

**New York Midwives  
Board of Directors and Annual Meeting via Zoom  
December 4, 2020**

Board members present: Sascha James-Conterelli, Pat Burkhardt, Nancy Kraus, Marian Seliqini, Helena Grant, Jessica Allison, Caitlin LeGros, Audrey Stedford

Other members present for all or some of the meeting: Kate Finn, Beth Cooper, Whitney Hall, Cindy Lynch, Connie Coker, Julia Lange Kessler, Goldie McBride, Rebekah Ruppe, Yulia Labko, Betsy Arnold-Leahy, Carol Bues, Suzanne Smith, Akilah Pancall SNM, Jaclynn Chen SNM, Joy-Noel Anderson SM, Iradeli Lorenzo SNM, Alicia Richter SM, Vanessa Lafortune SM, Susan Campos SNM, Tre Kwon SM, Shannyn Dewey, Neeli Shruti, Lana Pasek

President Sascha James-Conterelli called the meeting to order at 10:05am and asked for permission to record the meeting which was granted. Members of the Board and all others present introduced themselves.

**1. Review and approval of Minutes:** The Minutes from the August 25, 2020 Board meeting were approved.

**2. President's Report:** Sascha stated that 2020 was an unprecedented year for everyone, but was especially stressful for healthcare providers. Nonetheless, she was grateful for the opportunity to be President of NYM for the past 3 years and is invigorated by seeing so many students in attendance at today's meeting.

**3. Treasurer's Report:** Acting Treasurer Pat Burkhardt stated that revenues and expenditures for 2020 should be close to expectations. It is hard to project costs for 2021 in view of the ongoing pandemic, but she did present a proposed budget for 2021 which will need to be approved at the next Board meeting. The fee we pay Greenberg Traurig to represent us in Albany will remain the same in 2021.

Pat explained that the IRS discrepancy from several years ago is now being addressed by the Finance Committee. NYM, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row, was audited by JCOPE in 2020 without issue. Our organization is due for an internal audit in 2021 so a committee will need to be appointed next year. Pat has also spoken to the IRS about some questions about our 2019 tax return. NYM, in participation with the ACNM, did offer students reduced dues for the year.

**4. Legislative Committee Report:** Pat Burkhardt, chairperson, reported on discussions being held with Assemblyman Gottfried's office to write a bill licensing CPMs and then a subsequent bill that would update our Midwifery Practice Act. Although the committee originally was hoping for a Unified Midwifery Practice Act, covering both Licensed Midwives and CPMs, Gottfried recommends separate bills. Trying to find gender inclusive language that is

acceptable to legislators, removing physicians from the Midwifery Board, and expanding our scope of practice for primary care would be the objectives of a revised practice act. Due to significant concerns re strategy and goals, the Board asked the committee to hold an open Zoom session in January to review our legislative goals for the year.

The committee will either hold a Zoom Advocacy event in the spring, or if the pandemic has cooled, possibly an in-person Advocacy Day in June in Albany.

Whitney Hall then reported on on-going, frustrating discussions with the Department of Health re the Midwifery Birth Center regulations. The DOH at this time is still requiring the Certificate of Need (CON) process which is extremely expensive and time consuming and inappropriate for a midwifery birth center. However, birth centers were originally included in the CON law, and a bill may be needed by the legislature to remove them from that statutory language.

**5. Nominating Committee Report:** Betsy Arnold-Leahy reported for the committee which is grateful for the quick work of the Bylaws Committee this fall. For the first time in our history, NYM members are directly electing officers of the organization. The election is open until December 8. The committee also expressed its appreciation to the candidates for office for complying so quickly with requested photos and statements.

**6. Bylaws Committee Report:** MaryAnne Laffin sent a report for the committee. The new bylaws were written to be in alignment with ACNM bylaws and were passed by our membership in November. Everyone is asked to read the bylaws closely and suggest any needed amendments to the committee for consideration next year.

