

Lansing Makers Network

Board of Directors

Regular Meeting Minutes

January 22, 2025, 7:00 pm at 2730 Alpha Access

Board Members:

Charlie Finkel, Chair

Jody Applegate

Lex Savoyat

Carl Raymond

Joe Zimmerman (not present)

Jerry Jodloski

benny Vasquez

James Etherton

Guests: Brian Adams, Rozlyn Opolka, Mark Hahn, Maria Riolo, Anna Schiller, John Cardinal, Evelyn Down, Nick Mulder, Nicole Broughton-Adams, Brian Adams, Tony Kuhlman, Christopher GS, James Pock

Meeting Secretary: Lex Savoyat

Meeting called to order: 7:01PM

1. Housekeeping (Charlie Finkel)

- This year there will be a literal separation in leadership for the first time ever in LMN, with Charlie Finkel as Chairman of the Board, and Brian Adams as Executive Director. The role of the Board is oversight and making sure there is an operational budget. The Executive Director's role is the every day vision and running of the space.
- With the new year and some money in the coffer, it is time for us to think about and reflect on what the makerspace means to us, why it is important, and why it should go on. As a member organization, it's important to make sure that we are doing all we need to in order to serve our members.
- We need to start thinking of ways to work together, to have teams, to empower people to share the responsibilities. This is a two-way street, we need to work together, we have resources to share. People shouldn't be judged by their mistakes, we should have grace for people's lives as they change. Let's focus on the best of what we have to offer.
- Let's build something with growth and not need to be focused on staying open month to month. Let's rediscover our love of making together.
- **Approving Agenda**
 - Motion: Charlie Finkel Second: benny Vasquez
- **Declaration of newly relevant conflicts of interest for board members**
 - none

- Astronomy on Tap is coming back in March. At the next board meeting we will need to sign for the liquor license

2. Chairperson's Report

- Thank you to Mark Hahn for your extremely generous donation.

3. President's Report

- The President had nothing to report.
- **Events update Report - Lex**
 - Recent events
 - None new this month
 - Upcoming events
 - Pinewood Derby Building with Cub Scouts
 - Jan 26th (7 scouts), Feb 2nd (7 scouts)
 - Will be around 40 kids and their parents over 2 days
 - Might try to bring in the news to get some earned media coverage
 - Tool-a-palooza fundraiser and membership drive
 - Membership drive + checkout day
 - Paid checkouts - teaching people how to use tools
 - And now that you're' checked out, become a member!
 - Scheduled as an anniversary party on March 15, 2025
 - 3d printing workshop for kids
 - 1-time class with a group of girl scouts (who will be our test group)
 - How-to-Holiday Valentines edition
 - 5 stations
 - Scheduled for February 14, 2025
 - 3 take apart clinics scheduled in February at the schools
 - First newsletter was sent on January 15, 2025

4. Treasurer's report

- **December:**
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CAaGLFuEDiorDKjnnJDOTDUQffC-cSRi/view?usp=sharing>
 - Jump in outgoing funds because the landlord didn't cash the Nov rent check until Dec.
 - This is the last State Farm insurance bill, we are moving to Rathbun.
 - Larger than usual income from fundraisers.
 - KrampusNaught ornaments brought in \$2505.59
 - Bad Annie's sold ornaments for us. \$1400. Final payment will show in January.
 - Memberships brought in \$3400
 - Cash drops are for Nov and Dec.

- **January (Partial):**
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1efPYPQxKgxrWnrApCLoetwgaP7ke-cw/view?usp=sharing>
 - Gas is more than expected, but close to what we paid last year.
 - Parts were purchased to fix the older laser cutter.
 - \$1400 for classes so far.

