

Mefi Global BIPOC Advisory Board  
Meeting 22 Minutes (Public)  
Jan 23, 2024  
7AM PST - 8:30AM (PST) 90 mins.

**Roll call: loup, travelingthyme, cendawanita, majick, MiraK, aielen, hurdy gurdy girl, yueliang**

### **1. Introductions and greetings**

- a. Land acknowledgements
  - i. HGG makes a land acknowledgement
- b. Notes about board capacity
  - i. While HGG previously communicated she would step down after December 2023's meeting, December's meeting was canceled and so HGG has opted to attend this January 2024 meeting as her last meeting.
  - ii. Majick has had limited ability to participate in the last several months, and their ability to perform work outside of the meetings will continue to be constrained for the next several months. However, Majick will continue to attend meetings and provide input during meetings.

### **2. Agenda and Minutes**

- a. Agenda approval
  - i. Item prioritization:
    1. Decision to quickly approve Mtg 21 minutes, then focus on discussion items "Interim/Transition Board Diversity" and "How the board approaches / should approach ombuds role" based on HGG's preference since it is HGG's last meeting.
- b. Previous minutes
  - i. Mtg 21 Approval
    1. Board decides as protocol to keep action item list at the end of public minutes with the more important discussion summary at the beginning, balancing accountability with readability.
    2. A member questions the benefit of certain details being included in the minutes, noting that while users will always want more details, it isn't what they actually want.
    3. Small edits made based on members' suggestions.
    4. Board approves Meeting 21 Public Minutes.
      - a. Action: Thyme to publish Meeting 21 Public Minutes to board landing page and Metatalk.

### **3. Interim/Transition Board Diversity**

- a. Aielen is now on the interim board, gives quick recap of BIPOC board's Meeting 21 discussion on this item and update on developments since.
- b. Aielen shares document from the interim board for the BIPOC board that contains some proposals and questions about designing the new entity.

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- i. Board members can respond as individuals and/or collectively as a board, and can also opt to remain anonymous
- ii. BIPOC members are also welcome to join the interim board or sit in / attend interim board meetings if they would like to. Interested BIPOC board members can reach out to aielen about this.
  1. Action: Board members that would like to respond to the document from the Interim Board - to fill out responses by Jan 30.
- iii. aielen will relay the BIPOC board's responses (to the document) to the Interim Board on Feb 1.

**4. How the board approaches / should approach ombuds role**

- a. Aielen presents document on Ombuds policy/approach.
  - i. Intention of the document is to centralize and contextualize where the board has been for the Ombuds discussion, and propose next steps
  - ii. Background on Ombuds project:
    1. In September 2022, the board put together a summary/explainer document about the board's mandate and scope of work for the Steering Committee. In that doc, we noted we'd like to have a formal ombuds role as part of the board's mandate/scope.
    2. Board had already been doing ombuds work somewhat informally (acting as go-between for community members with BIPOC issue-related grievances, microaggressions, etc; speaking to admin/staff about specific gaps that arose or certain things being overlooked.)
  - iii. The board has had two ombuds-related cases so far, both raised by aielen. Aielen shares general approach for previous 2 cases.
  - iv. Some ideas for guiding principles/priorities:
    1. Providing a safe space for community members to talk about an issue or concern, ensuring they can trust us with their private/sensitive issues and information.
      - a. This includes prioritizing community members' privacy over expediency/convenience in ombuds cases, particularly in the case of public meeting minutes. (Board has tried to do this for previous cases - an approach that can hopefully continue going forward.) Separately, board members, staff members, working group members (or generally anyone in a position of power at MetaFilter) should be held to higher standards of transparency and disclosure for accountability.
    2. Surfacing any issues to not just the MetaFilter staff/management but also the community if/where we feel it is warranted. (In particular, systemic concerns should be brought to the attention of both.)
    3. Creating opportunities for better communication and follow up, including facilitating meetings/conversations when necessary.

