



## Board Meeting Minutes

Date: February 12, 2017 Time: 12:30PM EST (U.S.) Venue: Online Video Conference

<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	The Board Administrator called to the order the Board meeting for the AAGT at about 1:02PM (EST) on February 12, 2017 via RingCentral online video conferencing.
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	Toni Gilligan, Daniel Bak (leaving early), Jim Battaglia, Billy Desmond, Ansel Woldt, Nives Vrecic, Mari McGilton, Robert “Bob” Witchel, Deirdre Winter, Dina Miller, Patricia Tucker, Talia Bar Yoseph Levine, Jon Blend, Emily Meyer Stewart, Dominique “Domi” Chabre, Sandra Tompkins
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Ryan Tolman, Brad Larsen-Sanchez, Burt Lazarin, Maryanne Nicholls, Marlene Blumenthal, Gail Feinstein, Mark Reck, Nicholas Emmanuel
<b>CHAIR PERSON</b>	The Board is not chaired on this occasion. Individual Board Members order the Meeting. Board President Toni Gilligan is unable to be present due to technical difficulties.
<b>MINUTES PERSON(S)</b>	Minutes taken by Mari McGilton, drafted by Ryan Tolman (not present)

**Asheville Conference 2018**

**Toni, Sandra, Board**

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<p><i>From the Board Secretary:</i></p> <p><i>Today’s Board Meeting was called to order under special circumstances. At this time, an Executive Order by the current President of the United States (POTUS) has restricted entry of people traveling into the United States, an action currently being litigated in American courts. At this time the POTUS has resolved to further restrict travel from Mexico into the United States.</i></p> <p>Board Members have been attentive and interactive with the AAGT listserv. Today’s special Board Meeting was called to reflect upon the current political background of an international AAGT conference in the United States given the current political restrictions on international travelers. The Board surveyed the Membership (via e-mail) about international travel to the United States for the 2018 AAGT Conference to be convened in Asheville, North Carolina, United States. Taken as a whole, the Membership Survey</p>
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	<p>avored moving the 2018 AAGT Conference outside of the United States.</p> <p>The Board Members present acknowledge the weight of a decision to potentially cancel plans to convene in Asheville, North Carolina, and deliberations continue under stress and a feeling of obligation to represent the Membership responsibly while considering the political and ethical field, including the potential of a 2018 Conference not happening due to the Board’s actions, and what the decision means in the greater context of AAGT as an organization.</p> <p>The Board is meeting today to make a decision to continue conference planning in the United States, or decide not to convene the 2018 AAGT meeting in the United States.</p> <p>The Board is not meeting to discuss potential venues outside of the United States. The Board acknowledges a potential site in Toronto has been discussed on the listserv.</p> <p>The Board discusses the roots and principles of AAGT, and the spirit of AAGT as an international organization. The Board feels moved, saddened, and empowered by the responses from the Membership.</p> <p>Toni surveys the Board for opinions.</p> <p>There have been calls by some Members to “hold the heat” and convene in Asheville despite the controversy of international travel. Potentially, moving the conference from the United States might feel like “running away” from the chosen venue in Asheville due to controversy over current laws and regulations which might not exist in 2018.</p> <p>Some Board Members agree that to deny the controversy over LGBTQI+ rights in Asheville, North Carolina, United States (considering “HB2,” legislation designed to oppress people identified as LGBTQI+) is to deny the whole. At least one Board Member is upset that the international travel issues seem to warrant more concern from the Board than the LGBTQI+ issues. Today’s meeting is called to consider the issue of international travel.</p> <p>Board Members note that the potential to be turned away at the U.S. border existed during the previous presidential administration in the United States, and indeed a Board Member had the experience of being turned away at the U.S. border prior to the current U.S. travel restrictions. How much worse are current regulations, and how many Members would be impacted? Other nations in the world such as the UK and Germany are reportedly experiencing political controversy effecting international travel, though at this time the sentiment indicates that current U.S. policy makes international</p>
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travel to the United States less desirable than the UK or Germany.

The Board notes that there is a current, accepted proposal and the Board has full faith that the Asheville/AGTI (Appalachian Gestalt Therapy Institute) conference planners are willing and able to provide an international conference, and to reverse the acceptance of the Asheville/AGTI proposal may not honor the hard work of AGTI.

Sandra indicates that AGTI understands and fully supports that AAGT has to act in the best interest of the membership. No ill will toward a potential withdrawal from the conference site. AGTI has already discussed having a regional conference regardless of the decision.

The Board greatly appreciates the “hurry up and waiting” of the AGTI reps and all the hard work that they have done.

The Board wants to respect everyone’s comfort and sense of belonging. Many people cannot afford to come to so many conferences far away and right now there is a risk that some may try to enter the U.S. and be turned away with great financial burden.

It is too unpredictable to trust that things will change for the better in the next two years, so is it worth the risk to keep the Conference in the U.S.?

AAGT is a strong community and will not be divided by this decision. The Board is moved by the members’ responses and feelings of solidarity AAGT can adjust future challenges; this political climate may be permanent for at least a while. It is very important to have a conference rather than postponing it. Having a conference may help reenergize everyone and mend the divide that has been caused by this discussion.

Integrity is important when considering the impact of having versus not having the conference in the U.S. The potential negative impact seems to outweigh the potential positive impact of having it in the U.S. It may be safer to move outside US even though no place will be perfect.

The Board feels it acts in support of the Membership by moving to hold the 2018 AAGT Conference outside of the U.S.

Most Board members note that part of this feels like the wrong decision. The decision feels like a retreat instead of pushing forward despite discomfort. Many were personally looking forward to marching in Asheville and showing a united front with LGBT and other positive forces.

AAGT: Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy – An International Community

	<p>The question remains “Are we not going because of the international problems but were willing to go regardless of the LGBTQI+ calls for boycott?” Or do Members want to go to fight for LGBTQI+ rights? What do these issues mean going forward with this decision?</p> <p>Today’s meeting ends affirming a decision to move the Conference and call for new proposals.</p> <p>Meeting called to close at 1:53pm (EST)</p>	
<b>DECISION</b>	Move the 2018 AAGT Conference outside of the United States. Prepare a call for proposals.	
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
Toni will draft a statement for Board review and then announce the decision to the Membership.	Toni, Board	ASAP
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
Toni will draft a Call for Conference Proposals for Board review and then forward the Call for Conference Proposals to the Membership.	Toni, Board	ASAP