



**American Brain Foundation  
Executive Committee Meeting  
March 12, 2020  
10:00 am CT  
Conference Call**

**In Attendance:** David Dodick, MN, Chair; Susan Schneider Williams, Vice Chair; James Essey, Treasurer; Shafali Jeste, MD, Secretary; Kevin Goodno, Immediate Past Chair

**Staff:** Jane Ransom; Tim Engel; Kim Howard

The meeting was called to order at 10:03am CT by David Dodick.

The members approved the minutes of the December 16, 2019 meeting unanimously.

1. **Impact of Covid-19:** The Executive Committee agreed unanimously to cancel the 2020 in-person Commitment to Cures dinner knowing that the AAN is on the cusp of canceling its annual meeting. Staff is proposing a virtual Commitment to Cures campaign—using multiple channels to publicize our awardees and driving toward a live-streamed event on April 29<sup>th</sup> which would be emceed by Jim Cramer. Our marketing firm sees a lot of potential to build our social media following by using our celebrity awardees to attract people to the virtual event. Staff has reworked the sponsorship benefits for the virtual campaign and anticipates that at least some of our current sponsors will stick with us.

Executive Committee members agreed that the Covid-19 crisis is pushing us to envision new ways of doing our work and that the transition to an online Commitment to Cures is a good idea. Committee members want board members to make or pledge their annual gifts by April 15, so that we can announce 100% board giving and announce their collective gift at the start of the virtual Commitment to Cures campaign. Ms. Ransom will make that request. Awards will still be given to all awardees just in a different format. Collaboration with the AAN on this could be a win on both sides. The underlying message is that scientific research must not be side-lined and must go on. Ms. Ransom will meet with AAN leadership to discuss our plans and a message that we are transitioning to a virtual event will be sent to all ticket holders and sponsors.

Ransom also reported that the ABF staff is will begin working remotely on Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. She noted that AAN had developed COVID-19 travel guidelines for staff and recommended that the ABF adopt them. The committee agreed.

2. **Strategic Planning Board Meeting Follow-Up (Dr. David Dodick):** Highlights from the board's strategic planning discussion in Scottsdale were presented and discussed. Highlights:

- 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

The View appearance scheduled for April 9 was highlighted. Ms. McCain has secured a full segment for Ms. Williams and Ms. McCain to talk about the ABF. This could be postponed due to the COVID-19 situation, but it will happen eventually. If postponed it will give us more time to prepare and update our website. We need to create bite size information for public consumption and provide Cure One, Cure Many examples.

### 3. Other Discussion Topics (Dr. David Dodick):

- a. Board Composition – Dr. Dodick confidentially noted that there may be a vacancy for a public Board member coming up by the end of the year. He discussed the possibility of recruiting Susan Sarofim, who hosted a January 2020 event for the ABF in Houston. She has a personal connection to our mission because she experienced a TBI from car racing.
- b. Board Engagement – Dr. Dodick proposed a couple of subcommittees for development/fundraising and public engagement/awareness. After some discussion it was decided to create two strategic planning task forces—one for Public Awareness and one for Research and Fundraising. The latter task force combines research and fundraising because we must align opportunities in each area to be successful in either.

### 4. Clinical Research Training Scholarship in Tourette (Jane Ransom):

The Tourette Association of America (TAA) is unhappy that for the past three years we have had few applicants for the CRTS we co-fund with them through AAN's research program. They feel they can attract more people directly into their own research award program because the Tourette research community is used to TAA's application timeline, which is different than AAN's. Ransom recommended that we try reversing the funding relationship with the Tourette Association for the 2021 CRTS. It is important to retain relationships with sub-specialty groups; and perhaps over time the funding could revert to the way we've had it. The motion was made that in 2021 the ABF fund TAA in the amount of \$50,000 for one CRTS. This motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.