

Global BIPOC Advisory Board  
Meeting 3 MINUTES  
Tuesday, April 27 2020  
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (PST) 90 mins.

**1. Roll Call**

Please **specify** when your identity should be omitted from public notes in the interest of personal privacy.

Staff: travelingthyme, loup, cortex

Present members of the board: aielen, brainwane, hurdy hurdy girl, arabidopsis

- A member suggests that if discussions will be happening quickly and there is a need to vote on something, that the group use reactions/emoticons to confirm whether everyone has voted. There are no objections to this suggestion.

**2. Approval of Previous Minutes (5 mins)**

Review/Discussions of Meeting #2 minutes.

- Thyme opens discussion with a review of the previous meeting minutes, prompting all to share any concerns or revisions they may have. Thyme also asks that everyone confirm whether they've received their honorarium.
- Members confirm receiving honoraria.
- Group approves the previous minutes with a **revision** that states the Meeting Channel Privacy Policy discussion (Item 4) in the Meeting 2 Minutes as an in-progress, interim decision that will require further discussion.
  - Thyme makes note of the revision. See Meeting 2 Minutes for note of revision.

**3. Channel Privacy Policy and Member terms (10 mins)**

Revisiting the policy for meeting channel access and board member terms/conditions of participation.

**Thyme presents two questions:**

**1:** How many meetings can a member miss/be unresponsive to/is there a limit? There are several members who have been unresponsive since the first and second meetings, and I've continued looping them into all communications regardless. I haven't heard anything and want to make sure that I don't make any assumptions and leave folks out.

**2:** There was also a concern regarding decisions being made without all board members present at meetings. Are you all ok with moving forward under the assumption that whoever's present at meetings gets to vote/make decisions and that if members who were absent feel strongly about particular decisions, they can write to us via email and we can re-visit said decisions at the next meeting?

**Discussion notes regarding board members who have not responded to any forms of contact since meeting 2:**

- Member asks if the unresponsive members "are not replying to any communication (email, slack) even when directly/personally addressed?"
  - Thyme clarifies that they are referring to members who have not responded to a single email regarding scheduling, participation, etc. Since the second meeting, there have been a handful of folks who have not replied to a single email to share whether they are no

longer available or still interested in participating. Thyme has continued to include those members in all communications so far.

- Member suggests that those who have been unresponsive could be sent an email inquiring about their participation and giving them a deadline of X amount of time to confirm their board membership.
  - This suggestion is met by check mark emoticons, confirming that present members are in favor of this approach
  - Thyme will reach out to members and re-confirm participation of board via email; will give them a 2 week time limit to reply

#### **A note on Question 2:**

- While responding to the proposed questions 1 & 2 above, members stated they are on board with Thyme's suggestion that:
  - The board will move forward under the assumption that whoever's present at meetings gets to vote/make decisions. If members who were absent feel strongly about particular decisions, they can write to us via email requesting that we re-visit said decisions at the next meeting.

#### **Discussion notes regarding meeting attendance (Question 1):**

- Member suggests 5 meetings is the cap for absences
  - Member asks if there should be a different number allowed depending on whether the missed meetings are consecutive?
  - Member also mentions that the number of missed meetings acceptable might depend on frequency of meetings (monthly or twice monthly).
  - Member chimes in that a possible scenario would be "X number if spread out over the year, but a smaller number if missing consecutive meetings".

#### **Notes on the Question of Channel Access**

\*For contextual clarity\*

After discussion among the board at meeting 2 regarding meeting channel privacy policies, Thyme adopted the channel policy proposed by some of the board to keep meeting channels locked and accessible only to members who were present at a given meeting. In hindsight, the policy was unclear and there seemed to be conflicting interpretations among the board, including Thyme, so there is need for clarification.

