



**American Brain Foundation  
Executive Committee Meeting  
May 13, 2022  
10:00 a.m. CT  
Video Conference Call**

**In Attendance:** David Dodick, MD, Chair; Ben Lenail, Vice Chair; Jacqueline French, MD, Secretary; James Essey, Treasurer; Merit Cudkowicz, MD; Dan Gasby; Robert Griggs, MD; James Grotta, MD; Frances Jensen, MD; Sean Sansiveri; Orly Avitzur, MD, President AAN; Mary Post, CEO AAN

**Excused:** David Eagleman, PhD; Ralph R. Leslie; Ronald Peterson, MD, PhD; Alyx Porter, MD;

**Staff (non-voting):** Jane Ransom, ED; Noah Zak, Susan Corcoran; Emily Christian; Julia Miglets-Nelson; Lisa Dahlberg, Liam Moore, Kim Howard

**Call to Order - David Dodick, MD**

- The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. CT by David Dodick. No conflicts of interest were reported. The members approved the Consent Agenda (minutes of the March 19, 2022 meeting and the December 31, 2021 ABF Audit, and confirmation of Clifton Larson Allen as the auditors for 2022) unanimously.

**Board Chair Remarks – David Dodick, MD**

- State of the Foundation is healthy, as we look to increase the Board. With the departure of Suzanne Miller, we're looking for new Board members (both Neurologist and non-Neurologist) to join us. Fundraising for 2023's Commitment to Cures Gala has started with a \$25,000 donation from Draft Kings.
- Conflict of Interest Policy recommendations and Strategic Planning discussion will be held today.

**Research Update - Robert Griggs, MD**

- We've met/will be meeting with many partner organizations and pharmaceutical companies as we establish our shape our Neuroinflammation Initiative, which will be chaired by Dr. Stephen Hauser. These organizations seem very spirited and enthusiastic about these efforts, and we can expect fruitful cooperation in the future.

**Commitment to Cures Update – Sean Sansiveri & Emily Christian**

- Our annual Commitment to Cures event was a huge success, setting a record revenue of \$874,727 (a 205% increase over 2021's event). Sponsorship revenue came out to \$346,000, a 459% increase over 2021. 371 in-person attendees were joined by 815 virtual attendees.
- Strengths: Fundraising results; a strong program; strong leadership from our Chair; well organized; great group of awardees; well-attended and high-quality livestream; ABF-Funded researchers were given a spotlight and the chance to interact with sponsors; great venue for the main event.

- Weaknesses: Seth Rogen not in attendance; livestream was expensive and didn't raise much money; VIP reception was program-heavy and didn't allow for much mingling; VIP room didn't feel particularly "VIP"; make room for more entertainment; all-consuming for staff supporting the event; "Auction" portion was late night for East Coast viewers; virtual event felt a bit "prerecorded", instead of a "live event" buzz; goodie bags could be improved.
- Opportunities: Increase size of Event Committee; seek out local companies/institutions in Boston; include entertainment to keep the event lively; how can we make this "the place to be" during the Annual Meeting; ensure best timing of the event date during the AM week; build in more incentives for tiered ticket levels; increase help from sponsors with event promotion; more staff support for the event; next year's awardees.
  - o How can we engage the virtual audience and make the livestream feel lively and energetic?
- Threats: COVID-19; competing events at the Annual Meeting; timing issues/time zones; celebrity guests canceling in-person appearances; increasing board member involvement.

### **Congratulations to Dr. Griggs on his honorary doctorate from the University of Sheffield!**

### **Conflict-of-Interest Policies & Procedures - Sean Sansiveri & Jim Grotta, MD**

- To ensure that the ABF has a process in place in case of a potential Conflict of Interest.
  - o Modeled after Nonprofit law in New York, which tends to be stringent in comparison to other states.
- Document was emailed to all Board members.
- Motion to approve proposed COI Policy was passed unanimously.

### **ABF Strategic Planning – Jane Ransom, David Dodick, MD**

- Most current board members were not on the board when our current mission and vision statement was drafted. Our mission and vision may need realignment or recalibration.
- What do we want to be known for in 2030? How are we identified as a thriving organization? How are our partner relationships characterized?
- What are some of the gaps that appear in the AAN's public-facing spaces that the ABF could focus on? How can the ABF amplify the AAN's message, and vice-versa?
- Mission Statement: "Bringing researchers and donors together to cure brain disease"
  - o Revision ideas:
    - Focusing on "Brain Health", rather than just the disease.
    - ABF as hub/convenor in the brain space
    - Accelerating and influencing research
    - Health Equity
    - Cure One, Cure Many
    - Don't lose the role of donors.
- Vision: "Life without brain disease"
  - o Revision Ideas: General consensus was "Don't change it"!
- Discussions of organizational priorities and strategic goals, including Research, Fundraising, Public Awareness, Financial, and ABF/AAN Partnership strategy groups.
- Timeline:
  - o 5/13 BOD Meeting: Launch process
  - o Summer: meetings of work groups, delivering recommendations to Executive Committee by 8/1

- 8/4 Executive Committee: Receive recommendations from work groups & provide feedback
- 9/9-9/11 BOD Retreat: Review draft of strategic plan & provide feedback
- 11/3 Executive Committee: Recommend final strategic plan update
- 11/18 BOD: Approve final document

#### **AAN Update – Orly Avitzur, MD**

- AAN Annual Meeting had over 8,000 attendees from 60 countries.
  - ABF's booth and C2C event were both successful.
  - COVID response was smooth, with verification process, masking, and on-site testing running smoothly. Fewer than five cases were reported.
- Neurology on the Hill, May 23-24
- AAN Summer Conference: Autoimmune Neurology & Year in Review, July 15-16
- Call for board nominations in mid-summer
- New *Brain and Life* podcast
- From Jim Essey – how can we further support the Essey and Potamkin Awards moving forward?

#### **Finance – Jim Essey, Treasurer**

- Q1 Income Statement: very positive results. Operating expenses came in under budget.
- Q1 Statement of Financial Position: plenty of money in the bank, particular growth in unrestricted net assets, which is great for continued flexibility.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m. CT.