no funding deficit, breaking even on materials)
- Carrie sharing
 - Everything is current and recognized

- Jenny and MRCN will be depositing money
- Kit donations in total of \$8500- cash only
- In kind donations will be about \$30,000
- Next meeting EE kits will be broken out into assets and liabilities

10:55 wrap up, action items, future conversation items

Finals Thoughts-

Social distance, wear a mask, wash your hands, good luck to Karen