

**Vermont Acupuncture Association Annual Meeting 11/6/2021
via Zoom**

Called to order at 9:05 am.

Member Attendees: President, Deirdre Kelley, Vice President, Christina Ducharme, Treasurer, April Brumson, Secretary, Montana Burns, Director, Charles Murdock, Director, Scott Moylan, Director, Catherine Lumenello, Dianne Barclay, Beth Bloomfield, Robert Davis, Molly Fleming, Nyssa Green, Liz Geran, Chris Hollis, Kelly Kaeding, Sarah Kaplan, Brendan Kelly, Pamela Kentish, Amy Lafayette, Diana Vachon, Darren Maynard, Jeanette Moy, Glynn Pellagrino, Donna Powell, Julie Suarez Cormier, LiMing Tseng, Misty Williams, & Lucy Zhang Manning. 28 members in total were present.

Guest Attendee: Jessica Oski of Necrason Group (our lobbyist)

President Welcome:

Deirdre welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of the year. We used the energy of the Metal Ox year very well. She congratulated and thanked us all for growing our membership this year, which was a major goal of our organization. She reached out to all seven of our new members via email and asked before the meeting began if any new members wanted to introduce themselves. Her aim has been to establish a solid base for us to grow our membership and we have exceeded in that. By cultivating a respectful, kind and sharing space, we have seen so much healthy engagement this year. She mentioned how nourishing it is to have this group in her life. It has been a pleasure to work with this Board and that they have worked very hard this year to serve the membership. She thanked the Board members for all their help. Deirdre said it was an honor to work with them and she is looking forward to continued progress next year during the year of the water tiger.

Secretary Report:

Montana Burns reported we had an unprecedented 91 members in 2021. We currently have 86 active members, which has been the highest membership numbers on record. Just a handful of members need to renew their membership. On average we had engagement of over 80 members per month which was higher than we have ever had in the past, which was in the 60-member range according to last year's meeting minutes. We also had many inactive members rejoin the organization this year. Great job meeting our goals to increase and retain membership! She expressed that has been a pleasure serving with her fellow BOD members and has been the highlight of her work within the VTAA.

Treasurer Report:

April Brumson shared her screen with the balance sheet of the past few years of financial information. In summary we have:

Income of approximately \$7,500 in dues and donations
Expenses \$14,000+

Net loss \$(6,563.34+)

We have \$5,000 in reserves and \$13,217.14 on hand.

*Our \$5,000 reserve amount was amended at 2020 Annual Meeting for cash flow purposes. See detailed screenshot of financial report attached separately.

Dianne Barclay (our former Treasurer who prepared this financial report as a CPA) pointed out that this current path is not sustainable. April agreed that we have been spending our account down for the past three years without replenishing our revenue. Our last big fundraiser was in the summer of 2019 when Li organized the oncology workshop.

Legislative Report:

Jessica Oski gave a summary of what the past year has looked like in the legislature. It was mainly focused on workforce and pandemic related issues. She also reminded us that the VTAA has a “monitoring” contract with Necrason and has for the past two years. She communicates with us weekly and keeps an eye out for issues of interest to acupuncturists, of which there has been few this year. For the time being virtual meetings are encouraged despite the fact that lawmakers might return to the statehouse in January. A mask mandate is still in place and the activity in Montpelier is much different than it was before the pandemic. July 1st was the beginning of the fiscal year and there was \$14 million in revenue. While the gas taxes have been down the purchase taxes have increased. The stimulus has had a very positive and significant effect and the state budget should remain stable. The main issues have been surrounding our workforce (healthcare, childcare, education, food & hospitality), teacher pension issues, and lack of affordable housing. It may take us years to climb out of this housing crisis.

It seems that licensed acupuncturists are either growing or staying the same level. We are not seeing a reduction in numbers there, unlike some other healthcare sectors such as nurses and mental health professionals. The wait times for health care services are terrible and AHS is investigating it now. There are some ongoing considerations around telehealth driven by COVID. The legislature is looking at licensure to see if it needs to be updated in any case. The annual OPR bill struck some vestigial language to eliminate the Chinese Herbal Exam from our licensing. Jessica reminded us all that we still need to have that herbal training to prescribe herbal medicine so that we are acting within our scope.