5. Secretary's Report

- Bylaws have been added to the website
 - <https://www.lansingmakersnetwork.org/governing-documents/>
- Minutes for last months' meeting have been posted
 - <https://talk.lansingmakersnetwork.org/t/board-meeting-dec-18-7pm/6100/3>
 - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LCI6XKbPF4VnxvkueKID9hw4yBPGXZvbYSZvZo7vbmw/edit?tab=t.0#heading=h.vabmpbxwtg81>
- Submitted the LARA annual report
 - <https://cofs.lara.state.mi.us/CorpWeb/CorpSearch/CorpSummary.aspx?token=nBxlLn58HwVtv4JMRDwTm1cWblopjmlqg3FCQzRMH7Z0mRAdeXC1AbGAjGltGoqnsYYopDAibS2fKaoJlrvJCzlm7vJ6BrPvuDdDwvtN++1LiJZ5nXAHx+m3BoaOrDwFUuTV3be3t8tzhJIIJbiBvYVC2P7U6P4a0Ebw6rexwXWYfouBd/2C755Unff8a+IK7pfNIGsC7SNFpff7v002N1vfeyMn6gu+OTs3aJu7V3QIzZfo2N/hA8PaCplPNNWlpcVGNQXeJth1XHFncDckle7f8yMqMgD7P26d39HO2AhkNXhgHT4a1aJjkTJqnujnvzWOO9lh3LPGeXwYcmxe12O2KcQn3>
- Community has requested we share a google meet link for remote attendance for future meetings
 - Discussion
 - benny: no objections, but we should be clear that the audio and video quality is likely to be difficult to maintain. It may also be difficult to engage with people on the Google Meet.
 - Evelyn: I do think we'll need to have someone watching and moderating it, because we've had issues in the past with people joining and causing problems.
 - Proposal: Add Google meet for future Board meetings, starting with one trial. Second: benny. Passes
 - benny will figure out how to make this technology work for the next meeting
- Reminder to Board to complete the Annual Board of Directors Information Update
 - <https://www.cognitofirms.com/lansingmakersnetwork1/annualboardofdirectorsinformationupdate>

6. Continued Business

- 501(c)(3) status - Update from President
 - There was a miscommunication between Carl and Brian (they each thought the other was working on the project), so no forward motion was made on our side.
 - Brian and Carl will meet after the meeting to get it moving forward.

- Insurance status - update from Brian, Jody
 - We have the papers to sign. They have received the 5 year loss from the previous insurer.
 - They now want a 2024 financial statement.
 - They also need an asset list with values (as part of an P&L)
 - Rathbun agency, Scottsdale is the underwriter.
- Accountant status - update from Brian, Jody
 - The new accountant is engaging and we're good to go here.
- Choose new officers
 - Chairperson
 - Self-nomination
 - Charlie Finkel
 - Discussions
 - benny: You have proven already that you are passionate, stable, and the other things that I like to see in a board chair and I think you would be a great choice.
 - Elections
 - Unanimous approval
 - Charlie: I look forward to working with you all and working with Brian. This will be an exciting time for me.
 - Vice Chairperson
 - Self-nominations
 - benny Vasquez
 - Discussions
 - Lex is excited about the experience that benny brings to the board from previous positions
 - Charlie is pleased to have a vice-chairperson, since that position has been vacant for so long.
 - Elections
 - Unanimous approval
 - Secretary
 - Self-nominations
 - Lex Savoyat self-nominates
 - Discussions
 - Carl think Lex is doing a good job of sending out messages and event notifications and getting things updated
 - Charlie appreciates all the work that Lex has been doing, especially being on top of the legal/government things we need to do.
 - Elections
 - Unanimous approval
 - Treasurer
 - Nominations:


- Charlie would like to see Jody stay on as treasurer at least for a year especially to help with transition
- Self-nominations
 - Jody Applegate
- Discussions
 - Jody sees that he doesn't know a lot of what he believes he needs to know, and doesn't have a background in this work. He will work hard for a transition. If we can find someone more qualified, he believes they should take this on.
 - Brian: How can the board support you better in this role? Jody: I stepped up because we needed someone. Charlie: If we could get someone or a service to do the bookkeeping, would that make a difference? Jody: Yes, that would help very much. Charlie: Right now, the treasurer role is stuck between operations and board. We should work to separate that. Brian: To Jody's credit, he took on the role of the treasurer with the understanding that we would be hiring a bookkeeper, and then the next meet we closed for COVID 19.
 - Jody requests that we review the position and bring it back for a potential election again in 4 months.
- Elections
 - Unanimous approval

8. New Business


- Charlie:
 - I want to note that we're all here because we care about this space, but I would like to encourage that folks, if they can, both volunteer and also pay for your membership. Now is an especially good time to contribute in that way.
- The Volunteer coordinator would like to ask the board for clarification on the volunteer coordinator position
 - [W Volunteer Coordinator Description](#)
 - Nicole expresses that when she took the role on, Brian and she had agreed on an abbreviated job description
 - First priority - do interviews for new volunteers
 - Second priority - recreate/rebuild systems to cover what Jimmy used to cover, but that might have been lost in the transition
 - There are things that have been missed and dropped, but she's working on a plan to get things caught up and has scheduled a meeting with the volunteers
 - She's been looking into a google phone number for escalation purposes, that can be handed off if she's unavailable.
 - She wants to lean into google for tools use
 - Putting stuff on google calendar