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4. Documenting issues comprehensively, analyzing and reporting, highlighting noticeable patterns/trends, holding staff accountable.
  5. Carrying out this work within our own scope and capacity, being mindful not to overextend ourselves or set unhealthy precedents around BIPOC (volunteer, unpaid) labor. (Staff should not expect non-staff board members to contribute additional work or time outside board meetings.)
- v. Possible next steps:
1. Publicize / publicly communicate our ombuds role to the community
  2. Internally, we request mods notify us when issues arise.
    - a. While we ask mods keep us in the loop, this does not mean we are obligated to respond to mods or attend to any of these issues in real time outside our monthly board meetings.
    - b. We can use a central running document to be kept in the loop: mods can post information to this doc; does not need to be high-tech; could be a simple Google Doc or Notion page. This both keeps a record and lets board members opt-in to participate based on capacity without putting too much of an extra burden on board members.
- vi. Board agrees to move forward with the proposed next steps. Aielen can work on a draft for MetaTalk and can create the running Google Doc, sending it to the board mailing list.
1. Action: Aielen will draft a MetaTalk post communicating the board's ombuds role; will email draft to the board by Feb 9.
  2. Action: Aielen will create a running Google Doc to be shared by mods and the board, for mods to post to when ombuds/BIPOC-related issues arise; will email doc link to the board by Feb 9.
- b. Yueliang asks about the difference between mod flow vs the BIPOC board doc flow. What is the difference? Is there a developed procedure for the mod flow?
- i. Note this is related to this meeting's agenda item "Communication channels between the staff/mods and the board" which has not yet been discussed; also a followup from Meeting #19 and #20's discussions.
  - ii. Loup notes that mod flow and mod-to-board communication flow are not very well-defined. Loup believes a clear procedure should be developed so that if there are issues, the board knows exactly how to bring it up, who to reach out to, how to make sure it's visible to everyone so that it is something everyone on the board knows about, that we can have a conversation about as soon as possible rather than just waiting for the next meeting. Board asks, and Loup confirms, that email is the best way to reach out to mods.
    1. Loup asks: if the board raises any issue about a moderation decision to moderation staff, would the board want an answer to be given by the actual moderator who made the decision, or from someone representing the moderation team? Loup does not want the board to be in a position where expectations are not met, and believes part of why the board has

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had issues with unmet expectations is that things were not clearly agreed on in the beginning, and clear expectations were not set in the beginning.

2. Board provides clarification by referring to Ombuds Policy document's protocol and board's precedents with previous cases, also noting that in our past meetings and past cases, action items have been clearly noted with specific deadlines for followup. Action items were very clear, just that the items weren't necessarily acted on by the deadlines.
  - a. The action items we document in our meetings go a long way to making sure everyone agrees these specific things are what we need to do and expect. This should already help, but if there is some friction or lag in the time it takes for Loup to relay items to staff, the board could have a central running document for the staff listing action items, so that staff can have a direct view of the board's action item list with less dependence on Loup. This central document would be separate from meeting minutes documents, but would contain action items corresponding to those reflected in the most recent finalized meeting minutes.
    - i. Action: Aielen to update Ombuds Policy document confirming the ombuds policy decisions the board has discussed in this meeting, by Feb 9, emailing the board when this is done.
    - ii. Action: Aielen to create and maintain a running central document by Feb 9, viewable by staff, that lists the board's current pending action items for each month. (Action item list to be updated monthly, based on the board's most recent finalized meeting minutes.)
3. Loup affirms the above approach as well as suggestion for the central document specifically listing pending action items, says this will work for Loup/staff.
4. Yueliang has been thinking about this issue from a service design perspective: what do mods think and what do they do/not do, and then what is something that can be designed with them so we know what the next steps are and where they are all in the next steps? What are deliverables and actions and the progress on those and the work on that?
5. Aielen notes we may also need to be careful about scope creep - our board's mandate is not necessarily to improve staff operations/workflow, but maybe more to make sure we (the board) always have the information we need to carry out our own (board's) work. We, the BIPOC board, should be very careful about this - particularly because we've been there before quite a lot of times.
6. Conversation on struggling with the dissonance of on the one hand wanting to get the info (to do something with it) but also not piling too much responsibility for mod workflow onto BIPOC board members

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- iii. Aielen clarifies that the running Google Doc aielen suggested in the ombuds policy presentation is just a specific solution suggested for this particular ombuds project (not to replace in any way the larger discussion / need for solution re mods and board communication).
- iv. Yueliang suggests the board do an Affinity Mapping exercise that yueliang can facilitate, to brainstorm solutions to moderator-board communication flow
  - 1. Yueliang has run affinity mapping exercises with groups synchronously on Miro, but not asynchronously. Yueliang would like to do more research on synchronous v asynchronous affinity mapping.
    - a. Action: Yueliang will research synchronous and asynchronous affinity mapping, and will update the board next meeting (27 Feb).
  - 2. Yueliang notes that if the board's scope is restricted to monthly meetings, what would be required is doing a very quick and fast affinity mapping to target one very specific problem.
    - a. Loup offers to work with Yueliang (outside board meetings) on the affinity mapping exercise proposal and any solutions/tools Yueliang would like to develop
      - i. Action: Loup and Yueliang to work on affinity mapping proposal to target one specific problem (and any other solutions/tools they feel would be related to this), and update the board next meeting (27 Feb).