LiMing Tseng inquired if we as acupuncturists could practice telehealth in a different state according to our current licensing. Jessica said she would investigate and get back to us about that. Li also asked about the language of our statutes to see if we had the word “medicine” or “Oriental medicine” in our title. We do not, it is just “acupuncture.” Li mentioned she is working on updating our professional language at the national level with the ASA so that was the reason for her inquiry. Julie Suarez Cormier asked if this might be a good year to look at DVHA Medicaid coverage for acupuncture. It currently does not cover acupuncture. Jessica explained that with our current “monitor” contract she would be happy to assist us in laying out a road map

for how we could achieve those potential legislative goals, however if we wanted her to become our active lobbyist it would be a different, more expensive rate. Montana asked what that rate would be. Jessica said she could not give an exact number without the proposed scope of work. In 2019, it was \$25,000 annually for that type of contract. Brendan thanked Jessica for her great report and discussed the importance of our role as acupuncturists in treating mental health especially in relation to the shortage of mental health professionals and PCPs.

Deirdre thanked Jessica for all her assistance. Jessica said it been a pleasure working with us. Thanked us for being her client and signed off the call.

VOTE: Election of Vice President, Secretary, and Director:

Deirdre moderated the election and began with reading the prepared biographies for each nominee at the time of their respective position election beginning with the election for Vice President. Deirdre thanked Christina for her incredible service as Vice President and said the Board would miss working with her.

For the Vice President Position:

Deirdre read Montana's biography:

Montana Burns is currently serving as our VTAA Secretary since last November. She facilitates the Fundraising & Events committee while also working within both the Ethics, Conduct & Inclusion committee as well as our Legislative committee. Montana has brought enthusiasm, thoughtfulness, clarity, kindness, and a dedication to service to her positions within the VTAA. She is a Doctor of Acupuncture & Chinese Medicine (PCOM, 2019) and owns and operates a small clinic and herbal apothecary in Burlington, Vermont. During the pandemic, she suspended in person treatments as the clinic was in her home. This has shifted her focus into volunteer advocacy work for our profession, research, and remote education. Montana is a former competitive figure skater, dedicated yogi, and passionate mama to her 1-year-old and 3-year-old kiddos.

Deirdre then asked if anyone else would like to run for VP? Hearing none.

MOTION by Scott Moylan to elect Montana Burns as Vice President of VTAA for a three-year term. Catherine seconded. Hearing no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Congratulations, Montana!

Now the Secretary position is open. Misty Williams would like to be Secretary for the remaining two years on Montana's previous term. Deirdre read Misty's biography:

For the Secretary Position:

Misty Williams is a co-founder and served 2 terms on the Student Association of the New England School of Acupuncture (SANESA) as Treasurer and Vice President and represented

NESA on the Student Government Association of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS University) as Vice President. She currently resides on the ASA Student Leadership Committee and is a Vermont Reiki Association board member. She owns and operates Vermont Acupuncture & Massage in South Burlington. Recently an empty nester, she enjoys living in picturesque Jericho where she has resided for the past 20 years.

Deirdre then asked if anyone else would like to run for Secretary? Hearing none.

MOTION by Scott Moylan to appoint Misty to Secretary to finish two years of a three-year term. April seconded. Deirdre called vote. Hearing no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Congratulations Misty!

For the Director Position:

Deirdre then read Catherine's biography:

Catherine Lumenello is currently filling a one-year vacancy position as BOD Director, and serves on the VTAA's Ethics, Conduct, and Inclusion committee. Catherine has brought knowledge of legal language and 'mad' computer editing skills to both positions, along with honesty, compassion, humor, and a passionate dedication to correctness in word. Catherine is a published author in the field (*Gender and Sexuality in Chinese Medicine* – Singing Dragon, 2019) with both a Master of Acupuncture (Asian Institute of Medical Studies, 2005) and Doctor of Acupuncture focused on Integrative Medicine (Five Branches University, 2021). Catherine has a small Classical Chinese Medicine practice at her home in rural Windham County (Townshend, VT), and is considered a Master in Qigong and Feng Shui traditions. Catherine is also an avid motorcyclist and Mom to an 8-year-old human and a 4-year-old (recently adopted) yellow lab.

