



**American Brain Foundation  
Board of Directors  
February 23, 2020  
8:00 am MT  
Scottsdale, AZ**

**In Attendance:** David Dodick, MD, Chair; Susan Schneider Williams, Vice Chair; James Erwin; James Essey; Jacqueline French, MD; Kevin Goodno; Robert Griggs, MD; James Grotta, MD; Frances Jensen, MD; Shafali Jeste, MD; Sharon Klein; Cindy McCain; Suzanne Miller; Ronald Peterson, MD; Catherine Rydell, CAE; Joseph Sirven, MD; James Stevens, MD;

**Via Phone:** David Eagleman, PhD; Martin Shenkman

**Guest:** Ileana Trevino

**Staff:** Jane Ransom, Executive Director; Tim Engel, CFO; Emily Christian; Lisa Dahlberg; Julia Miglets-Nelson; Kim Howard

**Excused:** Sean Sansiveri; Dan Gasby; Ben Utecht

**Call to Order:** Sunday, February 23, 2020 at 8:05 am MT by Board Chair Dr. David Dodick

The minutes of the November 12, 2019 were approved as presented.

No conflicts of interest were stated.

**Executive Director's Report (Jane Ransom):** Ms. Ransom noted that 2020 will be a turning point year for the ABF. We have an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with the AAN, as well as to revisit our strategic plan and sharpen our strategies. She also welcomed the five new board members. Some highlights of 2020 so far, include:

- In January members of the ABF staff and Research Advisory Committee attended a Research Summit at the invitation of the AAN Science Committee. Sharing our respective research and fundraising agendas was a big step toward better collaboration. We anticipate future meetings to align on strategy.
- ABF will be hiring the Chicago-based marketing firm Yakkety Yak to increase the foundation's visibility. Recent public awareness events have included the Dan Gasby's radio show hosting the ABF, and a private party hosted by Fayeze and Susan Sarofim that brought Houston researchers and donors together around our Cure One, Cure Many theme. Susan Williams and David Dodick were both speakers.
- The first quarterly meeting of the new AAN/ABF leadership team was held with the chairs, chief executives and science/research chairs of the two organizations. The purpose is to promote strategic collaboration and alignment with them.

**Our Vision (Dr. David Dodick):** Dr. Dodick thanked all members for participating in the strategic planning surveys. He presented a vision for the future which includes:

1. **Vision** – Thomas Edison’s idea that “*Vision without execution is delusion.*” He stressed that we need the full engagement of board members playing their roles in execution. We need to exploit everyone’s skills and talents; we need the board working on our behalf. He also stressed that there remains an absence of a leading public voice for brain disease, which is a tremendous opportunity for the ABF.

2. **Distinguishing Characteristics** – What distinguishes the ABF?

**Cure One, Cure Many** – We fund research across the entire spectrum of brain diseases and disorders, knowing that when we cure one, we will cure many.

**Vital partnership with the American Academy of Neurology** - We have the brain trust, the very people who are going to find these cures.

Discussion highlights:

- A small percentage of the public understands "cure one, cure many" -- we need to explain what that means
- We need to brand brain disease like cancer and heart
- We need to sharpen our case and our message

3. **Short-term 5-year goals**

**FEAR** = Fundraising (philanthropy), Engage Public, Aligned leadership w/ AAN, Research

- Raise 26M for research; 8M unrestricted
- Expand Donors from 2,700 - 3,275
- Increase Grants/Awards from ABF to AAN to 19M
- Increase Public awareness of brain disease from 29 to 40%
- Improve functional expense ratio from 72% to 84% programming
- Improve AAN return on grant awards by 984%
- Improve AAN return on fundraising by 1697%
- Move Charity Navigator rating from 2-star to 4-star (we are now at 3-star)
- Move Guidestar rating from gold to platinum

4. **Big Win**

- We need a big win with big partners (industry, tech)
- We should not be ashamed to imitate
- Need strategic partnerships that capture *other* brain diseases that are not traditionally classified as brain diseases (e.g. mental health and chronic pain)
- We should have a partnership analogous to that which the AHA has with the Brain Health and Cognitive Impairment Initiative

5. **Make Noise**

- Provide value (content, resources)
- Tell our story
- Highlight research breakthroughs
- Capitalize on our assets, such as relationship with AAN and our database

**ABF’s Distinguishing Features Presentations:**

1. **Cure One, Cure Many** – Dr. Frances Jensen presented how science is beginning to break down silos in brain disease research, reflecting the ABF’s “Cure One, Cure Many” perspective, which is unique among brain disease organizations. She discussed the rapid growth of clinical neuroscience and outlined opportunities for breakthroughs:
  - Recent FDA approvals increasing at unprecedented rate
  - Neuroscience graduate degrees are the fastest growing category in biomedicine
  - NIH increased funding
    - BRAIN,
    - ADRD (dementia)
    - HEAL (pain)
  - Re-entry of pharma/industry
    - Gene therapy
    - Immunotherapies
    - devices
  
2. **Relationship with AAN** – AAN’s president Dr. Jim Stevens presented the basis of the partnership between AAN and ABF and our shared desire to increase awareness and fundraising for research. The ABF is the only organization in the field with a unique research partnership with the AAN, which is the largest professional association of neurologists in the world. The AAN supporting the ABF as a philanthropic arm that can fund its research program, and about the ABF’s increasingly public-facing position.

