

New England Council Board of Directors Meeting – December 7, 2022
DRAFT MINUTES

A Meeting of the New England Council’s Board of Directors took place virtually on December 7, 2021. The following Directors participated: Kelli Armstrong, Joe Baerlein, Beth Barton, Christie Bik, Connie Brennan, Jim Brett, Joe Dalton, Steve DiSalvo, Amy Dow, Pam Everhart, Cathleen Finn, Tom Flaherty, Mike Flammia, Jennifer Gallagher, Becca Gould, Jim Grasso, Brian Grip, John Hailer, Sandi Hennequin, Kevin Hennessy, Matthew Houde, Pattie Jacobs, Mark Kalpin, Dennis Kearney, Bill Kennedy, Dennis Leonard, Kristin Lewis, Tim McDougald, Dianne Mercier, Bob Murray, Joe Nolan, Katy O’Neil, Laura Peabody, Michele Perkins, Mike Prentiss, Cathy Provencher, Ken Quigley, Tom Rath, Shaun Real, Mark Reilly, Dan Rivera, Chris Ross, Tom Samoluk, Malisa Schuyler, Graham Shalgian, Greg Smith, John Stadtler, Joanne Sullivan, Jesse Villareal, Dan Walker and Lisa Wieland. The following New England Council staff members also participated: Griffin Doherty, Emily Heisig, Ashley Lokken, Sean Malone, Peter Phipps, Taylor Pichette, Pauline Spheekas and Larry Zabar.

Mr. Brett opened the meeting by welcoming the Directors and thanking them for participating virtually. He indicated his report would contain some great news about the work the Council did in 2021 and is poised to do next year. He asked the Chairman of the Council’s Board of Directors John Hailer to offer opening remarks.

Mr. Hailer described 2021 as another year of challenges but noted that it was remarkable to see how the Council kept all its members together and informed. He thanked the staff and the membership, calling the Council one of the most worthwhile groups he had ever been part of.

Mr. Hailer asked the Directors to stay on the call following the Directors’ meeting for a short meeting of the Council’s membership, during which they will be asked to vote to ratify the elections to the Board made over the past year.

Mr. Brett was recognized for the President’s Report. He began by reporting that despite the ongoing challenges related to the pandemic, 2021 has been a strong year for the Council. He also mentioned that since there will be no in-person Holiday Celebration this year, we planned to hold the Annual Meeting virtually, immediately following this board meeting.

The bylaws require 30 day notice of the meeting, but the Executive Committee has the authority to waive the 30 day notice, which they did at the last committee meeting on November 17.

A motion to ratify the waiver of the 30 day notice so that we may proceed with the Annual Meeting today was made, seconded and adopted by unanimous vote.

Mr. Brett reported that the Executive Committee has approved a slate of six proposed new board members for the Board’s consideration. They are:

- Patrick Brennan, Partner, RSM – replacing Chris MacKenzie
- Katherine Craven, Chief Administrative & Financial Officer, Babson College

- Kristen Garvey, Vice President of Corporate Communications, Waters Corporation
- Robert Johnson, President, Western New England University
- Joseph Murphy, President & CEO, Coverys
- Jerome Smith, Senior Director of External Affairs, Amazon

A Motion to adopt the full slate was Made, Seconded and Adopted by unanimous vote.

Mr. Brett next turned to staffing issues and announced that in September, Pam Seymour moved on after 25 years with the Council, first as our longtime accounting consultant, and in more recent years, as our Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration. Thus far, Mr. Brett continued, we've struggled to find the right candidates for this open position. Given the critical nature of this role, we are planning to employ the services of an Executive Search firm to assist in recruiting and screening candidates. We have been in touch with several firms who specialize in working with non-profit organizations, and with our Treasurer John Stadler's assistance, plan to select one in the coming days. The job description is in your materials so please feel free to share with your networks and anyone who might be a good fit.

Mr. Stadler, the Council's Treasurer, was recognized for the Financial Report. He began by saying what an invaluable asset Pam had been and though it will be challenging to find someone with similar skills, she left the finances and accounting control environment in good shape - and we are committed to finding a replacement and keeping the high standard. Toward that end, Mr. Stadler indicated that he and Mr. Brett had been talking to executive search firms with the objective of having someone on board in the very near future.

Mr. Stadler reported that the annual audit had been completed on time as had the Council's tax return for 12/31/21.

Turning to the fiscal 2021 budget, where revenue of \$3.3 million and expenses of the same amount were anticipated, Mr. Stadler reported that with the success of the Annual Dinner and the growth in membership, the Council had exceeded revenue by \$400,000 and bottom line by a similar amount. Mr Brett complimented Mr. Zabar and the team for continued connection with New England business leaders who see value in the interactions the Council fosters.

