

## Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE)

Awards subcommittee meeting | Thurs., Aug. 17, 2023 | 3:00 pm. to 4:00 p.m.

### Minutes

- 1. Welcome** – Meeting called to order by Matt at 3:03. Welcomed all.
- 2. Roll Call** - Present: Ryan, Emily, Elizabeth, interpreter (staff); Matt, Kevin, Daniel, Janet, Amy, Tammy, Damiana, Angie, Lucas (subcommittee members).  
**Absent:** Yvonne excused. Cullynn excused. Amy excused last meeting.
- 3. Housekeeping Rules** – Reminder to state name and speak slowly.
- 4. Approve August 10th meeting minutes** – Matt asked re: review and motion. Kevin so moved; Damiana seconded. All in favor, with amendment that Amy's absence was excused. None opposed, no abstentions, motion carries – minutes approved.
- 5. Emcee Announcement Update** - Ryan reported that Yvonne has found someone new more locally, since John Evans accepted another paid emcee gig in October and rescinded his attendance at ours, due to lack of travel reimbursement on our part. It is Jody Bortz from Big Bend Community College. They have experience with the disability community and employment, and have accepted to emcee. They have been recommended as a great speaker, and we will share more info soon.

Janet, Kevin, and Amy had their hands up. Janet mentioned that she ran into Bret Stewart the other day, who said that he would be willing to emcee for us again after stepping down for a bit, so he may be on the list of suggestions for next year.

Amy concurs. She wanted to clarify about why we cannot reimburse travel expenses. Elizabeth responded. She clarified that it isn't an issue of legality, but rather, budget. Though we do have quite a few sponsorships this year, it isn't unusual not to have that. It is our practice thus far not to reimburse travel for speakers at our other events, as well. She would like to think about it more and consider doing things differently in the future as long as

we have sufficient sponsorships, but for right now, it is the policy across our programs not to reimburse speaker travel (to include YLF, where there are a number of speakers, to be consistent).

Kevin mentioned that Elizabeth answered his question and wondered about honorariums. Elizabeth said it would likely be easier to reimburse travel than to do an honorarium. She thought we considered it at one point in the past as she recalled, but believes we ran into issues of the state law at the time, however thought it may have just been an issue of semantics. Kevin concurred.

Matt asked for any other comments. Ryan went back to Janet's comment to clarify about who she was referring to regarding the emcee offer. Janet clarified (it was Bret Stewart, a previous employer recipient and past emcee, who stepped down due to other responsibilities recently – at which point we switched to Barry a couple years ago and haven't gone back to Bret – but Bret said he enjoyed participating and would love to be considered in the future). Ryan noted that he did contact Bret for this year, and did not hear back right away, so contacted John at that point. Ryan then apologized to Bret at the time, since he had already talked to John after not hearing back from Bret right away, and John had accepted by the time Bret responded. Evidently Ryan's email was in Bret's junk mail, hence the delay in his response. We'll consider him in the future. It is sorted out for now. Ryan will share more info about Jody soon. He appreciates everyone's patience. Jody does know that we can't reimburse travel. Nothing else on this topic per Matt and Ryan.

- 6. Marketing Workgroup Update** – Emily reported that the Medium Private employer spotlight went out earlier today. Nominee spotlights will continue weekly by category until the event (sometimes 2 per week so we have time to recognize everyone beforehand).

Emily posed an open question about when we should follow up with nominee and nominator invites to confirm their name spelling and who will be

attending the event to accept the certificate and trophy on their behalf (if applicable)? Invites were originally sent last Thursday. Emily will look back in files to see what was done last year, and also welcomes input.

Pause for sound quality. Emily noted that the event registration link was also sent to the subcommittee team late last week, and asked folks to please fill it out if attending.

A final note from Emily was that photos/releases from nominees for the ceremony PPT are also needing to be followed up on as well (the original requests were sent as nominations came in).

To close, Ryan thanked those from our team who registered so far, and encouraged folks again to do so as soon as possible if attending. He noted that we do know that some folks are not attending. No other comments on this.

**7. Judging Panel Results Discussion and Update** – Matt tossed it to Ryan initially, after confirming who should provide the update here.

Ryan thanked everyone who participated in the judging process last week on behalf of staff. We appreciate your work. He noted that we did talk about this last week as well. We have the results. There will be an opportunity for more feedback after event. Folks can send thoughts to Ryan and Emily sooner if desired while still fresh as well.

