

# FLOAT CONFERENCE

## Board Meeting #1 October 14, 2018 | 11 am - 12:15 pm PST

### *Quorum Present*

#### **Present:**

- Ashkahn Jahromi (President) / Graham Talley
- Andy Larson (Treasurer)
- Gloria Morris (Secretary)
- Kevin McCulloch / Jake Resch
- Matthew Smith
- Jesse Ratner-Decle
- Jocelyn Jester (Operations Team)

#### **Absent:**

- Jamie Phillips
  - Sean Lavery
  - Tom Fine
  - Jeanine Bocci (Operations Team)
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#### **Agenda:**

1. Welcome and Thank you, Introductions
2. Legal Stuff
3. Workflow
4. Positions
5. Choosing a City
6. Choosing Dates
7. Event Structure

#### **1 - Welcome, Thank You, and Introductions**

To begin the meeting, Ashkahn asks that each person introduces themselves and mentions some things they would like to keep from past conferences.

**Ashkahn:** Wants to keep superhero capes for volunteers. Has tons of ideas! Mostly, doubling down on Friday activities as a chance to see more community involvement.

**Matt:** Based in Alberta, has 6 tank center. Has enjoyed the pre-conference events (Friday Party), and parties in general - cool place to connect with people. Agrees with community involvement. Maybe an inflatable bouncy castle.

**Jake:** Float STL - Enjoyed the Floatlympics and Friday workshops to get a dose of different things and meet different types of people. Idea to split up the day (speakers in morning, activities in afternoon, maybe more speakers) a great way to break things up.

**Kevin:** Float STL - Enjoyed AV aspect - it's powerful to be able to report and broadcast to the work (within and outside of the industry) as a way to continue to validate Floating. Interested in a way to build in a mentoring or a buddy program for first time and long time attendees.

**Jocelyn:** A member of the operations team, last year helped with speaker wrangling and AV. Interested to see Friday Activities continue. It's a nice way to ease into the event and meet fellow attendees.

**Andy:** Float Milwaukee - 5 tanks, 3 years. Loves about that Float Conference focuses on the city (Portland) with food trucks and farmers market. Not a run of the mill conference format. Drawing off what the city is known for. Loves the mix of speakers - research and tangential (Nestor/breathing).

**Gloria:** Float Sixty, has been to 3 conferences. Also enjoys having the city connected to the conference. Likes the pre-conference podcasts to get attendees prepared to hear speakers. Makes people pay attention differently. Hopes that we can continue the humor that Ashkahn and Graham have brought to the conference. Would like to see a way to continue the connection between attendees after the conference. (Parallel to Float Collective)

**Jesse:** Float Toronto (representing Sean today as well) -(did apprenticeship with Matt and JP) - Wants to keep the fun and lightheartedness of the conference. Connecting everyone. The Farmer's Market is a big hit and a great way to mingle. Wouldn't change much. Would like to see the video footage in a highlight reel - they could be very captivating.

**Graham:** Really enjoys leading the Beer Bus Tour/ Insider's Tour & thinks we should keep it. Wants to keep in mind that the magic of the conference is the people that attend and the guests. Anticipates a lot of work to get our legs under ourselves, let alone planning. We should be light on ourselves for this first conference - keep the essentials and not worry too much.

## 2 - Legal Stuff

In order to officially be a legal entity, we need to establish bylaws and a conflict of interest policy. Because of the unique goals of the Float Conference non profit, we are not as concerned with things like term limits and voting rules. Ashkahn is still waiting on the legal documents, but will send them via email shortly. In regards to the conflict of interest, there will be basic rules in place to avoid concerns of board members making decisions to benefit their own organizations.

*Open for Comments:* Jake, Kevin, Gloria - several comments that things make sense and that we agree.

### **3 - Workflow**

Basically like what Ashkahn and Graham talked about in their talk at 2018 Float Conference. We are all really busy. The people on this call are here because they have valuable experiences and knowledge. These board calls will be a bit more casual and less about voting and making decisions. Most work will be completed on these phone calls.

**President/Chairperson** - Ashkahn will act as president for this year. Main job will be running meetings and transferring knowledge, etc.

**Operations Team** - Most of the planning itself will be completed by Jeanine and Jocelyn. Jeanine has been with the Float Conference for all 7 years. She has incredible knowledge of the Float Conference. Jocelyn has been with Float conference for several years and has a robust event planning knowledge. We will supplement with local float folks.

**President/CEO** - There is a level between the staff and the Board - things like political calls/ details. Kevin and Jake from Float STL have agreed to hold that position for this first year. They can put a few more hours in outside of the Board phone calls for those details.

**Communication** - Ashkahn is setting up a Helm and we will use that as a communication board. People can add comments and opinions and clear questions before calls. Post minutes, etc.

**Nature of Decision Making** - Conclusions as a board = great! Don't want the board to get hung up on having to reach a conclusive decision on every planning question. Having conversations and allowing Kevin, Jake, Jeanine, and Jocelyn to listen to those conversations and use that information to make the decision.

#### *Open for Questions:*

**Is there a specific list or level of things that the Board will vote on?** (i.e. the City) Ashkahn is picturing the board being like a Director of the show - Master of Taste. I.e. City, date, format of the event, general structure of the sponsorships, ticket prices. Essentially we will play it by ear on which things we will need to vote on as a board.

