

IBHA Board Meeting  
August 2, 2012 9:15 am

Amway Board Room  
Devos Center  
Grand Valley State University



Attending: Leslye Allen, Milly Alvarez, Walter Alvarez, Craig Benjamin, Pamela Benjamin, Cynthia Brown, David Christian, Lowell Gustafson, Esther Quaedackers, Barry Rodrigue, Kathy Schick, Fred Spier, Joseph Voros.

Agenda:

- 1 IBHA Membership in other organizations
- 2 Long Term Financial Sustainability of IBHA
- 3 Fund Raising, Grant Applications
- 4 Role and Future of the Advisory Council
- 5 Chronozoom
- 6 Future of the IBHA

Fred Spier called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.. He welcomed our new board members and guests in attendance. He thanked all for attending and especially GVSU for its support. He mentioned that he and Lowell would review the by-laws prior to the members' meeting. David will encourage at Thursday evening welcome that all IBHA members attend meeting.

1. IBHA Membership in other organizations
  - a. David provides background of IBHA perhaps joining NOGWHISTO (national organization of global and world history). This would give us standing in this organization, permitting Big History panels at their conference. Affiliations also help with fund raising. In order to raise IBHA visibility with those outside of the history discipline, we might also join a Geological Association, a Paleo-anthropology association, etc. Perhaps we could join a Future Studies Association.
  - b. Lowell proposed that we apply for membership in NOGWHISTO and that David Christian appoint an IBHA sub-committee with non-historians to explore how the IBHA forms associations with other related organizations. Craig Benjamin seconded the motion.
    - i. Approved unanimously.
2. Long Term Financial Sustainability of IBHA
  - a. Craig submits Treasurer's report. We had \$67,961 at the end of 2011. We still have that amount after Chronozoom donation of \$10,000 and the Big History Project of another \$10,000.

- b. Craig will ask a financial manager to prepare an understandable financial report. Craig also reported that there will be an external audit, as called for by GVSU rules.
  - c. Our Lake Michigan account has about \$38,000. This includes membership dues and conference fees.
  - d. Craig had submitted and those in attendance approved a preliminary conference budget in February while many board members were in Moscow. In it, he projected a tentative conference profit of \$6,491.82.
  - e. Our actual profit on the conference will be almost \$20,000 (if one counts the BHP and CZ donations). It breaks even if we do not count those two special donations.
  - f. In our combined accounts, we will have about \$94,000 after the conference.
  - g. David Christian proposed a formal thanks to Craig, Pam, Leslye for their work on the budget! Approved by enthusiastic acclamation.
  - h. Craig Benjamin reported that a GVSU PR release had received over 2,000 hits, many by major corporations.
  - i. He reported that we had 259 paid members; 200 are registered for the conference.
  - j. Due to State of Michigan laws, Leslye's position will be advertised. Craig, Pam, and two union reps will be on the committee to hire her.
  - k. We now have enough money to pay Leslye for three years of part-time employment.
3. Fund Raising, Grant Applications
- a. Son of Fred Meijer (stores), Hank, is interested in history; may be a contact. David Frey, who is interested in environmental issues has been contacted, but no response yet. NSF, NEH, need a project, which includes administrative costs.
  - b. Other fund raising possibilities? How do we engage world outside GR? How does as IBHA fund raising interact with that by other centers, such as David's university BH center?
  - c. Two funders in Europe have discussed with Esther about business related programs based in BH. She will explore this.
  - d. Big History Project will be released in the middle of next year. The IBHA should use this to appeal to apply for grants.
  - e. Percentage of grants for external groups could stay with IBHA.
  - f. We may develop an IBHA rationale to be sent to Liberal Arts colleges to open Big History positions.
  - g. Could BH be used to provide rationales for STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) programs?
  - h. Importance of long term relationships, trust with potential funders for many years before funding is realized.
  - i. David will appoint subcommittee to look into funding and membership.
4. Role and Future of the Advisory Council
- a. David will look into appointing new members, such as Nick Toth and Milly Alvarez, to the Advisory Council. He may put representatives of external groups on Advisory Council.
  - b. The Board recognized Advisory Council member Pamela Benjamin's role as a co-staff supervisor.
5. Chronozoom