- Creating a form/process for getting volunteers for other reasons (for example: events)
- She's volunteering outside of events to contribute to volunteer hours as part of the current process.
- One of the things that is in the job description/expectations that she can't always promise to cover is shifts on-call
- She's coming to the board to understand what the board and volunteers are expecting from this role, not because she is trying to undercut Brian, but because she is worried about the (at least perceived) conflict of interest.
 - benny: Previously, before we talked on Monday, I would have expected that you would fill the position as written, but it is clear based on our conversation that the full job description isn't something that you can commit to or something that you had agreed to. Knowing that, what kind of clarification would you like from the board?
 - Nicole: I guess a better question would be: Would you like me in this role if I'm not able to fill the position as written?
 - Charlie: My feeling is that the volunteer coordinator position is a significant part of the operations team. The board's interface with that should only be to step in if the position isn't being managed, and then it's just for the board to say "Brian, coordinator, volunteers, - please go fix it.
 - James: What parts of the job description can you not cover?
 - Nicole requested a copy of the job description, and it was provided to Nicole.
 - Brian: to be clear, the job description was never approved or finalized by anyone - it was a description that Jimmy wrote to describe what he was doing.
 - Nicole: also, it wasn't so much a problem with the job description - it was that the members at large had taken it upon themselves to decide what my job was.
 - James: Without any additional context, my expectations are that someone in this role will do their best and communicate what they are able to do.
 - Lex: My concern isn't that each part isn't followed, but with you and Brian having agreed to specific portions of the role, that should be communicated with both the board and volunteers, so they know what to expect. It makes sense that volunteers would expect you to do what other volunteer coordinators did until they were told that something else would happen. Then, if there's anything that isn't covered, we could work together to cover it.
 - benny: I think that's what Charlie is saying: at the board level we don't want to have to care about a job description, we just want to know that the things that need to be done are covered. It should be a conversation between you and Brian.
 - James: The board is also allowed to have an opinion. For example: I wouldn't expect a boss to cover a shift at the front desk if it can't be

covered. You'd do your best to cover it, but if it can't be, that's just best effort.

- Nicole: Overall I don't have any problems with the things in the job description. I am not getting the support I need to understand or do this role.
- Lex: I would like to see you asking for more help to get the things you need, since we are all able to help more.
- benny: Charlie and I have an idea that might help for this, let's talk about the next part of the agenda. I very much want you to want to continue.
- * benny brought it back to this point after the committee proposal
 - benny: Given everything we've set up and shared, I don't think we have any concerns - board does anyone want to share anything?
 - Nicole: I have been a member for about 10 years
 - I have never been involved in the space in a management or volunteer capacity
 - I am married to Brian, but I am not Brian
 - Evelyn volunteers to onboard Nicole as a volunteer so that she is familiar with the process.
 - Board expresses no concerns
- Motion to appoint committees to address specific work presented by Charlie and benny:
 - benny: one of the things you said at the last meeting, Brian, was that you needed help getting all the things that need to get done. Charlie and I came up with an collection of committees that can help you get things done. Small groups of people that can attack a problem and solve it. We don't want to have to provide this oversight at the board level, but these will act as the board providing support for Brian to get work done.
 - benny read the committee description for the volunteer committee
 -  Committee Proposal for LMN
 - Discussion
 - James: Question for Brian: How does a committee help or get in the way of your operational work? I see myself as signing up to help you as a committee member, not as a board member.
 - Brian: Specifically as the volunteer committee, this would be Nicole's. Overall I would need to sit on all committees as the Executive Director, so that I know what is going on.
 - James: what if we make it a different committee's task?
 - benny: I want to clarify that this setup is specifically trying to avoid subverting Brian, and only support what he's doing.
 - Brian: I understand your concerns, James, as I had them too when I first read this, but ultimately, I don't see any specific concerns and I think we do need to try something different. I'm willing to give this a shot.
 - benny: I'm so glad - because the goal is literally to make it possible for you to express what you want to see and then they go

do the work, and then come back and make sure it's what you want to be done.

