

Animal Charity Evaluators
Board of Directors Meeting
Type of Meeting: Standard Monthly Meeting
Date: November 30, 2014

In attendance:

Chairperson: Simon Knutsson
Treasurer: Brian Tomasik
Secretary: Rob Wiblin
Board Member: Sam Bankman-Fried
Board Member: S. Greenberg
Executive Director: Jon Bockman
Board volunteer: Jacy Anthis

Absent:

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:** October minutes were approved via email.
- 3. Items considered:**
 1. September meeting: Welcome board volunteer (SK)
 2. October meeting: Philosophy document revision (SK)
 - a. Revision veganism
 - b. Revision wild animal suffering
 - c. Improved writing quality
 3. Brief financial update (JB)
 - a. Updated financials
 - b. October Financials
 - i. Beginning balance as of 010/01/2014: \$11,566.97
 - ii. October expenses: \$-8,126.91
 - iii. October income: \$13,700.00
 - iv. October net income: \$5573.09
 - v. October budgeted income: \$7,800.00
 - vi. Ending balance as of 10/31/2014: \$17,140.06
 - vii. Equivalent to approx. 2 months expenses
 - c. November Financials (11/1/2014 – 11/20/2014)
 - i. Beginning balance as of 11/01/2014: \$17,140.06
 - ii. November income: \$10,578.55
 - iii. November expenses: \$-3,195.16

- iv. November (to date) net income: \$6,828.26
 - v. November budgeted income: \$7,800.00
 - vi. Ending balance as of 11/20/2014: \$24,523.45
 - vii. Equivalent to approx. 3 months expenses
 - d. Financials including match
 - i. Ending balance as of 11/20/2014: \$24,523.45
 - ii. Additional matching as of 11/20/2014: \$33,746
 - iii. Total: \$58,269.45
 - iv. Equivalent to approx 7 months operating expenses
 - v. More income is expected as the matching drive finishes.
4. New recommendations (to be published December 1) (JB)
- a. Animal Equality is being added as a top charity. Vegan Outreach and the Albert Schweitzer Foundation are being added as standout charities.
 - b. Future process for reporting to board prior to publication
 - i. Proposal: Ask charities for permission to share information internally at ACE (incl. board).
 - ii. JB and the staff can share a folder containing charity information with the board as it is received, given the charities' permission to share that information. Previously this was difficult due to the large number of edits that must be done before sharing the information.
 - iii. JB will try to give the board notification of recommendations 3-4 weeks before they are announced and a shortlist of possible recommendations earlier than that, in case the board has insight into particular charities.
5. Progress update (progress in relation to strategic plan) (JB)
- a. No updates because of recommendation push. Program assessment to take place in December in preparation for 2015.
6. Board procedures (SK): In general, if we can, it would be better for the board's work if we have more written proposals sent out to the board beforehand (when the agenda is sent out a week before the meeting).
- a. Decision: Good to share these types of docs beforehand as long as they are short and optional.
7. Strategy proposals (SK)
- a. BT's suggestions
 - i. General discussion about the suggestions
 - 1. JB noted concern about deviating from the primary goals of the organization, and about allowing donations to influence research priorities (could be a concern for the organization's audience too)
 - 2. Consider having separate division (like GiveWell labs)
 - 3. JB also noted from Allison that these proposals would represent a significant time cost.
 - ii. Is veg*ism correlated with environmentalism and intuitions favoring non-interference in nature?
 - 1. RW worries the importance of this research would not be

- obvious to much of the audience, but notes that it is a very important concern for some members of the audience.
- iii. Review literature on whether slaughter improvements (a la Temple Grandin) increase inclinations to eat animals
 - 1. RW notes that this fits well into the ACE's existing framework.
 - iv. Insect-suffering topics such as silk, shellac, etc. and how effective campaigns on those issues could be
 - 1. RW thinks BT could pay someone else to do this research as this is outside the organization's main agenda and staff interests.
 - 2. SK notes that there are volunteers or new hires that might have interests more aligned with this topic.
 - v. Review Humane Slaughter Association
 - 1. ACE already looked into them for a shallow review, but were not allowed to publish it.
- b. BT's ideas about how ACE could target the far future
- i. General discussion about targeting the far future
 - 1. Board noted possibility of using a two-stage model of organizational development. The first stage is building the organization and a support base, and the second is about expanding the research, giving more consideration to important non-mainstream topics.
 - 2. These topics could be written about as part of a series or blog location for experimental or less mainstream topics. Compartmentalizing this research could help the organization maintain its brand and mainstream audience.
 - 3. This research could also be framed in a way more accessible to the average audience member, e.g. we want to work towards a world where the people in power all consider nonhuman animals in their major decisions.
 - 4. Far future research could highlight the importance of less cognitively sophisticated animals or future technologies like cultured meat.
 - 5. The board holds a diversity of perspectives on how the organization should prioritize these topics, but leans towards maintaining a focus on the mainstream research at least for the immediate future.
 - ii. Metrics
 - 1. RW thinks this is important because it could seriously affect recommendations. It also holds importance for determining the organization's target audience, e.g. focusing on people who are more likely to influence policy in both the near and long term.
 - 2. One possible metric is meat consumption weighted by wealth with wealth being a measurable proxy for influence, e.g.

