

Animal Charity Evaluators
Board of Directors Meeting
Type of Meeting: Standard Monthly Meeting
Date: December 21, 2014

In attendance:

Chairperson: Simon Knutsson
Board Member: Sam Bankman-Fried
Board Member: S. Greenberg
Executive Director: Jon Bockman
Board aide: Jacy Anthis
ACE Research Manager: Allison Smith

Absent:

Treasurer: Brian Tomasik
Secretary: Rob Wiblin
Board Member: Peter Singer

Quorum established: Yes

1. Call to order: SK called the meeting to order at 10:04 am PST

2. Approval of minutes: November 2014 minutes approved via email.

3. Items considered:

1. Brief financial update
 - a. Updated financials
 - b. November Financials
 - i. Beginning balance as of 011/01/2014: \$17,140.06
 - ii. November expenses: \$(7,541.81)
 - iii. November income: \$12,029.82
 - iv. November net income: \$4,488.01
 - v. November budgeted income: \$7,800.00
 - vi. Ending balance as of 11/30/2014: \$21,628.07
 - vii. Equivalent to approx. 3 months expenses
 - c. December Financials (12/1/2014 – 12/13/2014)
 - i. Beginning balance as of 12/01/2014: \$21,628.07
 - ii. December income: \$71,044.95
 - iii. December expenses: \$(2,584.70)
 - iv. December (to date) net income: \$68,460.25
 - v. December budgeted income: \$12,800.00
 - vi. Ending balance as of 12/13/2014: \$90,088.32
 - vii. Equivalent to approx. 10-11 months expenses

- d. Donor report
 - i. $\frac{2}{3}$ of donations were from 2013 and 2014 (to-date) were from individuals outside of ACE, while the remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ were from a combination of ACE board members, staff, and interns. In the future, we should aim to have an even larger portion of donations from individuals outside of ACE.
- 2. Progress update (progress in relation to strategic plan)
 - a. To learn from other social movements, case studies will be released ~bi-monthly in 2015
 - i. Social movement research is especially difficult because of variation between social movements and a lack of existing systematic analysis.
 - ii. Currently, for each movement studied, interns are summarizing the tactics they used, their outcomes, the relevance to animal advocacy, and other important information.
 - iii. This project takes half of AS's intern supervision time. Intern supervision overall takes AS roughly 2-4 hours per week.
 - iv. The first case studies should be published in January.
 - b. Pain matrix project (quantifying animals' ability to experience pain/pleasure) on hold until qualified volunteers are found
 - i. This project is on how ACE and animal advocates should value the well-being of various species relative to each other. For example, does brain size affect capacity for suffering?
 - ii. This is a difficult project and staff/interns lack expertise in the topic.
 - iii. This is in JA's expertise (neuroscience), but JA is skeptical of how tractable this project is, even for a qualified researcher.
 - c. Strategic plan and philosophy doc – will be worked on mostly next month, hope to publish by end of January.
 - i. JA is working on the philosophy document after working on the evaluation of the Executive Director with SK, incorporating notes from all board members.
 - ii. SK suggests a section in the strategy document highlighting ACE strengths/weaknesses.
- 3. Fundraising
 - a. Matching campaign
 - i. Ended at \$55K. Completely matched.
 - b. Distribution of income, forecast
 - i. A matching campaign in 2015 could be a major source of income, but planning for this is risky since it might not happen. Regardless, we will plan for a large fundraiser near the end of 2015.
 - ii. Increasing the number of recurring donors ACE has would be useful for forecasting and budgeting (an option on the donate page to become a monthly donor is on its way).
 - c. Investing our assets (are for example mutual funds worth the risk?)
 - i. Board members and staff with expertise in this area will have a separate

- call to discuss this idea in more detail.
 - ii. An important consideration is how this will be perceived by the ACE audience – if they would see it as a form of gambling with donations.
 - 1. If we decide to invest, it would probably be good to write a public explanation to avoid confusion.
 - d. Official budget for 2015: work-in-progress
- 4. Research program
 - a. 2014 workload distribution, including proposal for 2015
 - i. The largest research project has been evaluating charities.
 - ii. Other time has been spent on activities such as intervention evaluation and keeping up with non-ACE research relevant to animal advocacy.
 - b. Explanation of research division areas
 - c. Hiring another researcher
 - i. This would likely improve the quality of the 2015 charity recommendations. AS notes that, without a new researcher, she would feel limited in her research capacity for 2015. She feels that the main research challenges are: (i) increasing transparency, and (ii) getting a better grasp on intervention effectiveness.
 - ii. The value of this hire would greatly depend on candidate availability. We can advertise position but not commit to hiring a new researcher.
 - iii. Board is in favor of hiring a new researcher given a qualified candidate. JB to move forward with application process.
 - d. Creating another division, e.g. “ACE Labs” or “ACE Exploration”
 - i. Pros/Cons/Questions document
 - ii. One major concern is that the work on ACE Labs may not affect our recommendations much since there are so few organizations (say ≤ 5) working on the topics that ACE Labs would work on. So there would be almost no charities to recommend. And ACE is already aware of the few organizations and could evaluate them now instead.
 - iii. The opportunity cost is an important consideration (e.g. less time spent on charity evaluations).
 - iv. SG notes, given how young ACE is, that building the core audience could be more important than exploring new topics.
 - v. SK notes a concern that ACE could get locked into mainstream, non-controversial topics in the future if we don’t explore new topics now.
 - vi. AS notes that the general ACE audience is accepting of and interested in wild animal suffering, but there’s a sharp drop in acceptability for more fringe topics like digital sentience.
 - vii. Decision is to not formally have a “Labs” division right now, but to periodically discuss such exploratory, non-mainstream topics publicly. ACE may consider such a division again later.
 - viii. It would be helpful, when hiring an additional researcher, for them to have an interest or acceptance of “ACE Labs” topics, but they should be

happy spending the majority of the time on the mainstream topics.

5. Evaluation of Executive Director's performance
 - a. This one will be more extensive than the January 2014 performance evaluation of the Executive Director, and include evaluating the quality of the new recommendations. It will also compare progress relative to the strategic plan and to the feedback the Executive Director received in January 2014.
 - b. JA and SK are currently working on the plan for this performance evaluation and will notify the board via email.
6. Usertesting questions for January (optional)
 - a. Previous round of Usertesting for the ACE website was very useful, and another round will be done near the end of January after the revisions from last round are implemented.
 - b. SG suggests adding the following questions: "What's the first thing you want to do once you reach the site?" and "Having just looked at the page briefly, what do you think we do? What message comes across? Any initial impressions?"

4. New business:

5. Closed session (optional: excludes ED or other invited guests): N/A

6. Next scheduled meeting: January 25th, 2015 at 10 am PST

7. Meeting adjourned at 11:42 am PST on December 21st, 2014 by SK

Submitted by:

Rob Wiblin, Board Secretary

Simon Knutsson, Board Chair