Janet and Kevin had hands up. Janet suggested having more volunteers, so people weren't participating on so many panels, and get confused. Last year it was easier, because there were fewer nominations, but there was more this year. We should likely gauge by year based on number of nominations, and not assign more than 2 panels per person if possible.

Kevin concurs and believes we should also recap process improvements after the event.

Ryan believes we don't necessarily have to wait until afterwards, since we remember now for the notes. We can still solicit more during the wrap up meeting too.

Kevin mentioned that we should also do quality control to make sure the numbers matched from the nominations to the score sheets.

Emily mentioned that she thought she had done so, but has made a note of it. She and Ryan have also discussed providing clearer instructions next time, more streamlined communication and tracking, more time in between the nomination deadline and judging process (may require an earlier start), not conflicting with YLF (deadlines to be set accordingly for all nomination materials due).

Next steps per Emily are to double check on name spelling confirmations from nominees or nominators, draft, proof, and order trophies, and follow up with all nominees to confirm attendance at the event and who is accepting on their behalf (especially important for recipients, but will be checking with everyone, since recipients won't be notified in advance). Ideally we will all of this info relatively soon. Thanks for your continued support. Let us know if you can help with any of this, or if there's anything we can do to help you.

Matt sent his compliments to staff. Ryan appreciated Emily's comments and support and concurs. Janet and Kevin had hands up.

Janet wondered about the different subcategories and if we had more than 1 recipient in each main category. This was a change suggested last year. Matt clarified that he did the small employer category, and just kept it in 1 main group instead of splitting out further. Ryan asked for clarification of Janet's question and Janet clarified.

Emily spoke to this (it was not done this year in the interest of time, but the point was taken when suggested last year, and hopefully we will build in more time to address that next year). Janet hopes so.

Matt noticed that on his categories, those subcategories were not checked. He agrees with Emily's comments regarding time constraints. Janet thinks

we should either remove it, or keep it and make sure we do it next time. She suggested that perhaps we can redesign the form, so it is more intuitive.

Emily will follow up with Amy offline to address confusion around this topic. Janet thinks it is an important step to ensure equity. Matt agrees with Emily's comments about adjusting the timing, so we have more time to account for that. Ryan confirmed that he was understanding correctly. Janet recapped what happened with the different subcategory tiers last year. She also explained the rationale and reasoning. Ryan is clear and appreciates the feedback and will look at past forms. Nothing else on this topic.

- 8. Other Tasks** – Matt clarified if it was Ryan to speak on this. Ryan deferred to Emily. Emily reported that Yvonne has not heard from the original national anthem vocalist she found. She did find another possibility, has not had time to follow up. Staff can help if needed.

The Program book is still in progress (Kevin and Lucas reviewed so far, thanks, along with Yvonne). We will set final review deadline and print date by next meeting (need to check). It will be reviewed again once finalized.

The task list is still in progress. Other items continue (nominee highlights, registration tracking, confirmation of name spelling and acceptance from nominees, gathering their photos and releases etc.)

Certificates and trophy drafting is in progress, as well as the Ceremony PPT. Let us know if you can help with any of this. A Day-of Volunteer sign-up sheet to come as well. We have 10+ volunteers signed up to help so far. Kevin, Matt, Clarence not attending. Anyone else? Please let us know.

All attending need to register, including subcommittee (we will follow up). At least 12-14+ day-of volunteers needed (including some doing double duty on more than 1 task) needed based on sign up list. Janet volunteered a couple more WVS staff if needed, we will let her know. Yvonne had

registration process improvements that we should follow up about, others are welcomed too. Additional feedback for improvements (such as about the judging process) will also be collected at the post-event meeting.

Walking map of hotel to venue will be sent to volunteers before the event. Is anyone attending that has not submitted travel forms yet? If so, please do so ASAP. Travel is taken care of for 1 member needing it.

Thank you notes will be sent to all. We are following up with other presenters. Also, we're tracking sponsorships. We will let folks know specific asks at or in between meetings.

Kevin noted that folks are here to help and that we should consider adding a list of things they can help with and who is doing it. He wants to share the work and be helpful.

Ryan appreciates the list from Emily. It is a team effort to follow through on all of these items. Ryan called on Janet.

Janet wondered if the hotel offers a discounted rate in a block of rooms for nominees and others (not just staff and members who get the state rate). Ryan mentioned it has only been reserved for staff and volunteers so far.

