**American Brain Foundation**

**Board of Directors**

**September 15, 2019**

**8:00 am CT**

**Minneapolis, MN**

**Call to Order:** Sunday, June 23, 2019, by Board Chair Kevin Goodno

**In Attendance:** Kevin Goodno; David Dodick, MD; James Essey; Dan Gasby; Robert Griggs, MD; James Grotta, MD; Ralph Józefowicz, MD; John Mazziotta, MD; Suzanne Miller; Ron Petersen, MD; Jeffrey Rosenfeld, MD; Catherine Rydell, CAE; Lisa Shulman, MD; Joseph Sirven, MD; Gordon Smith, MD; James Stevens, MD; Ben Utecht; Susan Schneider Williams

**Guest:** Eric Mueller, Pixeleric

**Staff:** Jane Ransom, Executive Director; Tim Engel, CFO; Marie Tuhy, Lisa Dahlberg, Lisa Deutsch

**Excused:** David Eagleman, PhD; Shafali Jeste, MD; Sharon Klein; Martin Shenkman, CPA

Approval of the minutes for August 8, 2019. (Unanimous)

No conflicts of interest were stated.

1. **Board Chair Report**

Dr. Stevens was pleased to report that the ABF gave an outstanding presentation to the AAN Board on Sept. 14. The AAN Board was previously equally split pro/con/neutral on funding the ABF, but are now very enthusiastic with their decision to fund us for the next five years.

Mr. Goodno thanked everyone for their work in preparing this presentation. It was a valuable exercise, and we are stronger working with AAN rather than working separately. Our funding is now set for the 2020-2024 cycle, with plans in the works to increase communications with the AAN.

1. **Financial Report**
   1. **Financial Statements:** The financial statements for period ending on July 31, 2019, show that ABF has realized $4.8M in revenue. Operating expenses were at $3.9M, and the net operating increase of $954K. Our operating revenue shows a $1.4M net increase. Expenses are tracking against plan, and the 2019 forecast is looking good. The Foundation will still need to raise $285K through the end of the year to meet expenses.

Expenses are 6% under budget, which can be attributed to decreased grant expenses and staff turnover.

Investment returns have been doing well, with a return rate of 10% YTD. This amount matches industry averages.

Net assets of $6.5M include $2M endowed, $4.6M in unrestricted assets.

* 1. **Updated 2019 Forecast:** The Foundation’s available funds are $2M for awards, $3.1M in restricted grants to fund research, and $1M in endowment funds.
  2. **Approve 2018 IRS 990 Filing:** Mr. Engel reviewed our IRS Form 990. This is an information only return that we are required to file and is available to the public. It is also used by Charity Navigator and Guidestar to assess our rating. Detailed contributions are kept private to protect competitive data.

Upon a suggestion from the Finance Committee, Mr. Engel will expand Schedule O to more clearly show exactly where our funding to the AAN goes. In the last year. Upon filing, this will change our three-year average, which will improve our rating.

**Motion:** Approve the amended 2018 990 Form.

**Approved** *(unanimous)*

1. **ABF Business Plan Presentation to AAN Board:** Mr. Goodno, Dr. Dodick, Mr. Essey Ms. Williams, and Ms. Ransom presented our Business Plan for 2020 – 2024 to the AAN Board of Directors yesterday. The AAN had requested a new business plan from the ABF to justify funding for another five-year period. The presentation highlighted the value add that ABF has brought to the table, not just in fundraising, but partnerships with the community. The ABF has gone beyond those benchmarks, and funds flow has reversed itself in the past five years. AAN’s results to date on their investment in the ABF have shown very positive trends. Our partnership and strength of our shared commitment demonstrate that these are the best two organizations to achieve our goals.

Mr. Essey reviewed the previous five years, and how the ABF was created in response to a recommendation that the AAN outsource their fundraising to a separate organization. The original partnership proposal was for a five-year period, which is just coming to an end. We are on the cusp of beginning a new five-year cycle.

The ABF is in the stage of building our brand, we need to continue to build our brand and reputation. As we grow, we won’t need as much money from the AAN. The ABF proposal requested approximately $1.2M per year for the next five years, and forecasts returning $19M to the AAN in grants. This is an ROI of 450%. We asked for a five-year commitment, with the understanding that we meet certain performance factors.

