

This meeting of the Tech Valley Game Space Board of Directors was held on Thursday, 9/8/2022 at 8:00 pm EDT.

The following members of the board were in attendance via teleconference:

Taro Omiya (Chair of the Board)

Daniel Tanguay (Secretary of the Board)

Jamey Stevenson (Executive Director)

Elizabeth McLaren

Dr. Laquana Cooke

A quorum is present at the start of the meeting.

There is a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The Board approves the Consent Agenda.

Jamey provides a brief update on finances, as Tom is unable to attend today's meeting. Tom and Jamey are meeting weekly to catch up on old business. All outstanding payments and invoices have been resolved! Tom intends to deliver the Quarterly Report in October: this best lines up with TVGS's fiscal quarter, and we'll have a more robust report, including side-by-side comparisons between our goals and our progress.

Jamey provides an update on contract negotiations with Nancy Warner, Vocation Media, and Questar. It's been a tough time getting a response from Nancy Warner, though he finally heard back from Richard (POC) that he's been ill for the past month. He's on the mend, and he intends to review the contract at the end of this week. The goal is still to get this executed as soon as possible so Elizabeth can begin coordinating with them. As for Vocation Media, we have finalized the contract and just need to sign it. Emily (POC) has also been slowed down with illness, but this shouldn't impact the signing. Things will kick off when Emily is feeling better.

Jamey follows with an update for Questar. The biggest sticking point has been how Jamey should be classified. Jamey wants TVGS classified as a partner as has been done in the past; Questar needs him classified as a Questar employee in order to be sponsored for the NYS K-12 teaching certificate. Jamey has proceeded ahead with the Questar classification. Payment was the other sticking point. Questar wants to pay him directly as an individual; Jamey wants payment directly to TVGS to avoid additional taxes on individual income. Questar legal is looking into an organization to organization payment plan; alternately, if it needs to be treated as individual income, TVGS needs to get paid more to compensate for the taxes.

The Board asks some follow-up questions. Elizabeth asks if Jamey being treated as a Questar employee impacts curriculum ownership? Jamey says it doesn't seem to be the case, but we'll need to keep an eye out for it. Additionally, are there other programs that we can pattern our strategy/curriculum after? Jamey says that BOCES has a similar program that he's taking learnings from.

Jamey then summarizes his Questar time commitment and reminds folks that he'll need to delegate more to the Board as he's now teaching. TVGS needs a lot of help with outreach at the moment. Jamey has laid the groundwork, but he needs assistance. The priority for outreach follows: Lift Off, Curriculum Development, and Volunteer.

Jamey solicits the Board for organizers. Taro and Frederika ran Lift Off in the past, but they are not available. It needs 4-5 organizers, and there are only 2 "maybes" so far. Jamey says that organizers can be from out of state (even though participants cannot). Jamey recommends that even blasting your own social networks (with 2 links from Jamey) as a call to action will help drum up organizers and volunteers. Taro notes that there is extensive documentation of how we've run it in the past, so organizers won't be starting from scratch. Elizabeth asks if those documents can be shared so that folks can get a sense of how they might be able to best apply their support. Finally, Jamey notes that certain developers have reached out to change the verbiage of the audience to be "underrepresented genders" in the development community. This changes the breadth of audience, so Jamey solicits feedback from the Board on the change.

Taro needs to take a bio break.

Jamey notes that the same sign-up sheet for Lift Off organizers can be used to identify folks who can help with curriculum development. While we're not hitting those curriculum units until early next year, those folks need time to develop the curriculum, so lining them up now is critical.

Taro is back from a bio break.

Next, Jamey discusses Can Code's recommendation for reaching out to Workforce Development (WDI) as a source of funding for programs such as Lift Off. It started with a 1-on-1 with AnnMarie who runs Can Code. Can Code has more established funding than TVGS, so we can learn from them. Instead of Sponsorship Tiers from local studios (how we've tried to find sponsors in the past), AnnMarie feels confident that WDI could fund something like Lift Off in the future, perhaps next year. Laquana suggests checking EITC funding as a future income stream. Laquana could help pursue this type of certification.

