

Accountable Now Board Meeting

9 December 2025

Approved Minutes

Present:

Rachel Smith (Chair of the Board, Independent)

Babacar Ndong (Educo)

Caleb Jamal Masusu (Restless Development)

Patricia J. Lerner (Independent)

Javier Gonzalez Gomez (Independent)

Jesselina Rana (CIVICUS)

Violet Tsagka (Independent)

Vanessa Goas (Independent)

Jean Scrimgeour (Accountability Lab)

With apologies:

Mary Brezovich (SOS Children's Villages International)

Sarah Ritta Kattan (World Scouting)

In attendance from the Secretariat:

Megan Colnar, Executive Director

Onesimus John Waino, Associate Chief of Staff and Administration

Zipporah Ongwenyi Senior Director Community, Learning and Strategic Initiatives
(Membership session)

Welcome and Board Matters (ACC 25/16)

- The Chair confirmed that quorum was met and the meeting formally commenced.
- The agenda was reviewed and approved with no additions or amendments.
- The minutes from the last Board meeting (16 September 2025) were reviewed and approved via chat vote (**7 in favor, 0 opposed**).

Future of Membership Programming (ACC 25/17)

The Executive Director introduced the discussion and reiterated that the review is not driven by broad dissatisfaction among members; overall member feedback remains positive. The Secretariat shared that, over time, membership fees no longer cover the cost of membership delivery and that the organisation is increasingly subsidising membership services through contract work. The Secretariat also noted wider sector funding pressures and the need to ensure Accountable Now's identity and "community footprint" appropriately reflect the full range of partners and engagement.

Membership scenarios shared for discussion (no decision taken)

The Secretariat presented three possible directions for the membership model:

- **Scenario 1:** Maintain the current membership offer with refinements, including a clearer focus on organisations where dynamic accountability services are most needed and opportunities to cascade support across large networks.
- **Scenario 2:** De-link “membership/community” from the services desk, enabling a wider community/signatory-style engagement around dynamic accountability, alongside separately priced services (subscription and/or one-off support).
- **Scenario 3:** Wind down direct services over time and shift more fully to partnership approaches (including with national and regional platforms) to mainstream dynamic accountability, including through accreditation-related pathways.

Board reflections (high-level)

Board members discussed:

- The importance of making explicit assumptions about the external funding environment for 2026–2027 and clarifying the likely pace and sequencing of any transition.
- The value of maintaining **flexibility** to adapt to a shifting environment and the potential merits of a **hybrid approach**, drawing on elements of Scenarios 2 and 3.
- The proposition that “membership” could evolve into a broader expression of alignment with dynamic accountability principles, while the services desk is structured and priced as a distinct offer.
- The role of credibility and legitimacy associated with Accountable Now’s work, particularly for smaller or growing organisations seeking to demonstrate accountability to funders and partners.

The Membership Committee Chair confirmed that the committee’s earlier discussion was exploratory and that no recommendations were being brought for approval at this meeting; rather, the Board discussion would inform continued development. The Secretariat noted it would share prior benchmarking on peer models and continue consultation and testing with members and partners to inform the direction of travel.

Updates and Organizational Business (ACC 25/18)

Executive Director update

The Executive Director reported that 2025 is tracking toward the organisation’s highest revenue year to date and noted additional late-year commitments and invoicing. The Executive Director also highlighted:

- A continued emphasis on growing reach through partnerships, including

- development of a public training offer and learning partnership work.
- The intention to explore partnership opportunities focused on fundraising capacity and support, in response to member needs and wider sector conditions.
 - Planning work underway to confirm 2026 priorities with the IRP and internal team, with a commitment to share priorities with the Board early in 2026.
 - Initial planning for Accountable Now's 20-year anniversary in 2026, including communications outputs, an ambassador/alumni concept, and a focal moment around early June 2026.

The Board discussed the potential relationship between the anniversary/ambassador concept and future community-building approaches.

Finance and Risk Committee (FRC) update

The Treasurer provided a summary of the FRC discussion, noting:

- 2025 performance is closely aligned to projections, with variances not deemed material.
- Next steps to strengthen financial insight, including improved tracking of staff/consultant time against projects to support pricing, profitability analysis, and overhead coverage.
- Continued exploration of approaches to reinvest contract income into member-facing services and/or reusable "global good" outputs (with funder-by-funder feasibility).
- Early exploration of reserve investment approaches and the possible need for an investment policy for Board review.

2026 Budget

The Executive Director presented the 2026 budget and noted that it includes scenario planning for revenue shortfalls, including cost reductions at different thresholds, and a plan to rebuild toward the Board's reserve target over time.

The Chair confirmed that the Executive Director's compensation would be handled separately in the Board-only session.

The 2026 Budget was approved via chat vote (**6 in favor, 0 opposed**).

Governance Committee update

The Chair provided a brief update on work initiated through the Governance Committee, including:

- Early review of committee TOR and governance priorities.
- Confirmation that the fiscal hosting arrangement will continue through 2026 while longer-term structural options are assessed.

- The intention to seek further legal guidance on registration pathways and timelines.
- A request for clearer documentation on delegated authority and decision-making pathways (Secretariat vs committees vs full Board).

Risk management and delegated authority

The Board discussed the benefits of reintroducing a lightweight risk register (or equivalent) for periodic review and visibility. It was agreed that the FRC would review a risk register template with a view to formalising periodic review.

The Board also requested development and sharing of a delegated authority matrix to clarify: which decisions sit with the Secretariat, which are delegated to committees, and which require full Board review/approval.

Other Board matters

The Executive Director informed the Board of a short medical leave planned for January 2026. The Chair reiterated availability to support the Secretariat during this period.

Executive Session (ACC 25/19)

An executive session was held (Board only). The Board discussed items on the agenda, including the Executive Director's compensation.

Megan Colnar
Executive Director

Rachel Smith
Chair of the Board

END