Following this policy meant that an active member of the board was removed by Thyme from meeting channel #2, as they couldn't make it to the meeting despite intending to be present. This member emailed Thyme informing them that they did not agree with the policy and left the board as a result. Thyme followed up with the board via email to clarify whether this was the intended policy action, and whether there was room to reconsider/re-configure the policy. This discussion has been re-opened to further discuss the concerns raised via email the past few months, and to gain a clearer understanding of the policy and consider its impact on absent members.

- A member reiterates their point from previous meetings that each meeting channel should only remain private and accessible to those who were present. Future members can read the minutes to get caught up. They provide a link to additional information around the importance of channel privacy and maintaining

privacy practices that ensure the things that are said in confidence to only the individuals present are not weaponised in the future by new members. Link here:

<https://puzzling.org/technology/software/2020/06/delete-your-free-slack-backlogs/>

- Member mentions that it is “important to bear in mind that the board should be publicly accountable to the Metafilter community/members, especially because it is in a position to influence changes for the community”.
  - Member agrees and does not believe their suggestion is in conflict with the point made. They suggest that minutes are meant to serve the purpose of transparency and accountability, and that perhaps there should be an improvement to minutes if they are lacking in those qualities.
- Thyme asks, “if let's say I am a board member, and I missed this meeting but I do intend on continuing participation, should I be included in this meeting's channel or removed from it? Because that's how I moved forward and removed 2 members from meeting channel 2, one of which took issue with that. I'm open to taking any direction with this.”
  - Member thinks that if a member misses a meeting but intends on staying with the board, they can catch up by reading the minutes. They are also open to including chunks of transcript in the minutes if that makes the minutes more clear and useful as a record.
- Members discuss the possibility of the meeting minutes requiring more detail and improvements being made for them to be transparent.
  - Member says that improving the minutes may be an avenue to explore. Additionally, wonders if locking absent members from channels might result in board members saying certain things they would not otherwise say to absent members - could cause confusion/politicking
- Member asks “What might the difference be, then, between meeting minutes and the meeting channel transcript - such that the transcript would not be permitted to be seen by the absent members?”
  - Another member responds with an example where they might share a particular experience with a user and name them in meetings or even share a personal anecdote, and in the minutes that person's identifying specifics could be left out of the public minutes.
  - Thyme states they are ok with detailed transcripts being included as long as members communicate their concerns around privacy issues.
  - Thyme provides additional information about the users they removed from meeting 2's channel and the concern that was voiced around that action. Thyme also shares their personal feelings about full meeting transcripts being open to the public, but are open to altering minutes to be more detailed and specific.
- Members are in agreeance regarding private details remaining protected from transcripts, and not sharing full transcripts with the public.
  - A member re-raises the issue in question - whether the channel should be available to fellow board members that were absent.
- A member shares that they'd prefer channels to be open to current board members and that access should be revoked once they are no longer a part of the board. They are also unsure about new members having access to past channels.

- Thyme suggests the following: I will include more detail in minutes, if someone requests for additional details to be specifically included, I will do so and will not include usernames unless stated. We can continue with "Only members who were present for a meeting will have access to that channel, if a current member missed a meeting, they can access the minutes"
  - Member states that they'd be ok with a current member who missed a meeting to still have access to the channel if it would bring them comfort and if all board members are confirmed to be actively participating when they are able.
- Thyme summarizes the proposed policies to adopt:
  - #1. current board members having access to channels regardless of attendance
  - #2. new members having access to only the meeting they joined and beyond
  - #3. old members(those who left) being removed from channels
  - It is noted by a member that it is up to the individual to anonymize information before sharing. They think that transparency and past context is important for engaging in transformative work and that disallowing newcomers access to past context prevents access to information that may include safety concerns of their own. There is also the issue of locking previous channels as false security - one that will not guarantee safety
  - Discussion is going over time, Thyme suggests selecting a temporary policy that can be revisited.
  - Members agree to adopt Thyme's bullets 1 & 3 leaving 2 to be discussed further.

**In summary:**

Board will move forward with #1 current board members having access to channels regardless of attendance and #3 old members(those who left) being removed from channels. #2 (new members having access to only the meeting they joined and beyond) has been **tabled**.

