

Tech Valley Game Space Meeting Notes for 5-13-2020

The regular meeting of the Tech Valley Game Space Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, 5-13-2020 at 6pm.

The following members of the board were in attendance via Discord Voice:

Taro Omiya (Interim Chair)

Dan Tanguay (Acting Secretary)

Jamey Stevenson (Interim Executive Director)

Neil Alers

Mitchell Patterson

The notes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

The first item was to approve the 2020 Statement of Work (SOW) for the RPI Center of Excellence grant funding.

Prior to approval, Jamey reviewed via Discord Stream the key goal, task, report, and budget items in the SOW grant to get all Board members up to speed.

Neil asked about the difference in budget from 2019 to 2020 and why it's lower this year. Jamey responded with the strategy for putting more focus on fundraising as well as mitigating volunteer burnout.

Mitchell asked about the average fundraising efforts from previous years. 2019 was 10k, 2018 was 6k. He asked if he could match State money with State money; as far as Jamey knows, we cannot.

Mitchell volunteered to help with the fundraising strategy/efforts moving forward.

There was a motion to approve the SOW, and it was approved.

Jamey also developed a contingency plan for the SOW if it isn't approved. RPI's expectations for the grant request are less than the current ask due to informal spitballing earlier in the year. He reviewed it with the Board.

Jamey and Taro discussed if we need to approve the contingency SOW now. They felt we should.

Dan noted that a lot of universities are tightening their belts due to the COVID pandemic.

They reviewed how the Cost Share Letter, SOW, etc. should change. Taro recommended that Jamey make the edits in the moment so the Board has a draft to explicitly approve.

There was a motion to approve the contingency plan, and it was approved.

Jamey gave a status update to the Board on how TVGS has adapted to the COVID pandemic. The primary focus was the event strategy, and he reviewed what changes have been made so far.

One of the real challenges moving ahead has been the demand for online classes, which TVGS wasn't poised to execute due to the focus on onsite classes prior to the COVID pandemic. There are talks with local partners but nothing concrete yet. Jamey is seeking input for how to capitalize on the demand for online classes.

Jamey feels that social presence is another challenge, which he hopes to solve with a weekly (non-Jam) meetup online and a monthly community night (with icebreaker activities).

Dan asked how the community/member morale is. Jamey doesn't have a lot of insight into that currently outside of Game Jams and other events. There haven't been a lot of coworker cancellations yet. Jamey is continuing to look at new online-only value propositions for being a paid member, such as software licenses.

Neil asked about hardware loaning as a value proposition, and Taro discussed some of our early plans for inventory management as well as having to coordinate with TVCOG for access to the office.

Jamey is seeing the most negative impact with our volunteer coordinators. There are more vacancies than we've had, and those that are active volunteers aren't communicating as frequently now. There have been some movements toward improving Quality of Life (QOL) of the volunteers prior to the pandemic, but there's more to do.

Taro gave the Board context about how coordinators were written into the by-laws initially because they were going to be officers; they are not currently officers, so he suggested making changes to the by-laws in order to create more flexibility for the volunteer policy (to adapt to situations like COVID) to submit to the next Board meeting.

Jamey raised the issue that the Board should still be responsible for appointing persons to vacant coordinator positions should no members volunteer.

Taro asked when should we declare coordinator positions as vacant, and if we should create a more explicit policy/by-law around that.

Taro shared the latest by-laws with the Board to provide more context for the issues. Upon reviewing the by-laws, they are explicit about resignations and inactive or unresponsive coordinators.

Taro then prompted discussion for how to improve finding coordinators for the next term (especially for the communications coordinator and media coordinator). If we do move ahead with removing Coordinators from the by-laws, it gives TVGS flexibility to better curate the coordinator positions and find a balance between paid and volunteer positions.

A big challenge we have moving forward is soliciting volunteers for TVGS for the July-term. What medium best reaches folks in these socially distant times? What should our messaging be due to the pandemic? Jamey really leans into targeted outreach to folks from his contact list.

Neil has proposed that this outreach [and the July elections] is a good opportunity to consolidate the message about the near-term strategy and future for TVGS.

Neil and Mitchell volunteered to help with this messaging.

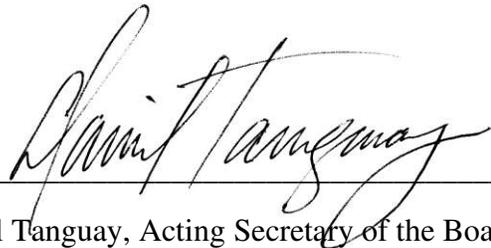
Jamey discussed the strategy for expanding education revenue and partnerships with the Board to get any quick feedback from the Board. Jamey has focused on partners such as BOCES that serve the whole Capital Region and not just one audience (such as universities). Taro proposed taking deeper discussions offline.

Taro solicited feedback from the Board on a better way to track action items and task management moving forward. Mitchel proposed that Trello is one of the best options. Dan noted that all tools have their upsides/downsides based on how they use them, and he recommended that he take a look at coordinator Trello board as an example.

Taro solicited feedback on having an annual theme for TVGS each year that aligns with the strategic planning. The Board thought it has value, and Taro wants to continue working with the Board on the theme offline.

Jamey informed the Board that TVGS is continuing to migrate documents to the Google Shared Drives. Document owners should move their work into the new drives. There will be an upcoming Admin Jam to assist with this migration, and there will be a Doodle Poll for this Jam.

The meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel Tanguay", written over a horizontal line.

Daniel Tanguay, Acting Secretary of the Board