- a. Rane Johnson and Roland Saekow joined the meeting to discuss the IBHA role in Chronozoom. Fundraising for CZ would be easier if it were owned by a non-profit organization like the IBHA rather than Microsoft. The IBHA could also appoint a Community Leader who would be paid for a period of time by Microsoft. The job of the CL would be to direct the development of CZ and enlist qualified people to add desired materials.
- b. Rane reported that NASA loves CZ; she talked to them recently. They might use it as an internal tool. Also Library of Congress. They both wanted to know who makes the decisions about what goes into CZ? Who is on the Advisory Board? How does peer review work? Rane asked if there is IBHA interest in CZ being an online journal of BH?
- c. There was discussion about if the IBHA Board sees us playing a serious, hands-on role. Does the IBHA have the resources, expertise, or time to manage CZ? If not, we would not do a good job. The IBHA might be better positioned to be on the CZ advisory board. Does CZ need a wider board than IBHA could provide?
- d. Could a CZ manager could be housed somewhere, and supported by Microsoft Research Connections (MRC). Could CZ be a catalyst for IBHA, attracting scientists? Could CZ help IBHA be a new kind of organization? Rane reported that MRC loves what we're doing, wants us to have big success. MRC contribution would allow creating another staff position within IBHA. Rane affirmed that the code would continue to be written at Moscow State University, Berkeley, and the University of Washington. The Project Manager (PM) is to be at UW, funded by MRC, paid for from Rane's budget. We also need a Community Lead (CL) for Strategy, Content, to build an advisory board, support for the CL would come from MRC for perhaps 2 years, but then we would need to fund with grants. What does it mean to have CZ spread among somany places? What is its organizational structure and who are its ultimate decision makers?
- e. Thinking broadly about goals and strategy, it was suggested that since CZ matches IBHA's purposes, the IBHA should support it. However, CZ's overall approach might be reviewed if IBHA took it on. Should IBHA positions be spread out around the world, maybe placing the Community Leader in Australia, Holland, or Berkeley. If CZ were centered at a 501.c.3, not just at MRC, we could look for more support from individuals who would not give if Microsoft is involved. Would CZ suck up any financial resources and time IBHA would have available. Could CZ help IBHA's visibility, and thus our ability to raise money? The CL doesn't have to be at GVSU, in digital world it could be anywhere, but we need an institution that would be supportive. What is the risk to IBHA if we managed CZ? Would the IBHA take on the organization of scholars from various fields for the CZ editorial board? Rane emphasized that we need explore this in the next few weeks.

- f. Fred, Craig, Lowell will communicate further with Rane, Walter and Roland about IBHA / CZ relationship.
6. Future of IBHA
- a. The IBHA needs to cultivate more science members.
  - b. The IBHA might seek funding to develop curricula for community / college level courses / fora. To do this, the IBHA would:
    - i. Organize seminars such as those now offered by Dominican for its own faculty who teach Big History.
    - ii. Community educational organizers and faculty from colleges who would like to teach Big History could apply for mini-grants that would cover costs to attend the seminar.
    - iii. Graduates of the seminar could apply for seed money to begin Big History courses / programs in their colleges / community educational organizations.
  - c. BH Research. THE IBHA could sponsor / co-sponsor a series of conferences that would focus on themes such as the anthropocene, entropy, time, etc. The IBHA could publish selected papers from the conferences.
  - d. The IBHA can award a prize for a BH publication. This could be named for donor.
  - e. The IBHA could offer funding for PhD students.
  - f. An objective for the IBHA is to break down academic silos, 19<sup>th</sup> century defined disciplines and foster hubs of knowledge, synthesis, unity of knowledge.
  - g. David Christian proposed that the theme of the next (2014) IBHA conference will be on the Energy and Big History. The motion was seconded by Cynthia Brown and was approved unanimously.
7. Meeting Adjourned at 3:00 p.m.
- a. All agreed that we had an excellent Board meeting and that we have come an enormous way since we met at Coldigioco, less than two years ago!