**7. Quality Committee Report:** Kate Finn submitted her Annual Report. She outlined three major efforts this year: trying to help establish midwifery birth centers upstate, getting the Community Birth Standards updated and published, and following the indictments of two CPMs who serve the religious communities in the Finger Lakes.

**8. Communications Committee:** Yuliya Labko reported that the new domain name Newyorkmidwives was purchased. She is currently working with two new volunteers for our social media accounts. The committee will also hold a Zoom open committee meeting in January to examine how to best meet the organization's website and social media needs, possibly with paid contractors and will then present a proposal to the Board.

**9. Insurance Committee:** Beth Cooper presented her report and summarized that there have three areas of major concern again this year. First, reasonably priced liability insurance for birth centers; 2<sup>nd</sup> reasonable malpractice insurance for independent midwives; and 3<sup>rd</sup> reimbursement issues, especially for Certified Midwives.

**10. Greenberg Traurig Report:** Jane Preston spoke from 12:05-12:45 about what's happening in Albany. This year, we will probably be focusing on a birth center accreditation bill which should remove the CON requirement, a CPM licensing bill, and the updating of the Midwifery Practice Act. MSSNY has been stressing how all non-physician providers "should" be under physician supervision. She encouraged our members to develop relationships with all the new members of the Legislature; for the first time in many years, the Democrats now have veto-proof majorities in both the Senate and the Assembly. She mentioned how multiple transitions in the Department of Health and the Governor's Office have made it difficult to get anything done.

**11. Regional Reports:**

Central NY, Jessica Allison: Covid is surging upstate worse than last spring. Reimbursement for homebirth has been an issue, and MVP refuses to reimburse CMs.

Hudson Valley, Marian Seliquni: About 15 midwives from the HV held a meet-up at the Walkway over the Hudson at the end of October and discussed trying to restart a Hudson Valley chapter. Marian will invite one of the midwives from the Refuah Birth Center, part of a FQHC, which opened in October under the Governor's Executive Order during the pandemic, to address the membership.

NYC, Helena Grant & Audrey Stedford: Midwives have been invited to speak to two recent NYC Council hearings. Thirteen hospitals with birthing units are meeting together in a Maternity Hospital Quality Improvement Network. NYC Midwives is considering separate incorporation and separation from NYM; they will be holding two Town Halls this winter before deciding on a course of action.

Western, Caitlin LeGros: The postpartum unit at her hospital is about to be transitioned to a Covid unit.

**12. Membership:** The Board hopes to reactivate a Membership Committee. Marian also suggested that monthly or bi-monthly meetings on Zoom to talk about clinical issues and social exchanges might be a way to encourage member participation.

**13. Affiliate New Officers On-boarding:** Marian learned that ACNM is planning a webinar in January for new affiliate officers; she hopes all new officers would participate. According to our new bylaws, it is also time to look at which committee chairs may need to be replaced.

**14. Midwifery Student Clinical Placements:** The SED (State Ed Dep) is restricting students from out-of-state programs from clinical placements in NY. This affects the distance programs which especially affects the rural and upstate areas of our state. Students in the only distance Certified Midwifery program which is based in Philadelphia are also affected; the only distance program based in NY only accepts RNs. A Task Force composed of Julia, Marian, Helena, Jessica, and Lily Dalke was appointed to do further investigation into this problem.

**15. Paid Administrator & Paid Scribe:** Pat proposed the Board consider stipends for these roles. She will develop a job description for the administrative work she has undertaken as a volunteer for the organization. A Scribe is listed in the new bylaws as an alternative for the Secretary taking the Minutes at the meeting.

**16. Meeting Dates for 2021:**

January Zoom meetings to be arranged by the Legislative and Communications Committees are to be open to all members.

January On-Boarding Zoom for all new officers.

Monday, February 8; Zoom Board meeting

Wednesday, April 21, Zoom Board meeting

Friday, September 24, either Zoom or in person in Albany

Friday, December 10, at Greenberg Traurig offices in NYC

The meeting closed at 3:30pm. There was a lunch break between 12:45 and 1:15.

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Kraus, Acting Secretary