Ms. Ransom presented information on ABF’s fundraising, marketing and research grant focus. Fundraising figures were broken out to reflect the fluctuations due to the LBD project. We have $6.4M in assets to fall back on should we not reach goals. As we evolve, we will have a spending plan for planned gifts. We have had significant staff turnover this year, but feel that we do have sufficient staff to achieve our goals. The ABF hired an independent contractor to handle digital fundraising and is adding a new grant writer position. Additional staff will be added in 2023-2024. ABF has a great marketing database, including all AAN members and Brain & Life subscribers. We can analyze the information there to target audiences as needed. Our Research Grant Focus includes $13M in grants to the AAN in the next 5 years. We also have high reward research targets – currently this is the LBD project. Once that is completed, we will use this model to fund additional projects. The ABF is the corporate home of several designated awards, that we do not have control over. We value our strong strategic alliance with AAN as our research partner.

Dr. Dodick spoke about how we are positioned for success going forward. He presented our new board leadership for 2020, and stressed Jane’s importance on this team. He introduced our new 2020 board members; two internationally known neurologists, and three public members who have strong connections and influence in philanthropic circles. Dr. Dodick also noted several new upcoming grants and announced two well-known guests for our Commitment to Cures Gala at the AAN Conference in Toronto. He ended by stressing the importance of being affiliated with the AAN, whose brand brings us visibility and instant credibility. The AAN houses the brain trust of the best neurologists. We are stronger together.

* 1. **AAN Feedback:** Dr. Griggs felt that the AAN Board is in strong agreement, this is a relationship that should go on forever, and won’t end after five years. The mutual feeling is that we are much more effective together.

Mr. Essey acknowledged that a lack of ongoing communication created some misunderstanding from the AAN board. The ABF needs to improve on our updates in the future. Ms. Rydell explained that a motion was passed for the AAN to fund the ABF based on mutually agreed upon metrics and milestones. The two executive committees will establish these by November 22, and then review them annually. She also stressed that communications between the RAC and the Science Committee needs to be a two-way conversation, both sides have ownership in expressing their needs.

The Foundation has also started working with Trevino Consulting Group in Houston, Texas to establish major giving efforts in the region which has one of the largest concentrations of high-wealth individuals in the country.

* 1. **Board Discussion:** The Board spent some time discussing our Business Plan going forward. Discussion highlights included:
* Dr. Smith suggested that Ms. Ransom should share her monthly update with the AAN.
* Dr. Griggs stressed the importance of building partnerships with outside groups.
* Ms. Miller recently hosted a fundraiser and felt she needed more support from an ABF representative to explain how donations are used.
* Dr. Dodick noted that our previous five-year plan was put together by outside consultants. This would be an ideal time to have a strategic retreat to discuss how we will realize our new five-year plan.
* Dr. Stevens is pleased that our strategic plan and budget are aligned and agrees that we should take a few days to set our direction. Having a template makes a big difference in achieving results.
* Dr. Dodick acknowledged the leadership and guidance received from Mr. Essey, Ms. Rydell, Mr. Jozefowicz and Mr. Smith throughout this process.
* Ms. Rydell and Ms. Ransom will discuss enhancing our connections to build a sophisticated marketing and communications team.
* Mr. Utecht proposed a revenue opportunity for the ABF to offer AAN tools and curriculum through a learning management system.
* Ms. Miller expressed her wish to better tell our story; our accomplishments and achievements thus far. Ms. Ransom agreed that renewed support from the AAN will help build our marketing.
* Dr. Shulman would like to challenge people through our CRTS program to work in high profile areas to help raise awareness and build our profile. Challenges result in lots of excitement.
* Dr. Sirven spoke about the importance of a formal onboarding process and mentorship for our newest board members.
* Mr. Utecht and Mr. Gasby would like to develop an electronic press kit; a tool kit that includes a “sizzle reel” that can be used at events.
* Mr. Goodno and Ms. Ransom recognize there are many needs, and we are now in a better position to look at these ideas and use our resources in a smart and effective manner.
  1. **Strategic Planning:** The Foundation Dr. Sirven spoke about the 2020 Commitment to Cures event which is tied to the AAN annual meeting. Host Committee co-chairs, Drs. Anthony Lane and Xavier Montalban are working on increasing our profile in Toronto. Our three scientific breakthrough awardees are British and Canadian. Both will be fantastic draws, however both are subject to scheduling issues. Meetings with Brain Canada, a comparable foundation, have been arranged to talk about a possible joint venture. Planning for 2021 in San Francisco starts soon. Discussion highlights were:
* Dr. Petersen suggested Jim Nance as a possible honoree in 2021. He already has a relationship with Brain & Life.
* Ms. Ransom would like to honor a Canadian for a breakthrough achievement for the Cure One, Cure Many Award.
* Dr. Petersen mentioned the Weston Brain Foundation, and the CCNA (Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging) as possible resources and partners.
* Ms. Ransom has sent letters to Seth Rogen and Courtney Cox & Renee Zellweger regarding possible cover stories.
* Ms. Rydell noted that there are many more rules and regulations regarding holding this meeting in Canada. Sponsorships, fundraising laws, etc. may require us to hire a fundraising/PR consultant.
* Dr. Shulman and Dr. Griggs would like to have a current or former CRTS recipient at each one of the banquet tables to share their story.
* Dr. Sirven is working with the committee to select a venue, Ms. Rydell suggests working with the AAN meeting planning staff to utilize their connections.