Deirdre then asked if anyone else would like to run for Director? Hearing none.

MOTION by Scott Moylan to elect Catherine Lumenello as Director of VTAA for a three-year term. Montana seconded. Hearing no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Congratulations Catherine!

The new Board is Deirdre Kelley as President, Montana Burns as Vice President, April Brumson as Treasurer, Misty Williams as Secretary, Charles Murdock as Board Director, Catherine Lumenello as Board Director & Scott Moylan as Board Director.

Break at 10:10 am for 20 minutes.

Called to resume at 10:30 am

Committee Reports (Fundraising, Legislative, Membership, Outreach & Ethics):

Fundraising by Montana Burns:

We had a great midyear meeting in May with Brendan and Li. Our biggest goal this year is to restructure our membership dues, which will be presented in more detail for vote at 11AM today. Basically, we want to alleviate the pressure that has historically fallen on the shoulders of a few members to raise a lot of funds each year to pay our ongoing expenses. Our goal is to have sustainable, renewable revenue so we can pay our costs without always having to create big fundraising events.

We successfully raised \$700 in the raffle for UVM pain management conference, we profited \$325 after paying our sponsorship of the conference, we are hoping to put on an in-person event fundraising next summer and to create some VTAA merchandise in the spring, and lastly, we want some input from the membership on how to potentially incorporate paid sponsorships and advertisements from vendors or members that are not on the board. Brendan is going to spearhead that effort, and if you would like to help or if you want to be a part of the fundraising committee, please email Montana and she will add you to our listserv. Thank you!

Legislative by Scott Moylan:

There are a few topics that were discussed this year such as injection therapy and the potential short form health care bill in the Vermont legislature that might evolve over the next few years.

Scott spoke about Cigna and ASH update. As of 9/1/21, Cigna transitioned to ASH for acupuncture reimbursement. Scott had a meeting with them so they could present information about their company and communicating with them was difficult. The membership raised many concerns over the change. Due to antitrust laws, the VTAA must remain neutral on this issue. We can offer to support the membership and provide information, but legally we cannot persuade members in any way. In June we took a survey. No other formal action was taken.

In order to create meaningful action, we need more engagement within this committee. Brendan offered to co-chair this committee and Scott thought that would be great. If you are able to volunteer committee, please let Scott know and we can add you to our email list.

Membership by Liz Geran:

Liz presented that reached our goal of adding and retaining our membership at the highest levels yet. However, there are still over 100 licensed acupuncturists in Vermont that are not a part of the VTAA, and we should reach out to them. There are 204 LAc's in the state according to OPR and only 86 VTAA members. Our goal is to reach out to these potential new or inactive members and ask them to join. If you are interested in helping us, write emails or make phone calls, please let me know and we would appreciate your help.

Deirdre sent a membership questionnaire in May and Liz read some of the responses. Overall, the most common denominator is that people enjoyed being a part of the VTAA for the connection! Liz also read a response that stated a member really appreciated the reduction in

bullying on the listserv. Great job this year and please let us know if you want to join this committee!

Outreach by Charles Murdock:

We had a great year of outreach and education that happened rather organically. The VTAA sponsored and participated in the UVM Pain Management Conference this year. Brendan presented and Li was a big coordinator behind the scenes, ensuring we received CEU credits. We had a huge turnout, over 30 members participated in the event. Our hope is to participate in more events and community lectures like this in the future. Li, Diana, Arthur & Scott also coordinated a Qi Gong class on October 24th for AHM (Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine) Day which had a great turn out.

There was then a rich discussion about what the group could further do to coordinate outreach more cohesively or intentionally. Robert suggested a spreadsheet or shared document where we could share beneficial resources from one another. We could even create a theme for the coming year and have a clear intention about driving our messages. Montana mentioned that Beth can post any event on our website. Nyssa suggested that we do things outside of our profession but still within healthcare.