Jamey also notes that Can Code has partnerships through local community colleges, and this has resulted in Jamey having contacts at HVCC. He highlights a future opportunity to take our developed curriculum to adult education and workforce development. Elizabeth notes Jamey's bandwidth and asks what the goal is in expanding to these new audiences. Right now, Jamey's focused on relationship building with partners who have a good reputation for funding, etc. He's identifying opportunities that we may be able to capitalize on in future years but not committing to anything at the moment. Expansion needs to be a purposeful decision.

Next, Jamey provides an update on coworking spaces. Brian Corrigan, founder of MadGlory and now Rocket Science, seeks a partnership. Brian wants to put together a Unity certification course using existing materials. There would be a job path to Rocket Science based on this certification. Additionally, he has a new space in Schenectady that he wants to share with TVGS. He's also proposed a corporate membership Tier that bundles all the coworking spaces together. Tom is going to get more information from Mitchell at Wolfjaw about this business model.

Is this a good strategic fit? As a means to pool our resources, it seems like a good fit. It's potentially a good fit for our education efforts as well. Is it a good fit for coworking? This is debatable. We need to talk about the future of TVGS coworking prior to partnering on that. We also need to make sure that the TVGS Code of Conduct carries across all of these spaces. Elizabeth notes that Schenectady is a good fit for our audience.

Jamey notes that this could change from an opportunity to a threat depending on how Rocket Science wants to proceed. This points to the need to have a strategic planning session, including a SWOT, soon. There are lots of opportunities we need to evaluate. Jamey points out there are numerous organizations in the Capital Region trying to do the same thing. He wonders if there's a way to get everyone outside of TVGS to the table to find ways to collaborate. Dan will reach out to his contacts.

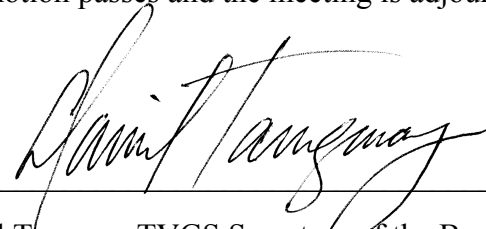
Finally, Jamey provides an update on the TVCOG coworking space. (As an aside, a couple of new folks are now using the coworking space after promoting it at the RPI event.) TVCOG wants to renegotiate membership tracking and pricing (including TVGS paying the upfront cost of key fobs for members). TVGS has a list of tracking requirements that TVCOG couldn't meet in the past; perhaps they can now. Jamey wants to still break even on membership costs, and paying for fob costs would not help with that. If there's a way to make it break even, Jamey recommends that we pursue that.

Taro skips an in-person review of mock Public Board Meeting feedback. We can review these changes on Discord in the Board/Coordinators channel.

Taro discusses strategies for meeting the 2022 Board Fundraising. The Board is supposed to hit \$9k by the end of the year; but it's only around \$2k at the moment. Giving Tuesday was our biggest day last year, so we're likely counting on that again. It's a great opportunity for punching above our weight due to the Facebook matching. Dan recommends that we reach out to Jarell to see if he can run Giving Tuesday again this year. Additionally, we should contact Emily and Rochelle for advice on personal fundraisers. Jamey also notes a longer-term idea of selling a Capital Region game bundle (itch.io-style) online as a fundraiser.

The Board asks when we should do our next SWOT. Dan suspects that November is too soon. The Winter break + January seems more reasonable. We should avoid using the Annual Members meeting as a forcing function, instead setting an internal milestone to get it done sooner (late Jan/early Feb). This will allow us to get the RPI funding signed in March and in flight by the time the Annual Members meeting comes around in April.

There is a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passes and the meeting is adjourned.



Daniel Tanguay, TVGS Secretary of the Board