

Board of Directors

Emergency board call

March 11, 2020

In attendance: Cheryl W. Thompson, Lee Zurik, Jodi Upton, Jill Riepenhoff, Nicole Vap, Jennifer LaFleur, Jodie Fleischer, Bethany Barnes, Cindy Galli, Brian Rosenthal and Norberto Santana Jr.

Also in attendance: Executive Director Doug Haddix and Deputy Executive Director Denise Malan.

Cheryl called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

Doug provided an update on the staff response upon learning late in the afternoon of March 10 that a NICAR attendee had tested positive for COVID-19. The staff immediately began gathering guidance, talking to officials from the CDC and putting together FAQs that would serve as a one-stop shop for information regarding the case. It took more than two hours to reach a live person at the CDC. The attendee who tested positive also personally called everyone the attendee had close contact with during the conference. Doug also alerted the University of Missouri dean, who was very supportive of the staff's response to the situation and also the decision to have all IRE staff members work from home until further notice.

Denise said that all regional watchdog workshops and spring bootcamps had been postponed.

Lee asked Doug about upcoming travel. Doug said that he cancelled all training for the upcoming two weeks, in which he was supposed to be training in Australia and Hawaii, because he needed to be at the helm.

Bethany said she was concerned that members learned of the positive COVID-19 case through a Slack channel and from statements from their own newsrooms before IRE publicly released a statement.

Jennifer asked if members of the Executive Committee or the president was notified before the entire board learned of the case. Doug said in the interest of speed all board members were notified via email at the same time.

Bethany asked that the timeline of when the board knew to be included in the FAQs.

Jodie F. asked what the staff was doing during the two hours Doug was on hold with the CDC. Discussion ensued about the need for transparency regarding the timeline.

Doug said that the staff was in a video call when Cody Winchester saw the mention on Slack about the positive case. Doug asked Cody to post a message that IRE would be posting information on its website soon.

Norberto asked if contest judging would still happen. Doug said that will be handled remotely.

Jodi U. asked how long until the coronavirus was going to cause problems for IRE's revenue stream. Doug said that everything that had been postponed to date – bootcamps and workshops – would not create a revenue problem. Chris has talked to funders who are supportive of the delays. Denise said that those who had scheduled custom training have rescheduled and that no one had cancelled.

Norberto asked about the attendee's symptoms and the attendee's home state. He also asked if the June conference should be made virtual. Doug said that he has met with Stephanie and Heather and will have a report later this week about the conference. He said IRE could not cancel its contract with the Gaylord without significant financial penalties, totaling about \$900,000,

Motion and second by Jodi U. and Jennifer, respectively the board approved to adjourn at 3:01 p.m.