If people are interested in working on this or have other ideas for outreach and education, please email us and we can add you to the group.

Ethics by Catherine Lumenello:

The ethics committee included Christina Ducharme, Deirdre Kelley, Montana Burns, and Catherine Lumenello this year. At the mid-year committee meeting the adopted bylaw changes from our last annual meeting were officially updated on our website. Some of our main priorities this year were to foster healthy communication in our group and create more accessibility. We did our best to support the group by encouraging respectful discourse with a netiquette reminder and clarified best practices regarding public health information. We revisited and made suggestions for the bylaws to be updated this year to promote better balance within the BOD positions going forward and to promote greater accessibility regarding email and mail communication. We will take a vote on that at the end of the meeting. Looking ahead, our goals are continued inclusion surrounding access to our annual meeting with Zoom options or even childcare for those who need it. If you want to join our committee, please let us know.

For next year's mid-year committee meeting, Christina suggested that we do it before growing season begins in mid-April.

ASA Report by LiMing Tseng:

Li shared that there is a survey for renaming our professional that will be sent out soon from the ASA that she is spearheading. There was a recent NCCAOM town hall about those proposed updates to the language. She was successful in obtaining a proclamation from Governor Phil Scott about Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine Day on October 24th. She suggested that we

continue to read the ASA newsletters and we quickly discussed the importance of the Judy Chu Bill for including acupuncture coverage for seniors with Medicare. Li reminded everyone about our benefits as automatic ASA members through the VTAA with respect to insurance discounts, etc. She also mentioned that there might be increasing in herb pricing and needle shortages in the future due to supply chain issues and we should be stocked up on what we need to practice.

Li also mentioned you can text “acupuncture” to 52886 to receive information about the support acupuncture for our senior’s act from the ASA & NCCAOM. It will automatically set you up to email your representative about your support for the Judy Chu bill.

VOTE: Membership Dues Restructuring Proposal:

Montana shared her screen and presented the proposal created by the Fundraising Committee and approved by the BOD for discussion. See initial proposal below:

Proposal: Restructuring of our membership dues

Our current membership levels are described on our website as:

- 1) annual/basic professional membership (\$100)
- 2) supporting professional membership (\$200)
- 3) sustaining professional membership (\$300)

After working on a collaborative proposal at the Annual Meeting, these are the updated levels beginning on **January 1, 2022:**

- 1) **access professional membership (\$100)** available for first year members, retired, part-time or members with financial need
- 2) **annual professional membership (\$200)** most members might choose this option
- 3) **supporting professional membership (\$300)** for those members who can offer a little more support to the organization
- 4) **sustaining professional membership (\$400)** for those willing to go the extra mile

*An option already exists on our VTAA website to donate at any amount at any time.

*The last increase in dues happened 8 years ago in 2013 when it changed from \$60 to \$100/year. *Dues of approximately \$300 appear to be the national average and that would finally a sustainable revenue for the VTAA without pressure falling on a few members to always be fundraising each year.

Montana explained that we are trying to keep access for members in need of the lower rate, but shift everyone else up to a higher, more sustainable level. The minimum revenue required yearly for our fixed expenses with the lobbyist was approximately \$15,000. If each member contributed \$200 on average, we would theoretically meet our needs with approximately 80 members (80*\$200=\$16,000).

MOTION by Liz Geran to accept the changes to the VTAA membership dues as presented. Catherine seconded. We then discussed the proposal.

