

**NNECAPA Executive Committee
Conference Call Minutes
Annual Chapter & Section Coordination Meeting**
Friday July 14, 2022 – 11:00 am – 1:00pm

EC Attendance: Sam Durfee, Eric Vorwald, Meagan Tuttle, Sarah Wraight, Amanda Bunker, Cat Bryars, Jeff Levine, Nancy Kilbride, Kyle Pimental, Matt Sullivan,

Regrets: Catherine (Cat) Ingraham, Sarah Marchant,

Other Attendees: Donna Benton (NHPA), Heather Shank (NHPA), Steve Lotspeich (VPA), Shayna Sylvia (NHPA), Jim Fisher (MAP), Shanna Saunders (NHPA)

1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Meagan Tuttle opened meeting **11:03am**.
2. **Membership Process & Communications.** Ongoing multi-year project to improve with some recent progress made.
 - a. **Membership List Update & Section 2022 Pro-rata payments.**
 - June report from APA shows 510 Chapter members with section shares as follows: 35% NH, 31% ME, 27% VT, and 7% southern New England states (this last group is growing). Over 140 members have not renewed membership in past year. NH and VT organizational memberships ended, so a portion of membership decline is linked to that change.
 - There had been growth in new memberships and student memberships associated with Nancy's outreach efforts, but many of those did not renew.
 - Revenues from membership dues are on track overall with recent years due to higher per capita revenue for those who transitioned from organizational to individual memberships.
 - Nancy and Sam review monthly APA membership reports to identify lapsed members. Chapter numbers are beginning to align with APA reports.
 - Communications at the section level could help Chapter pursue renewals. Sections have not yet pursued renewal outreach. Chapter will develop a message to be sent out at chapter level that solicits feedback on why members are not renewing. Sections can send out the message to lapsed members as identified in membership lists shared by Nancy and Sam soon.
 - Reminder to balance focus on lapsed members with outreach to new planners with good welcoming materials.
 - NNECAPA has not cut pro-rata checks to Sections yet. Will wait to do membership renewal outreach and divide according to Q4 roster in September.

Action Items / Next Steps:

1. **Send updated June 2022 member roster and non-renewal list to Sections.**
2. **Chapter will develop a renewal message and work with Sections to disseminate.**

3. Chapter will do pro rata payment to Sections after Q4 report.

b. New Member Welcome & Member Renewal Support.

- New membership is first communication touchpoint and should involve cohesive and engaging messaging. Chapter needs a working group to develop this with Nancy's support. NHPA has existing welcome language they will share.
- How do we figure out when there are new members? The Chapter references APA membership reports, which are currently being issued monthly. Look at report for "Join Date" to ID new members. Ideally membership numbers from APA would be accessible on demand, but this is not in the works at APA.
- Have we asked if there is a way to automate a link to a welcome page via APA when people sign up through that portal? No, but likely not an option.

Action Items / Next Steps:

- 1. Welcoming packet working group of Shayna, Donna, Nancy will develop welcome message using NH materials as a reference. Amanda will look for section volunteers in ME, and Eric in VT.**

3. Sponsorship Timing & List Coordination.

- The Chapter transition has increased reliance on consistent sponsorship for our events and programming. \$20K has been obtained in new sustaining sponsorships. Nancy's direct communication with potential conference sponsors can lead them to become sustaining sponsors when interested.
- Sponsor outreach needs to be better coordinated across Chapter and Sections. Generally, Sections do spring/early summer conferences or workshops and fall/early winter annual meetings that involve sponsor requests beginning as early as March of each year.
- Nancy does sustaining sponsorship outreach in January. Of the Chapter's inventory of over 100 sponsors, only about 20 or so sponsors get invited to be sustaining sponsors. Nancy may include in initial outreach a note that smaller opportunities to sponsor will come up later in the year so potential sponsors are on notice for future requests.
- Before or following Nancy's January outreach, Sections may wish to flag sponsors they want to reserve for Section outreach.
- Nancy has developed a comprehensive list of sponsors across the region. Sections need a shared google spreadsheet to track sponsor outreach. Historically, Sections are good at tracking who they've successfully contacted about sponsorship, and bad at tracking who they contacted unsuccessfully.