Mr. Stadler indicated that there were plans being made to speak to outside investment advisors to seek opportunities to realize a higher return on a portion of the funds in the Council's account. This investment foundation will ensure the council is able to continue

to provide connections with New England’s legislators and business leaders for the long term.

Mr. Stadler concluded his report by saying that the 2022 budget was currently being established and would be shared with the Board upon its completion.

Mr. Brett next turned to Membership and indicated that he was pleased to report that membership growth and retention continues to be strong despite the ongoing pandemic and its economic impact.

To date in 2021:

- We have secured 76 **new members**, representing \$251,250 in new dues revenue.
- We have an additional 14 **new members committed**, representing \$106,000 in new dues revenue.
- That brings our current new dues total to \$357,250.
- Mr. Brett noted that 20% of new member dues collected has come from 2020 resigned members that re-joined in 2021 , and 17% of 2021 new member companies are members who had resigned in 2020.
- We again set a conservative goal this year, with the expectation that many businesses may be hesitant to take on new expenses while the economic situation is still so uncertain.
- Our 2021 new member dues **revenue goal** was \$100,000, so with the new members already paid along with those committed, we have already surpassed that goal by more than triple.
 - Among the new members this year are some very well-known regional and national organizations. These include: Amazon, Analog Devices, Bose, Delta Airlines, Novartis, Pfizer, Roger Williams University, The Home Depot, and Trinity College.
- We have a very strong **prospect** list, and continue to have very promising conversations with a number of “hot” prospects.

- And finally, **resignations** continue to be low, which says a lot about the value our members are getting from the Council during these difficult economic times.

Mr. Brett next turned to the work of the Policy Committees and highlighted several pieces of legislation that the Council has advocated in support of in recent months:

- Bipartisan **Infrastructure Deal** – Mr. Brett reported that last year, we worked with members to develop a set of regional infrastructure investment priorities that we shared with the delegation. Once the Senate bill was finalized and it included many of those priorities, we wrote to the region’s Senate delegation to express our support for the bill, and then more recently, we sent a similar letter to the House delegation as they prepared to vote on the bill.
- On the higher education front, over the summer, Mr. Brett indicated that the Council endorsed a bill that would expand eligibility for **SNAP benefits for college students** to help alleviate food insecurity on our college campuses. As a result of our ongoing advocacy in more recent months, several members of the New England delegation have signed on as co-sponsors.
- Turning to energy issues, Mr. Brett indicated that several of our energy members recently brought to our attention an issue related to **tariffs on materials used to manufacture solar panels**. Claiming that China was attempting to circumvent these tariffs, an anonymous group requested that the Department of Commerce open an investigation and add new tariffs on products from other Asian nations, which would harm the ongoing efforts to add more renewable energy resources in our region. The Council wrote to Secretary Raimondo to oppose the investigation and new tariffs, and to highlight the importance of the solar industry in the region.

Mr. Brett also highlighted some recent programming for our policy committees:

- Our **Financial Services Committee** recently hosted a meeting with Congressman Andy Barr, a senior Republican on the House Financial Services Committee.
- Our **Healthcare Committee** recently hosted a very well attended meeting where members were briefed by Senator Jack Reed’s healthcare policy advisor.
- Our **Higher Education** committee and **Advanced Manufacturing** working group recently partnered to host a briefing on an innovative partnership among

several of our members—including Stonehill College and Bridgewater State – to prepare students for careers in the growing photonics manufacturing sector.

Turning to Events, Mr. Brett reported that on October 18, we had an incredibly successful Annual Celebration, which was presented virtually for the second year in a row. The success of the program was in large part due to the hard work of our incredible event co-chairs, Becca Gould of American Tower and Dennis Leonard of Delta Dental.

Millipore Sigma was again our presenting sponsor, donating the services of their very talented creative services team to produce the program. And NBC Boston anchor Latoya Edwards served as our emcee for the second year.

Mr. Brett indicated that we honored three incredible New Englanders of the Year – all women for the first time in the 50-plus year history of the award:

- U.S. **Rep. Rosa DeLauro**, the Chair of the House Appropriations Committee
- **Sandra Fenwick**, the recently retired CEO of Boston Children’s Hospital
- **Reshma Kewalramani**, the CEO of Vertex Pharmaceuticals.

