



Game Manufacturers Association
Board of Directors Meeting Agenda
2020-07-23 @ 4:00 PM Eastern Time
Zoom Video Conference

Call to Order

Approve Minutes of 2020-06-16 Annual Membership Meeting

Circulated separately.

Approve Minutes of 2020-06-18 Board Meeting

Circulated separately.

Executive Director's Report

Circulated separately.

Update and Report on Town Hall Meeting and Member Survey

Communications

See attachments.

Schedule of Future Board Meetings

Establish the Objective of Board Communications ("one voice" operating practice)

Committee Reports

See attachments.

Committee Documents, Records, and Reporting Processes Discussion

Alternate Revenue Streams Discussion

Member Services Discussion

Further Bylaws Revisions Planning Discussion

2020–2021 Schedule of Board Meetings

Adjourn

Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee: John Stacy (Acting Chair)

No report.

Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design: John Stacy (Chair)

On July 9 the committee met to discuss how to proceed with the announcement of this year's winners and Hall of Fame inductees. It was decided that since we already have video acceptance speeches from the two HOF designer inductees, Wolfgang Kramer and Reinhold Wittig as well as from our rising star recipient Wolfgang Warsch, we would create a video program to be released by the end of August featuring the award recipients, the in Memorium segment for those members of our industry that died in the past year as well the two products that will be inducted into the hall. To facilitate this process we are mailing the Callie statues to the award winners and asking them to film a short acceptance speech which will be included in the final video. Of course we will ask them to embargo their winning until the program airs so we can have a greater impact of the awards. We also discussed the Origins Award & HOF review and recommendations committee and how we could support their efforts in time for the opening of 2020 nominations this fall.

Trade Show Site Selection Committee: John Stacy (Chair)

On July 21, we sent a meeting request doodle to committee members asking them for availability in August to reconvene the committee to discuss the format of the GAMA Expo for 2021 in case we need to alter it due to the covid-19 pandemic. The committee is comprised of members from all tiers and provides a nice cross section of membership. The committee will look at three contingencies: smaller physical show, a virtual expo or a hybrid of the two. In addition the committee will be asked about their experiences with virtual shows this year to create a best practices document to help guide future GAMA online conventions and conferences.

Communications

Received 2020-06-17

To the members of the GAMA Board of Directors:

I have had ties to the game industry, GAMA and Origins for the past 25 years -- as a member of the media as Senior Editor for InQuest Gamer magazine in the 90s, as a fan and attendee for many years after that, as a retailer for the past decade, and just a few years ago as a volunteer cyber-security consultant when I alerted the previous GAMA president to a major security hole in your registration system that allowed anyone with the know-how access to and even the ability to modify your entire registration database.

I have always supported GAMA's efforts, but I fear I cannot do so any longer. I'll leave my many issues with your failure to make a statement before Origins Online and the failures of your subsequent apologies to the industry voices of color who have spoken out.

The breaking line for me personally was the official Origins Online cancellation e-mail. Like most others who had registered for Origins Online, I found out about the cancellation from this e-mail. The ostensible reasons for the cancellation, that "we cannot responsibly hold our virtual convention, Origins Online, in this setting" and "even if it were possible to hold it, it would not be appropriate to do so," made little sense to me. Indeed, how better to support Black Lives Matter and people of color in this time by using your influence and your upcoming virtual convention to reach out to a large audience of predominantly white people -- the very people who need to hear that message the most?

It was only through digging deeper that I discovered that a large number of industry professionals and volunteers who were going to be a part of Origins Online had withdrawn from the convention. And seemingly this decision was made because "GAMA failed to address Black Lives Matter." But again, on its face that didn't make sense. Merely not making a statement is not reason enough for people to be so upset as to abandon the convention.

So I dug deeper. And ultimately it seems the board was requested to make a statement well before the convention, and had an opportunity to do so, and for whatever reason, chose not to. By the accounts I've found, it seems that one or more people made an appeal directly to the board, that appeal was denied, and it was solidarity against the board's refusal that led to the defections that ultimately forced the board to cancel the convention.

Of course, this is all second-hand and third-hand information, which brings me to my ultimate point, complaint and concern. I don't know for certain what happened behind the scenes, because YOU have refused to tell us. You make general statements about supporting Black Lives Matter and having a history of inclusion, but you don't take ownership for the mistakes you made -- whatever they were -- that led to so many industry professionals and fans being so disappointed.

But worse still, and unforgivable, is the impact your failure to fully explain what happened has had on the gaming community. I can't even count the number of disgruntled gamers I've seen on many different forums who are complaining about "cancel culture" or how ridiculous it is that a company is "forced" to make a statement or be vilified. By your silence and then misrepresentation of the reason for the convention cancellation, intentional or not, you have fed this reaction. In a time when our community needs unity and harmony more than ever, your failures to not only say you were wrong but WHY you were wrong, have only made a bad situation worse.

It's good that you're doing a town hall for some, but the damage to the gaming community at large has already been done, and that damage will be much harder to undo. Most people who had their registrations canceled won't know why the convention was truly canceled, and they won't do the research I did. They'll simply accept what you tell them, and some -- and even some is too many -- will blame Black Lives Matter itself. They will walk away less likely to support the cause, or worse, speak out against it.

I can forgive a person or an organization who makes a mistake and then owns that mistake. But I cannot support an organization that pays lip-service to those it offends without truly taking ownership of its responsibility.

Therefore, it is with deep disappointment that after 25 years in the industry I can no longer support GAMA, at least not until if and when this organization truly recognizes its failures and the potential negative impact of those failures, and addresses them in a truly *meaningful* way.

Having a diverse board is not enough. If you are not willing to use your influence and platform to truly help bring our community together, to show the importance of both acceptance AND accountability, then you are failing at what I feel should be your most fundamental goal

- Jeff Hannes

#