Action Items / Next Steps:

- 1. Develop sustaining sponsorship request message that cross-promotes additional sponsorship opportunities and funding levels.**
- 2. Set up a shared Google spreadsheet to track potential sponsors. Use shared document to reserve sponsors for specific, priority asks.**

3. Create an annual sponsorship schedule in the Chapter manual that outlines sustaining sponsorship outreach, follow-up opportunities for Section events and NNECAPA Conference, and an opportunity for Sections and Chapter to “reserve” potential sponsors for specific asks.

4. Communications Coordination Best Practices.

- User issue: Constant Contact previous communications are being deleted. Need to save copies in your own folder to reference old communications.
- Constant Contact account is shared by Chapter and Sections, but has outdated section-level contacts. Perhaps a training would help get users more comfortable with the shared tool.
- There are four listservs across the Chapter and Sections. Google spreadsheet created a few months ago to coordinate Chapter-level listserv communications is working well.
- Nancy appreciates receiving section emails. She needs to be added to MAP listserve.
- Ongoing problems with members not receiving or not being able to read Constant Contact communications. Problem is a local IT setting that is common especially for government-based emails.
- Suggestion to consider using regional planning commissions' communications people to put information out.
- Current method of coordinating with Nancy and Jeff about Chapter-level communications is working well. Reach out to Nancy and Jeff when in doubt.
- Group debated the pros and cons of cross-posting messages across listservs and how prevalent complaints of excessive communications are. Overall sentiment was generally in favor of more outreach/communication with perhaps better communication about the ability to unsubscribe from listservs and a link to helpful tips for managing email loads by filtering messages.

Action Items / Next Steps:

- 1. Sections should coordinate with Meagan and Nancy to make sure Constant Contact users at Section level have access to the account.**
- 2. Jeff will put a call out to Section ECs to gauge interest in a training on Constant Contact use. Nancy and Shayna may support the training.**
- 3. Add Nancy's email to the MAP listserv.**
- 4. Share request with Sections to use RPC networks/newsletters to disseminate communications.**
- 5. Add an unsubscribe option or other helpful links to Chapter listserv signoff.**

5. Planning for future Chapter Conferences.

- Chapter transition changes have improved conference planning and execution. Nancy has taken over a number of administrative tasks and introduced expertise in event planning. Three-year Section conference rep terms provide volunteer continuity. The conference committee is finally getting the hang of the conference planning cycle, especially with Section ECs and Section reps taking on early tasks of venue ID and booking years ahead of events. Now, conference committee only kicks in a year in advance to develop programming. This year has been the first time that there is even volunteer representation on conference committee from all states. Feels like a true NNECAPA event vs. a state event.

- The large size of the conference increasingly limits venue options, with all-inclusive resorts in rural areas as common venues. It is harder to rotate venues within states and there is greater need for social programming in remote locations.
- Need for a conference theme and customized logo? It is challenging to be locked into a theme and then lose keynote speaker, and session topics often lack a link to the theme. Several long-term conference committee members agree that development of a theme and logo uses a lot of volunteer time that would be better used on programming. A brand for the NNE conference could be developed and reused, leaving the option for conference committees to develop a unique theme year-to-year if inspired.
- Virtual speakers/presenters? Anecdotal feedback is mixed on how popular virtual speakers/session presenters are with in-person attendees. It seems opinions are just as influenced by speaker skills as by format. Advantage of virtual is getting higher profile, more remote speakers. Having equipment to support a remote speaker introduces a new cost, but this may directly offset speaker fees/travel reimbursement costs. Best practice for a virtual speaker is to make it part of a panel so if technical difficulties occur there is a backup content plan. Make it clear to session that if they want to do virtual speakers, all tech is up to them to coordinate.
- Entirely virtual/hybrid conference? This is not feasible at this point. Even having a single remote speaker requires a lot of upfront planning and day-of coordination. Costs for an entirely virtual conference are excessive.

Action Items / Next Steps:

- 1. Chapter will develop a NNECAPA Conference standard logo to be used when there is no special theme for annual conferences.**
- 2. Update Chapter conference policies to reflect flexibility in determining a theme for each conference event if a committee chooses.**

6. **Adjourned 12:58pm**

*Respectfully Submitted by
Cat Bryars, NNECAPA Secretary*