1. **Mission Advancement Strategies and Tactics:** Ms. Marie Tuhy, Director of Mission Advancement, introduced Mr. Eric Mueller. Mr. Mueller owns and operates a digital marketing company called Pixeleric, with a focus on small business and non-profits. Mr. Mueller presented information to the Board on Social Media tools and strategies. Our main focus and investment is on Facebook. We have been able to use the amazing amount of demographic data that Facebook has to target likely donors. The advantage of this is that we can simultaneously test the effectiveness of several ad campaigns, manage and measure the results in a short period of time. We also have established accounts on Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn, with plans to make Instagram our next launch. Each of the social networks have their own strengths for different types of communications – video, graphics, photos, and text. Ms. Tuhy spoke about using our 2020 plan to focus on specific diseases, with the tie to Cure One, Cure Many.

Ms. Marie Tuhy, Director of Mission Advancement presented a crowdfunding update. The Mission Advancement Team looked at successful campaigns, determined that networks are the key element. Since our site has been refreshed with the new branding, this is a low-cost way to launch a campaign. The ideal amount for crowdfunding is $10K or less, which is not much in the research world. Ideally, we could target elements of a project, such as one line-item or piece of equipment, or and education grant to fund travel or a summer stipend for students. This will be a great way for our research advisory committee to collaborate with the AAN scientific committee to approve smaller projects suitable for crowdsourcing.

Mr. Lisa Dahlberg, Major Gifts Officer spoke about several donor events the ABF is sponsoring in the next few months. Mr. Eagleman is hosting a movie screening and discussion in Silicon Valley. The Sarofim family is holding a party in Houston, and we are exploring several other events in Aspen, Minnesota, and comedy shows in the Bay Area. Ms. Miller hosted a party in the Hamptons on September 7, which resulted in 60 new donors.

The purpose of these events is to make connections; get the ABF in front of people of means, have conversations, get introductions to potential donors, do some brand building. Mr. Goodno recognizes that putting on events is very time intensive, but is a good way to identify prospective donors who will need at least 6-7 touches, maybe many more, in order to realize major gifts. The Board brainstormed ideas that would help party hosts:

* A stock presentation that can be fine-tuned as needed.
* Speakers available to attend who have more detailed information about the ABF and can speak about how we are different from sub-specialty organization, and how we intersect.
* A 5-7 minute “sizzle-reel” containing all the ABF highlights, from the high level to the focus in a few minutes. Ties into edutainment piece.

1. **Governance Committee Report:** Five new members will begin on the ABF board starting in January. The Board was asked for ideas and feedback on the best onboarding process. Following are some of the suggestions:

* Mr. Essey suggested giving new members an orientation packet and have them attend a short webinar to brief them on the mission and history of the ABF, get them acquainted with the staff.
* Ms. Rydell, as CEO of the AAN, meets with her new board members for one day in their environment. This provides an opportunity to build trust, have conversations and build a personal connection.
* Several people mentioned pairing each new member with a mentor. This allows them to ask questions privately and share feedback.
* Dr. Dodick mentioned having a retreat to build camaraderie prior to our Board meeting in Scottsdale.

The Board also discussed ideas to keep our retiring board members engaged with the ABF, and retain their institutional memories:

* Create an advisory committee / alumni council
* Keep members involved in whichever committee they are passionate about
* Bring members back for Strategic Planning as needed
* Hold a social event at the AAN Annual meeting and give them information to enable them to be ambassadors for the ABF.

1. **Executive Session**

**Adjourned 3:00 p.m. CT**

Mr. Goodno thanked the ABF Board for their work and dedication and stated is has been his honor to be our chair.