

Accountable Now Verein General Meeting

4 December 2024 Minutes

Present:

Rachel Smith (Chair of the Board, Independent)
Mary Brezovich (SOS Children's Villages International)
Babacar Ndong (Educo)
Jean Scrimgeour (Accountability Lab)
Vanessa Goas (Independent)
Alex Sardar (Independent)

With apologies:

Tamryn Lee-Fourie (Civicus)
Veronica Zambrano (Plan International)

In attendance from the Secretariat

Megan Colnar, Executive Director

Welcome and Board Matters (ACC 24/14)

- The Chair confirmed that the necessary quorum was met to commence the meeting and approve board actions.
- The board minutes from the September 2024 meeting were reviewed and formally approved via chat vote. (6 in favor, 0 opposed)
- Approval of the Strategic Framework was also confirmed, following a prior vote that was interrupted due to lost quorum in the last meeting. (6 in favor 0 opposed)

Executive Director Updates (ACC 24/15)

Financial Update

The ED highlighted significant progress in fundraising efforts, noting that 95% of the 2025 budget is already secured. Accountable Now has successfully pivoted from being heavily reliant on membership fees (75-80%) to a mixed-revenue model where project funding plays a dominant role (20% from membership fees). Member revenue remains fragile, with key long-time members alerting us to the fact that they may not be able to pay their fee in 2025. We have already waived one fee in one of these cases. There were also cash flow concerns for January-February 2025, though

mitigation strategies include front-loading revenue collection, delaying payments where possible, and requesting upfront disbursements from funders. Plans are in place to build back reserves (ideally at 3 months) for operating expenses over the next year.

The ED shared that AN has secured some major new partnerships including a two-year contract with the Funder Safeguarding Collaborative and continued engagements with Fondation Botnar.

Staffing & Organizational Development

Accountable Now is moving to a fully remote model, with staff located from Seoul to New York and across other parts of the world. With plans to transition two existing contractors to full-time roles:

- Zipporah (Senior Director of Community, Learning, and Strategic Initiatives, Nairobi-based,).
- Katie (Communications & Programs Coordinator, Netherlands-based).

These hires will strengthen member engagement, leadership support, and financial sustainability. The board appreciated the need for new staff to round out the team's offers and capabilities. Given the revenue and expenditure projections presented to the board, they were happy to approve a budget that included funding for these new hires in a sequenced and responsible way.

On the ongoing German Wind down operation: Negotiations with Baker & Tilly are ongoing to finalize financial statements and VAT obligation 2023. Wind down steps are underway, although some have been delayed due to financial reports not being produced on time.

Approval of 2025 Startup Budget (ACC 24/16)

After the budget presentation, the projections for 2025 are strong, marking the first planned deficit-free year in a long time. The Board formally **approved** the 2025 startup budget (97% of revenue secured). With this in mind, they delegated authority to the ED to incrementally expand the budget based on financial conditions in Q1 2025. Budget adjustments will be developed and closely monitored by the FRC, with updates on changes and scenarios presented to the full Board at each board meeting. Key budget priorities include:

- Hiring full-time staff (Katie and Zipporah).
- Investing in staff well-being (home office stipends, development fund).
- Maintaining financial sustainability (balanced budget growth while restoring reserves).

Membership Fees and Revenue Strategy (ACC 24/17)

The Board approved transition of membership fees from Euros to US Dollars, using a standard exchange rate for calculations. The Board also reaffirmed its commitment to

actively support membership recruitment efforts. Members will assist by connecting with key prospects, participating in outreach efforts, and leveraging their networks. A target list of potential members will be circulated for Board members to assess existing relationships and possible introductions.

Furthermore, the Board discussed exploring funders as potential members. The board is interested in considering this issue further and supporting strategic thinking and assessment in 2025. **(Action)**

Other Business & Executive Session (ACC 24/18)

Jean Scrimgeour will be on leave from February-June 2025, with Cheri-Leigh Erasmus serving as her temporary replacement.

Executive session was held to finalize staffing, strategic planning, and governance adjustments and the next meeting will take place virtually on March 11, 2025.

Megan Colnar

Executive Director

Rachel Smith

Chair of the Board

END