#### 5. Big thanks and acknowledgement of Hurdy Gurdy Girl

- a. Board: Thank you, HGG. We'll miss you greatly, and we appreciate all of your help, all of your amazing insight and the very balanced perspectives you have offered through all of this. It's been a privilege to work alongside you in this group, as well as having personal and social time with you. You've contributed so much, you've been with the board since its beginning, and the board has greatly benefited from your contributions. They are long-lasting contributions. None of the board's work would be where it is right now if you weren't part of this. We're grateful and happy we got to have you on the board, and we're so sad to see you go. We wish you all the best going forward.

#### 6. Action items from past meetings

- a. Action: Thyme to obtain final clarification from user about redactions and publish Mtg 19 minutes accordingly. (*followup from Meeting #21*)
  - i. Thyme obtained clarification from user over email, Mtg 19 minutes have been posted to the board landing page (<https://www.metafilter.com/board-rc.mefi>). Thyme will post the Metatalk for Mtg 19 before our next meeting (Mtg 23).
    - 1. Action: Thyme to post Metatalk for Meeting 19 Minutes before our next meeting (Mtg 23, Feb 27).
- b. Action: Thyme to check with Brainwane about approving Meeting 20's minutes (*followup from Meeting #21*)

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- i. Thyme obtained approval from Brainwane regarding Meeting 20's minutes, Mtg 20 minutes have been posted to board landing page (<https://www.metafilter.com/board-rc.mefi>). Thyme will post the Metatalk for Mtg 20 before our next meeting (Mtg 23)
  1. Action: Thyme to post Metatalk for Meeting 20 Minutes before our next meeting (Mtg 23, Feb 27).
- c. Action: Loup to send Jessamyn an email (looping in the board) asking for clarification on the current list of transition board members (confirmed, unconfirmed, invited, volunteered, etc) - by Oct 24 (*followup from Meeting #21*)
  - i. Loup relays: Jessamyn clarified there was also a private list of recommended MeFites, and communicated to Loup that everyone on the recommended list had been contacted.
  - ii. Aielen notes that when they reached out personally to MeFites that had been recommended (including BIPOC/international MeFites), almost all stated they had not been previously contacted by Jessamyn or the Interim Board.
  - iii. Aielen states there was a communication gap in this instance that should be noted (this was a bunch of valuable MeFites including BIPOC MeFites who could have been possibly recruited had communication been better handled), but item can be resolved since Interim Board has now been reaching out to potential members in its own capacity.
- d. Action: Thyme/Loup to send Frimble the Survey Request document, receive a response from Frimble within 1 week of sending the request, and update the board on Frimble's response next meeting (Meeting 22). (Response should include an estimated timeframe, feasibility, and how survey answers can be collected/viewed/accessed by the board.) (*followup from Meeting #21*)
  - i. Thyme relays: Frimble said this is doable and likely can be done by mid-February.
    1. Frimble just needs to know if the board is good with a survey asking the Y/N question, and users will need to be logged in to do this survey. Do members feel it is important to have access to the user's usernames/identities?
      - a. Action: Board will discuss Frimble's response and follow-up questions about the survey at the next meeting (Meeting 23) on Feb 27.
- e. Action: Majick to pull subsite-specific geographic data from Matomo for board to review next meeting (Meeting 22). (*followup from Meeting #21*)
  - i. Pending. (Majick is at capacity; we may want to shelve or proceed slowly with this item for now.)
- f. Action: Cendawanita will work on sampling the most recent ~500 posts to major subsites based on the above reference list of criteria, and will present/update the board on this next meeting (Meeting 22) on November 28. (*followup from Meeting #21*)
  - i. Cendawanita shows work/progress thus far:
    1. Cendawanita presents proposed methodology: reverse chronology, with

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- a. 500 posts in 1 year, or
- b. 500 posts scattered across 3 years (can do a year-on-year comparison by quarter; staggered sampling approach which would entail randomly picking ~14 posts a month)
  - i. Cendawanita's proposed staggered sampling approach: Picking the ~14 posts per month at *Day N+3* intervals (e.g. Pick a post on Day 1, then pick another post on Day 1+3=4, then pick another post on Day 4+3=7, etc until maxing out)

2. Typology:

- a. Content type (light (hobbies, trivia, lifestyle) vs heavy (academics, politics, news))
- b. Geography (by continental regions)
- c. Topic theme: topics sorted by subculture, political leaning, philosophy, cuisine, communities (by demographics)
  - i. HGG suggests one more topic theme: social justice issues (separate from "political" theme)

ii. Action: Cendawanita to continue to update board on post-sampling progress at the next meeting (Meeting 23) on Feb 27.