- James: for example if we set up a fundraising committee, that group should be empowered to do what it needs to do without requiring Brian specifically.
- Brian: I think it's very important to say that I should be able to trust everyone on the board. It's going to be very important for the board to take a hands-on approach to figuring out our fiscal dilemmas. I think it's important to scope this to the specific charges of the committees: if they are charged to act, then they should be able to act. If they're charged with process creation, then that's what they should be doing.
- Nicole: A concern I have about the committee process is that someone in the group could circumvent Brian and go directly to the board.
 - James disagrees, the committees are making recommendations, not more.
 - benny: "reporting" in this case is just letting us know how things are going, not coming back to us for approvals.
 - Brian: It's important to note that the committee is acting as one, and reporting as one.
- Charlie: Operating under a committee system should allow more stuff to get done, and empower more folks to help get that done.
- Rozlyn: I am the chair of a different board, and I would highly recommend and endorse the committee system. It helped us so much at the Kalamazoo Book Arts Center
- Charlie: do any of the board members have any concerns that they would like to voice about committees in general?
 - None noted.
- benny read through the remaining committee proposal
 -  Committee Proposal for LMN
- Motion to enact a committee system.
 - Jody: Question - where it says 1-2 board members, does that mean we cannot invite non-board LMN members?
 - benny: no, this is meant only as a minimum recommendation, not as a limitation.
 - James: I think it's very important to also say that we want to encourage members to join these committees, as this is a fantastic place to allow them input into the space
 - Charlie: I do want to caution against allowing them to get too big.
 - James: maybe the board member assigned should be required to limit that?
 - benny: to be clear, that's something the committee should be handling - they're self-managing.
 - First: James Second: Carl Vote: Unanimous

- Committees created, and board members responsible for each committees:
 - Volunteer Management
 - James
 - Budget:
 - Charlie
 - Jody
 - Enhanced membership definitions and agreements
 - Carl
 - Lex
 - President Evaluation
 - benny Vasquez
- * benny brought it back to the volunteer coordinator discussion.
- James: Are we open to having more board members?
 - Lex: Yes, we can have up to 11.
 - James: Could we make a call for additional board members?
 - Brian: Yes, but it should be a specific request, not just an open call.
 - James: will propose a specific call that we will send out to folks - and he will send it to the board for approval.
 - Lex: should we keep the same group of people doing interviews as last time?
 - Board: yes
 - James: if you see someone at the space doing cool stuff, ask them if they wanna join the board
- Guest discourse
 - John Cardinal: Is it possible to quickly go over the board meeting minutes from the previous meeting to understand where we were, before starting into the current meeting.
 - Christopher GS: I really appreciate the work to get the 501c3 back. It has been a real challenge when speaking to the public about the space. It has been a long time, and it needs to get resolved soon.
 - Christopher GS: I have concerns about how we've chosen to create and capacitate the volunteer coordinator responsibilities in one person. My concerns are that I reached out 4 times via email and Discord, between now and December. I still haven't gotten a response. I hope that the board and Executive Director can support and empower the coordinator so the work that needs to be done can be done.
 - benny: Do you think the work we did tonight was enough to give you hope?
 - Yes, it gives me hope. I would like to see responses from the coordinator
 - Nicole: I have tried, but I find communication via Discord very difficult.
 - Evelyn Down: Tomorrow's opening shift and the week after are not covered. Who can cover it. Jody can cover tomorrow, Lex has the second.

- Maria Riolo: It sounds like Brian is the only one that can fix badge issues currently, and that seems concerning because he should have other work to do as well. Is there anyone else that can be given access to help with these issues?
 - This is assigned to the volunteer committee
- Mark Hahn: Getting the 501c3 is time sensitive for me, and I'd be able to be more generous if we have that. My deadline for being able to provide more support is March 15.
- Maria Alcaraz: I am worried about the 501c3 status. I haven't seen any progress or logins in QuickBooks that would indicate movement.
 - True, Brian and Carl are assigned to work on this.
- John: As far as I know we don't have a way to deal with members who are continuously dangerous in the space.
 - He shared a couple examples of a specific person making dangerous choices in the shop
 - Charlie: We don't have a process right now, but right now it is managed by the president.
 - Maria A.: a membership handbook that provides guidelines would be nice.
 - benny: an incident management system is what we're looking for here, I think.
 - Maria A.: We've discussed this with Brian before but no forward motion has happened.
 - Brian: this is something that's been proposed many times, but hasn't been prioritized because the people who would be concerned have self-selected to leave
 - Roz: Can this be part of the waiver process?
 - Brian: we are still a private organization and can tell anyone that they are no longer welcome at any time, with or without a process.
 - Jerry: What is the fear for just restricting this person's access immediately? Why would we not do that immediately?
 - Brian: I think that we need to spend some more time looking at all of the ramifications.
 - benny: this feels like a large risk from a legal perspective. Can you please put together a policy for us to review for the next board meeting?
 - Brian: yes.
- Nicole: One of the things we'll need to do as a Volunteer Committee is to create a Volunteer Handbook. Should I work on figuring that out?
 - benny: I don't want to add to your list yet, so let's table that in case we need it.
- Schedule next board meeting
 - February 19, 2025 at 7:00pm

Motion to Adjourn:benny Second:James

Meeting adjourned at 8:58

9. Executive Session

No executive session was held.