Stevens outlined the financial and corporate relationships between AAN and ABF which have been renewed for the period 2020-2024. The shared goals of the partnership are:

- Better treatments, prevention, and cures for patients in the hands of neurologists
- More public influencers and leaders actively advocating for research dollars from both government and the public
- Career growth of clinicians and scientists (most of whom are AAN members) in the field of neuroscience due to funding from the ABF
- Greater public awareness of the value of neurologists and the neurology profession
- Growing public understanding of the need to contribute to research

Following Dr. Stevens presentation Dr. Dodick presented Cathy Rydell with the Board Chair Award that will be formally presented at the ABF’s Commitment to Cures event in April. Dr. Dodick thanked Cathy for her leadership over the last 21 years and her continued support of the ABF.

### **Strategic Planning**

The Board discussed strategic priorities for the next 2-3 years. Discussion highlights included:

- a. Fundraising/Research:
  - Big Win (One brave idea but exploit cure one, cure many mandate)
  - Disease-specific funds: Glioblastoma
  - Big research themes that cut across many diseases
  - ABF Brainstorms or Brain Innovation Institute (secure NIH R13)
  - Shark Tank (exploit innovations on the cusp)
  - Planned giving information on AAN dues page
  - COVID-19 estate planning presentation by Marty Shenkman

**b. Public Awareness:**

- Sharpen our case and our message with examples fit for public consumption that demonstrate connection between diseases
- Share our successes (funded investigators), content (podcasts from our funded researchers, where are they now, 1-pagers that describe the disease and key research areas), create a sense of urgency and cultivate trust/confidence to public, AAN members, previous donors, subscribers
- More public influencers raising awareness and money for funding
- Appear on The View per Mrs. McCain's invitation
- Partnership with new marketing firm, Yakkety Yak

**Lunch Presentation – The Board & Fundraising:** Ileana Trevino from Trevino Consulting Group presented a workshop on how the board can be involved in fundraising. She stressed that funders want to see 100 percent giving by the Board. Board participation can be especially helpful in getting the following big wins for 2020:

1. \$1.65M for 10 research scholarships in cognitive aging and age-related memory loss
2. \$1.5M for our Lewy Body Dementia research award
3. \$1.6M for Next Generation Research Grants (CRTS/CSDA)
4. \$3M for a 3-year public awareness campaign
5. \$200K for Commitment to Cures

**Financial Report** – Jim Essey, Treasurer, and the Finance Committee are committed to being very aggressive on meeting our financial goals this year. They want to make everything very transparent and easy to understand. They plan to bring in a outside consultant to look at our financial policies, procedures and practices looking at potential ways we could improve in any of those areas.

Tim Engel, CFO, shared the preliminary financial statements for period ending on December 31, 2019, show that ABF has realized \$5.2M in revenue. Operating expenses were at \$5.1M, and the net operating income is \$60K. There was a significant estate gift in 2019 of \$1.2M and \$390K of in-kind advertising.

We're seeing a very positive trend from 2017-2017 where our functional expense ratios are moving into conformity with what is considered best practice in the nonprofit industry, that is, 75% of expenses going to programming and 25% going for fundraising and management.

Sharon Klein requested that Tim Engel share the ABF Investment Policy with the Finance Committee. Dr. Griggs suggested a goal to establish an endowment eventually. Several mentioned the hope that the ABF could raise money from pharma for research because a lot is being left on the table. The AAN continues to raise money from pharma to support the annual meeting and continuing educational programs, and the ABF does not want to undermine that funding in any way. But the ABF should go after the philanthropic side of the pharma companies where there is no competition with the AAN.

**Committee to Cures Update** – Dr. Joe Sirven reported that the event planning and fundraising for the Commitment to Cures event are going well. Awardees for the event are Jim Cramer, Emilia Clarke, Sidney Crosby and Cathy Rydell. We have raised to date \$57K, 134 sponsorships are

pending and the value of those pending request equals \$285K. Dr. Sirven mentioned that it is helpful to have the ABF Board members make their annual gifts as bids at the dinner.

**Executive Session**

At 2:30 p.m. the Board met in executive session.

**Adjourned 4:00 p.m. MT**

DRAFT