organizations could be considered based on the influence of their target location.

3. It is important to focus on influence rather than simply on immediate changes in consumption.

iii. Digital sentence

1. This represents a broad range of possible life forms. It could be simulations in a sophisticated computer or 'sentient subroutines' of a larger digital system.

iv. Target those who build/control AI or political/economic/evolutionary trends rather than values

1. JB wants to be careful with using this as a basis for decisions, but would like to give it more thought and consideration.

8. Fundraising (JB)

a. Matching Donation Drive

- i. JB to compile report on donor types over 2014. The purpose is to make cash-flow projections for 2015, which will serve as decision material for hiring another staff. The report should show donations per person for the top 10-15 or so donors and the likelihood and timing of donations during 2015, as well as forecasts for other and new donations.
- ii. If JB doesn't think we'll meet matching gap, notify board two days prior.
- iii. The organization could consider investing their balance in a mutual fund to accrue interest rather than leaving it in a bank account. Although SB and SG note that there is a small chance of losing money this way, which could harm the organization. There is also concern that the audience could interpret it as gambling with their donations, which could be troubling.

b. Matching funding: Considering hiring another researcher (JB)

- i. Start exploring hiring another researcher, put feelers out. Don't need to hire if don't find ideal candidate, would be good to start the search. Increased research production could lead to increased donor support, but that is not guaranteed.

c. .impact FB ads study with MFA (JB)

- i. .impact is conducting a Facebook ads study led by Peter Hurford. They approached MFA who has agreed to let their materials serve as the treatment condition for the study and have various outcome measures charted for each ad. They also need money for the control condition.
- ii. It seems like this is the sort of project our organization should endorse, sharing it with a donation link as long as the research methodology looks reasonable. SG offered to take a look at it.

9. Usertesting (JB)

- a. We ran our first series of usertesting with usertesting.com and learned a lot about the website. Will run another round after completing some fixes.

10. Preferred contact emails for board on the ACE website (SK)

- a. JB will look into this to find the most practical method like displaying the email addresses as images or including a contact form rather than an email address. The chosen method should be consistent across board members.
11. Next board meeting: JB suggests Dec. 21 instead of Jan. 4. Does that work for the board? Allison to join. (JB)
- a. Board will meet on Dec. 21. Allison will join.

6. New business:

We need an audience segmentation and selection of target audience segment(s) (SK):

To be discussed at bullet 3.7 (Brian's strategy proposals).

From our draft Strategic plan (2015-2017)

"Our primary audience is people in the wider animal movement who want to become more effective; our secondary audience is people already interested in effective altruism who care about animal suffering."

SK added the following to the Strategic plan (2015-2017) under Goal 1: Key activities (p. 3):

- a. Segment our audience and select target segment(s)
 - i. Formulate hypotheses
 - ii. Determine criteria for selecting target audience segment(s)
 - iii. Divide our possible audience into segments, incl. detailed segment descriptions
 - iv. Select target segment(s)
 - v. Draw implications for our research, recommendations, brand, outreach, organization, and fundraising

Meeting notes: It would be good to consider this question more deeply than previously considered, perhaps by setting up pros and cons of each market focus and identifying a more definite audience for research moving forward. BT noted that it is important to consider interventions and audiences jointly, e.g. insect/digital sentience might be a small audience, but due to the high impact-per-person, it is still an important audience.

7. Closed session (optional: excludes ED or other invited guests): [N/A if the session was not closed]

8. Next scheduled meeting:

9. Meeting adjourned at 11:53 on 20 November 2014 by SK

Submitted by:

Rob Wilbin, Board Secretary
Simon Knutsson, Board Chair