Mr. Brett reported that the Annual Celebration raised a total of **\$1.528 million** from **171** businesses and organizations. Remarkably, despite the virtual format, this year’s event raised nearly as much as our all-time highest revenue event in 2016. He further indicated that nothing so clearly demonstrates the value Council members are receiving than contributions to a virtual event that raised as much money as this year’s event did.

Mr. Brett did note that the challenge is going to be future years’ events. The World Trade Center—where we enjoyed a very generous cost structure—will be closed until probably 2024. As a result, next year’s expenses will be hundreds of thousands of dollars more than we typically have spent for in-person Annual Dinners in recent years. But we are looking forward to an in-person Annual Celebration in 2022, and we have secured the brand new Omni Boston Hotel at the Seaport as our venue, with the event taking place November 7.

Mr. Brett next provided a recap of recent events.

- To date this year, we have hosted 22 virtual **Capitol Hill Reports** with members of Congress from throughout the region.

- Most recently, we heard from Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and Assistant House Speaker Katherine Clark.
- We've also hosted events in recent months with Vermont Gov. Phil Scott and Maine Gov. Janet Mills.
- Our new "Inside the Corner Office" has gotten off to a great start. Our guests so far have included American Tower CEO Tom Bartlett, National Grid US President Badar Khan, New England Aquarium CEO Vikki Spruill, and just yesterday, Dr. Ann Klibanski of Mass General Brigham.

And a few weeks ago, we partnered with UMass to host our first in-person program since March 2020, a discussion of US trade policy with Chairman Richie Neal and US Trade Ambassador Katherine Tai.

Regarding upcoming events, Mr. Brett reported that we have one more event scheduled later this week: on Thursday, we will host a regional energy outlook program featuring Gordon van Welie, CEO of ISO New England. And we have our first two Inside the Corner Office guests for 2022 confirmed:

- In January, we will hear from Catherine D'Amato, the CEO of the Greater Boston Food bank.
- And we've just confirmed that Dr. Kevin Churchwell, the new CEO of Boston Children's Hospital, will be our guest in February.

We are also moving forward with plans to resume our Washington Leaders' Conference in DC in May after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. We'll be finalizing the dates very soon, but it is looking like it will take place during the second week of May.

Mr. Brett next discussed a return to in-person programming. He indicated that we are eager to return to more regular in-person programming in the new year. However, we are mindful of taking the appropriate precautions to protect the Council, and to keep both our staff and guests safe and healthy.

To that end, we are working with our legal counsel to develop a COVID policy and to establish protocols, including appropriate legal disclaimer language to incorporate into our event registration process as well as a plan to require guests to show proof of vaccination.

Given that the virtual format has made our programs more accessible to members throughout the region and in Washington, DC, we have plans in place to record our in-person events and make the recording available to all members shortly after the events conclude.

We do anticipate that we will still offer some virtual programming. Our “Inside the Corner Office” series, for example, will likely remain virtual, both to ensure widespread access but also to make it more convenient for CEOs to participate.

And many of our issue-specific programs that feature panel discussions will remain virtual, as it allows us to bring together panelists from a variety of locations more easily. And finally, we have seen a significant increase in committee meeting participation when the meetings are held virtually, so we will continue with that format going forward.

Turning to Communications and Social Media, Mr. Brett reported that we wrote an op-ed calling on Congress to pass the bipartisan infrastructure bill that has run this fall in several regional publications:

- New Hampshire Journal
- Worcester Business Journal
- Providence Business News

According to Mr. Brett, we continue to receive favorable media coverage of our programs, especially since the virtual programs are so much easier for reporters to access. In particular, our program with Gov. Baker in September received quite a bit of local TV and print coverage, which you can find on our website. And just last week, our program with Congresswoman Clark was covered by several local outlets, including State House News Service.

Mr. Brett indicated that with the addition of Ashley Lokken in May as our Digital Communications Specialist, we’ve implemented new social media and digital strategies that have increased our online presence and exposure exponentially. With the addition of these new strategies, such as the implementation of video content, new social media graphics, and design elements we have been able to draw in new audiences while continuing to engage our current audience. As a result, we have continued to see increased engagement and new followers on all platforms.

Mr. Brett concluded his report by updating Directors on the Council’s new website design. He reported that we are now several months into the process of a complete redesign of our website, which was long overdue. Emily and Ashley are working closely with graphic design and web development firm, JackRabbit Design, on this project, with

a target launch date of early 2022. We are looking forward to a new website that will have a fresh and modern design, will be mobile friendly for viewing on a phone or tablet, and will have some new features that will make it easier for members to engage with the Council.

There being no further business, the Meeting was Adjourned.