**Which Positions are paid?** So far only paid positions are event planners (Jocelyn and Jeanine), hoping CEO position can be paid. Float STL probably will not be paid quite as much, but hopefully enough to make it justifiable for them.

**Who will be in charge of Speaker Line up, etc?** Picturing using connections of the Board - everyone putting names in and looking through that together. But then the speaker schedule itself (times and order) is beyond the board itself, so will be pushed to the CEO/Planner side.

#### **4 - Positions**

As a non-profit, we have to have three titles on the Board - President, Secretary, Treasurer.

We will have staff taking care of the books, notes, etc. Ashkahn is hoping these people will have these things on their mind and will speak up if we need to look into something or if something is not going correctly.

Ashkahn plans to be the chairperson/ President of the Board, mostly to run meetings, etc.

**Vote to approve Ashkahn Jahromi as the President: Unanimous Agreement**

*Ashkahn opens call to see if anyone is interested in being the Treasurer or Secretary:*

*Andy agrees to be the Treasurer!*

**Vote to approve Andy Larson as the Treasurer: Unanimous Agreement**

*Gloria agrees to be Secretary!*

**Vote to approve Gloria Morris as the Secretary: Unanimous Agreement**

#### **5 - Choosing a City**

Ashkahn feels strongly that Float Conference should not be in Portland, OR - Thinks it would be helpful to make it its own event as opposed to ghost version of its former self.

##### **Cities in consideration:**

*Denver, CO* - We almost had to move the conference to Denver last year. Ashkahn and Jeanine already went and scouted out Denver (looked at venues and have a contact with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, etc.) It's a cool city, about the same size as Portland. Has a good personality, good float centers, is centrally located. Local liaison position - Paul and Heather Clift own Float Semana and are excited about taking on that role.

*Portland, ME* - James and Amy Harder of Float Harder are really stoked on the idea of "From Portland to Portland" and are interested in being the local liaison. They have done a lot of leg work to share information with us. We wouldn't have to change our graphic design - it already says Portland! Cons - some people may fly to the wrong Portland. James has production experience. They also have connections with the city and with the local university.

(Graham comments we should look at going international long term - specifically Canada)

##### *Open for Comments:*

Kevin suggests that if we are going to be rotating, the biggest thing would be to have a smooth transition from year to year. His thoughts would be to go to Denver, because the groundwork is already completed. Maybe look at going to Portland, Maine after we have some ground work and some more comfort.

Andy agrees. Comments on the confusion of Portland to Portland. Also it will be significantly more difficult for attendees to get to Portland - with flight availability and prices.

Graham - It would be funny to do Portland, but Denver makes more sense.

Gloria - Denver makes more sense, mostly easy to get to. Denver culture seems like a good transition from Portland culture.

**Vote to decide on City for Float Conference 2019: Unanimous votes for Denver!**  
*Cheering ensues.*

Graham suggests we look at the next few cities soonish to get those conversations rolling. Suggestions and agreements to be able to announce the next city at the end of each conference.

## **5 - Choosing Dates**

We have been doing August because that is least likely time for it to rain on us. This logic isn't necessary for Denver, or moving forward.

**Things to consider** - summer is an interesting time because kids are out of school, vacations, and weddings. These things can hinder people attending. Weather based on the city is relevant (will be more obvious as we go along.) Flights can change based on the time of the year. And in terms of events, summer isn't necessarily conference season. October/ fall is a big conference seasons. In the Float world, summer tends to be our down time, businesses might be in a bit of a slump. Summer is better for speakers as well. Other Float Events should also be considered: Rise is in April/May. We don't know when the IT Float Con will be.

*Are we planning to do the same time of year every year?* It's probably easier for attendees to plan if it is around the same time. There's about a month span of range that is reasonable. When school starts is a bit harder.

*Open for Comments:*

Gloria - It would be nice to balance out with Rise and other events - leans to September.

Graham - November would be a good time frame. Not the nicest time weather wise.

Ashkahn - slightly tempted to do December or earlier to have a '19 event. To let people know that there is a smooth transition.

Kevin - early October has been pretty open recently.

Most people are on board with September / early October. The rest of the decision should be dictated by the reality of booking venues.

## 6 - Structure of the Event

Next thing we will need to do is think about the days we will want the event. In the past, we have the Workshop Thursday and Friday morning, Friday Activities, Conference Saturday and Sunday, and the CPO on Monday. Wednesday we set up for Workshop/Friday Activities. Thursday / Friday we set up for Conference.

### **This could be different if we want. Things to think about:**

Structure of Conference itself. Most conference have multiple tracks as opposed to just one, and attendees choose which ones they want to see. Ashkahn has been hesitant because he thinks this group wants to see everything. We could do a marketing track and research track? Or split it up and have one track in the morning, and multiple in the afternoon, etc. We've always done the main conference on Saturday and Sunday - it might be nice to be Friday / Saturday, which would allow people to spend Sunday flying home to be ready for Monday.

*Friday Activities* - do we want to expand or do multiple days? Have them mixed into the presentations?

*Workshop* - Do we want to still have FTS still do the workshop along with the conference (conflict of interest).

*Other things to think about* - in a ballroom or in a theatre - these will be big decisions we will need to think about.

*Tom Fine signs on.*

## 7 - Closing Comments

*Should we connect with Justin to make sure he is available later in the fall? Yes - Ashkahn to reach out.*

Science conferences are usually in the spring.

Ashkahn is excited!

*Chorus of big thanks to Ashkahn.*

*Meeting Adjourned.*