- g. Action: Board members to confirm with Loup whether they have received honoraria payments and if they have any questions. (*followup from Meetings #20, #21*)
  - i. Pending. Due to time constraints, this item will be revisited next meeting.
- h. Action: Board will discuss and review the moderator notes tool together with Loup during Meeting 22. (*followup from Meetings #20, #21*)
  - i. Pending. Due to time constraints, this item will be revisited next meeting.
- i. Action: Loup to review the board's suggested changes to the 3 policy documents together with the board next meeting (Meeting 22). (*followup from Meetings #18, #19, #20, #21*)
  - i. Pending. Due to time constraints, this item will be revisited next meeting.
- j. Action: Thyme will add policy review agenda items to the board's calendar for 23 July 2024 and 27 August 2024 by today (August 22). (*followup from Meetings #18, #19, #20, #21*)
  - i. Pending. Due to time constraints, this item will be revisited next meeting.
- k. Action: Board to comment, finalize and confirm desired changes reflected in the BIPOC Board landing page document by Meeting 22 (November 28) (*followup from Meetings #19, #20, #21*)
  - i. Pending. Due to time constraints, this item will be revisited next meeting.
- l. Action: Loup to attempt to follow up with the former member regarding payment for the meeting they attended, and confirm that payment has been received. (*followup from Meetings #17, #18, #19, #20, #21*)
  - i. Pending. Due to time constraints, this item will be revisited next meeting.
- m. Action: Loup to email the board an update before October 1 addressing "Loup to discuss the BIPOC board subsite spec with Frimble and give an update on the BIPOC board subsite next meeting. (*followup from Meetings #17, #18, #19, #20, #21*) (Note that this is

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a different action item to 3)k) - the landing page updates item concerns textual, short-term changes to the current landing page while this action item concerns the board's longer-term request for a subsite with more functionalities

- i. Pending. Loup emailed the board on October 20. While the email did not confirm that Frimble received the subsite spec, the email from Loup relayed it would be ideal to invite Frimble to a board meeting so the board could speak directly with Frimble. The email noted that this meeting could only happen after the new tech assistant role had been filled, when the new tech assistant would be fully up and running. Due to time constraints, this item will be revisited next meeting.
- n. Action: Loup to email the board an update before October 1 addressing "Loup to check with Frimble about the next phase of UX changes and the code tour, get more details and update the board next meeting. (*followup from Meetings #17, #18, #19, #20, #21*)
  - i. Loup updated the board on this item in an email sent on October 20.
  - ii. In that email, Loup said "I still don't have a timeline for the Flagging UX/UI changes to be deployed to the site. The reason for this is because frimble only works part-time and their availability was decreased during the summer months so they are currently catching up while still maintaining the site."
  - iii. Code tour was not addressed in the October 20 email. Due to time constraints, this item will be revisited next meeting.

1. Action: Loup to update the board about the code tour in Meeting 23 (Feb 27).

- o. Action: Thyme to look into this specific case/thread - (<https://ask.metafilter.com/374247/Tech-support-India-Maybe-more-important-to-us-than-them-Culture#5319846>) - (e.g. what happened on the side of the mod team, timeline, reasons for deletion reason/note change, etc) and update the board next meeting (September 26). (*followup from Meetings #19, #20, #21*)
  - i. Pending. Due to time constraints, this item will be revisited next meeting.

**7. Action items requested asynchronously outside past meetings**

- a. Action: Majick to remove Brainwane and Porpoise from the mailing list (*requested/prompted by Brainwane on Sep 10*) (*followup from Meeting Minutes #21*)
  - i. Done
- b. Action: Majick to look for somewhere else to put board contact email. (*added by Majick on Oct 24*) (*followup from Meeting Minutes #21*)
  - i. Pending. (Majick is at capacity; we may want to shelve or proceed slowly with this item for now.)
- c. Action: Thyme to communicate/coordinate with HGG and Brainwane to move some minutes documents hosted on their personal drives over to the board's shared drive. (*requested by aielen on Oct 24*) (*followup from Meeting Minutes #21*)
  - i. Pending. Due to time constraints, this item will be revisited next meeting.
- d. Action: Thyme to move a minutes document (Mtg 16 Public) hosted on their personal drive over to the board's shared drive (*requested by aielen on Oct 24*) (*followup from Meeting Minutes #21*)

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i. Done.

**End of Meeting. Items below will be discussed/revisited at our next meeting.**

1. Larger question about whether BIPOC feel comfortable reaching out to mods about problematic posts. Discussion of problematic AskMe thread: <https://ask.metafilter.com/374247/Tech-support-India-Maybe-more-important-to-us-than-them-Culture> (ties in with action item 6)o) from this meeting)
2. Improving mod team followup and internal alignment wrt user communication
3. Communication channels between the staff/mods and the board
4. Proposal to review minute-taking methodology
5. Moderation resource allocation