Brendan brought up the great point that while that might satisfy our minimum, we would not have the money to put on big events or do anything else meaningful. Liz agreed. Stewart Cohen asked if we were worried about losing members with the price increase. Christina mentioned that we wanted to keep the membership accessible especially for those impacted by the pandemic or who live in rural areas. There was a great discussion and many members weighed in with their thoughts. Kelly Kaeding proposed a different price structure that everyone agreed to, and we amended the initial proposal to the final one below:

Final: Restructuring of our membership dues

Our current membership levels are described on our website as:

- 1) annual/basic professional membership (\$100)
- 2) supporting professional membership (\$200)
- 3) sustaining professional membership (\$300)

After working on a collaborative proposal at the Annual Meeting, these are the updated levels beginning on **January 1, 2022**:

- 1) **access professional membership (\$150)** available for first year members, retired, part-time or members with financial need
- 2) **annual professional membership (\$300)** most members might choose this option
- 3) **supporting professional membership (\$500)** for those members who can offer a little more support to the organization
- 4) **sustaining professional membership (up to \$1000)** for those willing to go the extra mile

MOTION by Molly Fleming to accept the proposed change as written above. Liz Geran seconded. We moved to a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

VOTE: Consider rehiring Necrason group for one year for \$12,000:

Deirdre brought the next topic up for discussion regarding rehiring Jessica Oski from the Necrason Group for 2021.

MOTION by Montana Burns to rehire Necrason Group. Catherine Seconded. We then had a good discussion with many member's perspectives:

Li suggested that there might be things upcoming such as the renaming our profession topic to pay attention to with respect to the legislative committee, but it might not happen this year. Montana thought this might be a good year to pause, create some intention around a legislative plan in order to move forward next year potentially. Li agreed. Molly explained that we have a very reasonable rate for this contract at \$12,000/year and most lobbyists are much more

expensive. Robert also made the comparison that a continued relationship with a patient is stronger than one that is on and off and so too is our relationship with Jessica. It is better if we are more consistent. Brendan agreed and stressed the importance of having a lobbyist. Liz suggested we could send an email to the membership calling for more fundraising, because we are in a tight spot financially this year if we sign this contract. This initiated an incredibly generous response from the group and almost \$5,000 in donations was pledged by Li, Brendan, Liz, Aidan, Christina, Robert, Kelly, Molly, Amy, Julie, Jeanette, Diana, Scott, April, Beth, & Deirdre. With that influx of donations, the group decided to call this to a vote.

The **MOTION** passed unanimously.

VOTE: Bylaw Updates:

Catherine and Montana worked on the changes. There were four separate sections that needed updates and we will vote on each edit one at a time. Catherine reviewed the changes and Montana shared her screen with the proposed changes in red and the language to be removed in strikethrough as follows:

Proposed updates to the VTAA Bylaws:

The first update was to allow the option to send VTAA members invitation to the Annual Meeting by email, while keeping the option open for future mailings and mailing nonmembers.

I. USPS UPDATE:

Original text:

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Section 3. Notice. Written notice of the Annual Meeting shall be made no less than forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting. This notice shall be deemed delivered upon posting with the United States Postal Service and via VTAA group email.

Suggested amendments in red:

Section 3. Notice. Written notice of the Annual Meeting shall be made no less than forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting. This notice shall be deemed delivered upon posting with the United States Postal Service and/or via **electronic communications**.

MOTION by Catherine Lumenello to accept the changes to the VTAA bylaws as presented. Liz seconded. There was a brief discussion, and it was passed unanimously.

The second update to the bylaws was regarding rebalancing the roles of the Secretary and Vice President positions to promote labor equity within the Board of Directors.

II. BOD ROLES UPDATE for VP & Secretary:

Original text:

Section 7. The Vice President shall:

1. Assist the President in all duties.
2. Act as a liaison between members and the Board of Directors.
3. Chair meetings in the absence of the President.
4. Assume the duties of the President in the event of the President's inability to serve.

Section 8. The Secretary shall:

1. Record and file all minutes of the Annual Meeting, special general meetings and Board meetings. Prepare and distribute the minutes to all of the Board members.
2. Send the Presidents of the national organizations of acupuncture and Oriental medicine the names and addresses of officers of the Association after elections have taken place at the Annual Meeting.
3. Send copies of important correspondence and information on matters of general business of the Association to the President.
4. Keep a list of members with address, phone number and dues status.
5. Send copies of Association by-laws to new members upon request.
6. Receive, answer and file all VTAA correspondence and distribute them to the appropriate officer.
7. Notify all members of the date, time and place of the Annual Meeting forty-five (45) days prior to the event. Notify all members of any special meetings or election information as set forth by rules.
8. Notify members of time, place, and date of all other meetings at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting date or as soon as possible in the event of an emergency meeting.
9. Notify all members of annual membership renewal forty-five (45) days prior to renewal date.