Ryan deferred to Elizabeth. Elizabeth suggested asking the hotel about if they would be willing to give us a larger block of rooms at the state rate to include others. She asked Ryan to take the lead on that since he has been in communication with them already, and will help how she can. She thinks it is a wise idea. There aren't any rules that say we can or can't do that, we'd just have to request it from the hotel.

Ryan appreciates the clarification and wants to make sure we are following any procedures. Elizabeth appreciates him checking and would still like us to ask the hotel on behalf of the nominees.

Ryan asked Janet how many more rooms she thinks we'd need. Janet clarified that she was not just asking for her staff, and noted that she did help 1 nominee already, but also knows of other employers attending as well. She does not have an idea on numbers but thinks we should still ask.

Ryan mentioned that Oktoberfest is happening that weekend, so that may be impacting hotel prices and availability. He wondered how many are coming from Janet's organization (Janet said 7, and she has made reservation for 4, but still needs to do a few more).

Kevin had his hand up. Ryan interjected to clarify with Janet about the rates she got. They will probably share rooms for her staff per Janet, but she is the only 1 who got the state rate, the others will be at the higher rate. She wants to ensure we are thinking of the other nominees and representatives who will attend as well. Ryan will check.

Kevin thinks we should thank the hotel at the event if they are willing to do this for us.

Lucas had his hand up. In his experience, you can give a headcount to the hotel, and then once they have the block of rooms reserved we can let attendees know what the rate is. He wonders if we could do that next year.

Ryan supports that. He mentioned that the Coast Hotel attached to the venue was not willing to offer the govt. rate due to Oktoberfest and cost-benefit analysis, so if other hotels are thinking along those lines too, then there may not be much more we can do – but we will try. Fortunately, Hilton was willing to work with us so far, and he will reach out to them again. If not, maybe we can find somewhere else. Amy suggested checking when we book the event next year to see if there are competing events in town. Matt concurs. Ryan paused for Lucas' hand but was rescinded.

Meeting adjourned via motion by Matt at 3:57. Folks bade a good evening. See you next Thursday August 24 at 3.

**9. Next action steps** – Emily recapped as follows:

- a. Judging process nearly complete, trophies to be drafted soon. Let us know if you have any process improvements now or at the Oct. 19 meeting. So far: more volunteers, no more than 2 categories per person, quality control check of nomination forms to score sheets, clearer instructions, streamlined communication and tracking, more time in between nomination deadline and judging (earlier start), not conflicting with YLF, same deadline for all nomination materials. Remove or redesign form to split categories out further next year.
- b. Emily will follow up with Amy to clarify confusion about Award categories.
- c. Ryan will look at past nomination forms and compare as we consider how to accomplish splitting categories further.
- d. Weekly nominee highlights to continue (sometimes two per week).
- e. Let us know if you can attend and help, need help with travel – including forms - or hotel, and what task you'd like to sign up for.
- f. Ryan to check with hotel about expanding our block of rooms to include nominees and others. Will be thanked during event if so. If not, we will look elsewhere. We will find out more about the process for next year.
- g. Keep an eye out for the day-of volunteer sign up sheet soon (as well as asks for assistance in the meantime).
- h. Pending decision on Gov's attendance soon, may need to check in.
- i. Will send map of route from hotel to venue to volunteers prior to event.
- j. Pending vocalist (staff can help) and guest speaker confirmations soon.
- k. Pending sponsorship funding and expense tracking soon.
- l. Let us know if you can help with reviewing materials (nominee spotlights, trophies, certificates, ceremony PPT, revised program book, thank you's, etc.)
- m. Staff will check when program needs to be sent to print and set a final review deadline.



- n. Register to attend if volunteering on day of (including guests). Let us know if you have process improvements in this regard. Registration will be tracked.
  - o. Let us know if you can help with following up with nominees about confirming name spellings, accepters, and photos or releases.
  - p. Emily will look at when to follow up with nominees based on last year.
  - q. Next year we will see if there are any competing events before deciding.
  - r. Ryan will send more info on the emcee. Bret will be added to the list to consider for next year.
  - s. We will consider how we might be able to do travel reimbursements differently for guest speakers in the future as well.
10. *Next meeting date and time: Thursday, August 24th, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. to 4 p.m.*

*Important Note:*

31<sup>st</sup> Annual Governor's Employer Awards

Friday, October 6, 2023

Wenatchee Convention Center: 121 N Wenatchee Ave, Wenatchee, WA

Hotel: Hilton Gardens