

Board Minutes – April Board 2014

Date of Meeting	10/04/2014
Location	Beazley
Present	Chair, CEO, T Cadman, J Campbell, C Halsted (by phone), A Orge, G Paul, W Pitt (by video link), J Troiano
Absent	P Abrahams
In attendance	Items 1-3 only; J Magill, D Moseley

Note - this was a Directors only meeting, save for items 1-3, designed to give Directors the opportunity to consider the Board's performance and challenges. Thus this meeting has the status of a BF Directors meeting, rather than a full Board meeting.

Introductions & Apologies

1. The Chair introduced GU for her first Board meeting as CEO, extending the good wishes of all Board members.
There were no Director apologies, but PA was absent.

Declarations of Interest/Risk Management/Catch-up

2. GU declared, with TC, a new interest in her usage of fencing facilities recently set up by AO.
3. There were no new Risk Management items.
4. There were no catch up items.

BF Finance/Budget

5. DM circulated the latest summaries and briefed the Board on key points. Directors were pleased to note the much improved outcome now forecast for the year, with the deficit substantially reduced. They noted that this was an operational summary which did not take account of investment income. Asked how this result was achieved, given the Board's previous discussions and concerns, DM identified a wide range of cost savings and expressed confidence that the figures presented were likely to be very close to the final outcome.
6. The Board discussed the specific headings, and thanked DM for his report.
7. The Board then discussed the budget, with an introduction by GU stressing that this was a "tough" budget, with little spending room despite the hard challenges BF now faced on all the headings - but especially Development. Performance would balance, and GU also noted the level of detailed control maintained by UKS. For Development, all depended on the new strategy, now being considered. There were key decisions to make on trips, on staffing resources, etc. DM reported that the revised budget numbers were based on all latest information. WP noted that here was an important step forward for the BF Board - a budget that reflected the Board's priorities and responsibilities, with a projected deficit that was within reasonable and manageable bounds.

Decision: On JT's proposal, the Board adopted the budget for the year.

At this point, JM and DM left the meeting.

“Changing Times” – Presentations & Discussion.

8. Chair introduced this “Directors only”, informal discussion by saying it was fitting for GU’s first Board meeting, and the first meeting of the new year (one of major commitments), to have an informal discussion about how the Board might face up to the challenges of the next ten years. There were then presentations by DT and GU and oral reflections by JC on her experience so far as a BF Board member.
9. The key themes from the Board’s discussion are as follows:-
 - the Board had to be strategic, rather than operational, at all times; but it must monitor and evaluate the BF performance and results;
 - BF needs to achieve, at last, the right and proper balance and alignment between the roles, responsibilities and priorities of the Board and the executive;
 - there were and would remain both external and internal demands and pressures, to be managed as effectively as we can;
 - the executive must brief Directors fully and regularly - GU’s first Operational Reporting Template was very well received and agreed to be the right model;
 - leadership was vital, it was the major responsibility for the Chair, Board and CEO;
 - BF needed a new and effective commercial strategy, to provide new resourcing where urgently required;
 - there were major challenges ahead – and with them will be very hard choices;
 - together we must now review the overall ten year strategy - using the next Board Away-days with our consultant;
 - the lists of priorities GU had received from Board members were welcomed, although she had to stress the continuing need to manage the finances according to our means and responsibilities;
 - it would remain vital to make our partnerships work;
 - for GU, Development must be the major and urgent task; she was rightly absorbing herself in the work, and there were new strategic strands at SE that BF must adapt to but which looked promising for fencing;
 - Directors welcomed GU’s new approach for representing our values of, “Honesty, Respect, Excellence”.
10. Closing the discussion (only because time overran), Chair asked for the following actions:
 - Action JC** to consider and circulate three key messages from her presentation for the Board’s own management of itself and its business, going forward
 - Action GU** given the Directors’ clearly expressed wish to give her whatever support she needed, to set down specific programmes and tasks where individual or collective support and help/advice would be helpful
 - Action All** to note for their diaries the Waterloo pop-up event on 14th May, and to contact Katie if able to attend and help.

Wheelchair Fencing

11. Chair noted that he had received an approach from Wheelchair Fencing (WF) – British Disabled Fencing Association - about working toward a merger with BF. He noted that in principle the BF Board had agreed to merge, some two years ago, but the WF Board had not pursued it. In discussion, Board members expressed concern about BF’s ability to provide the necessary financial help (WF having recently lost substantial UK Sport funding) in the short term. It was agreed the Chair would respond to the WF Chair to explain that BF did not at present have the necessary resources, but the situation could change in the future.

Any Actions Off-line

12. There were none to report.

AOB – Matters Arising

13. No other business was raised. The list of Matters Arising to be managed in writing.

Date of Board Meeting - Thursday 15th May, at Beazley, at 5.00pm.