Suggested amendments in red:

Section 7. The Vice President shall:

1. Assist the President in all duties.
2. Act as a liaison between members and the Board of Directors.
3. Chair meetings in the absence of the President.
4. Assume the duties of the President in the event of the President's inability to serve.
5. Receive, answer, and file all VTAA email correspondence from the current BOD account and distribute messages to the appropriate officer.
6. Send copies of important correspondence and information on matters of general business of the Association to the President.

7. Maintain the general membership information with the VTAA Secretary and Webmaster. This includes maintaining and sharing the current list of members, (contact information and membership status) and maintaining email group lists (members, BOD, committees, etc.).

Section 8. The Secretary shall:

1. Record and file all minutes of the Annual Meeting, special general meetings, and Board meetings. Prepare and distribute the minutes to all the Board members.
2. Send the Presidents of the national organizations of acupuncture and Oriental medicine the names and addresses of officers of the Association after elections have taken place at the Annual Meeting.

~~Send copies of important correspondence and information on matters of general business of the Association to the President.~~

3. Keep a joint list of members with address, phone number and dues status with the Vice President & the VTAA Webmaster.
4. Send copies of Association by-laws to new members upon request.

~~Receive, answer, and file all VTAA correspondence and distribute them to the appropriate officer.~~

5. Notify all members of the date, time, and place of the Annual Meeting forty-five (45) days prior to the event. Notify all members of any special meetings or election information as set forth by rules.
6. Notify members of time, place, and date of all other meetings at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting date or as soon as possible in the event of an emergency meeting.
7. Notify all members of annual membership renewal forty-five (45) days prior to renewal date.

MOTION by Scott Moylan to accept the changes to the VTAA bylaws as presented. Catherine seconded. There was a brief discussion, and it was passed unanimously.

The third update was regarding committees and addressing the lack of chair volunteers and how board members can help facilitate the committees in their absence.

III. Committee UPDATE:

Original text:

Section 9. Committees. The Board of Directors may create committees as needed. The President shall appoint the Committee chairpersons. All Committee chairpersons shall be approved by a vote of the majority of the Board of Directors.

Suggested amendments in red:

Section 9. Committees. The Board of Directors may create committees as needed, and all VTAA committees must be approved by the BOD. Any active VTAA member is eligible to become a chairperson on a committee. If no members volunteer, then the BOD may assign a BOD member to facilitate that committee as needed. All committee chairpersons shall be approved by a vote of the majority of the Board of Directors.

MOTION by Catherine Lumenello to accept the changes to the VTAA bylaws as presented. Li seconded. There was a brief discussion. Some language was updated further with input from Li, and it was passed unanimously.

The last update was a new addition to clearly define the Director's roles on the BOD.

IV. NEW ADDITION: Directors' Roles (two parts):

A. *There is no existing text re: directors, the proposed addition in red:*

Section 10. The Directors shall: Support the BOD Officers with their various tasks. This may include but is not limited to facilitating committees, checking the PO Box, completing the monthly lobbyist filing with the Secretary of State, editing membership communications, or other tasks as deemed necessary and agreed upon or as delegated by other BOD members.

B. *Renumbering to accommodate Director description*

Section 10. 11. Conflict of Interest. Each member of the Board of Directors shall sign a conflict-of-interest policy statement and shall not use his or her position on the Board to profit his or her own interests. If any action of the Board may present a real or perceived conflict of interest for a Board member, that Board member shall explain the reasons and not vote or participate in discussion of the matter.

MOTION by Catherine Lumenello to accept the changes to the VTAA bylaws as presented. Montana seconded. There was a brief discussion. Some language was updated further with input from Li, and it was passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 12:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Montana Burns, VTAA Secretary.