Thyme will individually email board members and give them 2 weeks to reply with their intentions for board participation, after that 2 week period, Thyme will update roster and meeting channels.

**4. Moderator participation (10 mins)**

*Role of staff at board meetings.*

Thyme prompts the board to consider their position on the topic of non-BIPOC moderators being present in the channel during meetings. Some members have raised concerns over non-BIPOC mods attending the board meetings, and that the meeting space would feel safer and more open if it were limited to BIPOC.

- Members discuss the importance of free, healthy discussion that is BIPOC-only, the reach and purpose of the board in terms of decision-making power and the pros/cons of having non-BIPOC moderators present.
- Thyme mentions that for their role as a facilitator, having non-BIPOC mods present is helpful in that they are available to answer questions where Thyme may not have enough experience or knowledge.
- Member suggests that BIPOC have a space to discuss freely and "...if discussion with non-BIPOC mods is needed, that could be kept to a separate part of the meeting". (a separate channel)
- Member shares that they would like an on-camera portion of the meeting, that is BIPOC-only, while meeting channels via slack are attended by non-BIPOC mods who are only present to listen mostly.
- Member mentions they did not prefer BIPOC-only MeTas as they felt less conducive to their participation than MeTas where moderators were allowed to speak.

- Member shares that the goal of the board is unclear and in order to have independent input on changes, moderator presence is not preferred, with concerns about POC users expressing concerns about feeling marked as problem users.
- Member raises concern that a point of conflict has been rapid responding from mods that have led to misunderstandings; “allowing time to absorb suggestions and output from the board post meeting gives room for a deeper appreciation of those concerns”.
  - Member expresses that they’d be happier knowing that non-BIPOC mods were hearing members out in meetings.
  - There are concerns around having safe, free discussion spaces that will not be biased/influenced by non-BIPOC moderator presence in meetings.
- Member shares resources about optimizing safe spaces:
  - <https://theunitofcaring.tumblr.com/post/100561778176/safe-spaces-and-competing-access-needs>
  - <https://kyraneko.tumblr.com/post/645743367258554368/shinelikethunder-modularnra40>
- Member shares that they want a space where they can speak with other BIPOC freely about MeFi issues to create action items for mods, and would like the opportunity to also address the mods and ensure that they hear what’s being said. These things can happen at separate times?
- Thyme suggests having separate channels. One for BIPOC-only to discuss privately, and one where staff brings forth questions/ideas/opportunities for feedback in a space where all are present.
- In the interest of time it is suggested to move onto the microaggressions report by Loup.

## 5. Microaggressions Update (10 mins)

### Report on microaggression efforts.

- Loup shares that they have been working to update the Microaggressions and Guidelines pages. With a final product with 3 main goals:
  - Being more clear about the behavior we want to foster and encourage.
  - Be extra clear about the type of content that is not Okay in the site (particularly with the latest update to the microaggressions)
  - Apply them more and more in the moderation day-to-day work
- These pages are not final and will evolve with time.
- Member asks if there are anecdotes or data trends to determine whether these improvements have improved site behavior?
  - Loup states that they currently don’t have a specific date on the impacts but that these changes have helped to work out differences with members who fail to see why their engagements may have been considered inappropriate.
  - Member mentions that they’ve noticed more engagement from moderators in deleting microaggressions and addressing users directly.
  - Loup states that the goal is to have mods pointing out those microaggressions, as it is not the responsibility of users to have to explain themselves repeatedly.
- Thyme suggests putting the rest of the discussion items on next meetings’ agenda and plans to coordinate a meeting for 2 weeks from now.
- Meeting adjourned.

## 6. Statement of Commitment (10 mins)

Commitment statement from MetaFilter staff.

TABLED

**7. Staff Report + Future-Planning + Role of the Board (15 mins)**

TABLED

**8. Board's Decision-Making Process**

TABLED

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**