AMS Finance Committee

Attendance

Committee members:

Lucia Liang (AMS VP Finance)
Cole Evans (AMS President)
Brandon Connor
Katherine Feng
Mathew Ho
James Chen
Jimmy Kim
Keith Hester (Managing Director, non-voting)
Mary Gan (AVP Finance, non-voting)

Present: Lucia Liang, Cole Evans, Brandon Connor, Katherine Feng, Mathew Ho, James Chen, Jimmy Kim, Keith Hester

Guests: None

Regrets: Mary Gan

Recording Secretary: Katherine Feng

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:04pm.
Adoption of Agenda

MOVED by Mathew, SECONDED by Brandon

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda is adopted”

1. Approval of July 7th Minutes

MOVED by James, SECONDED by Katherine

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the minutes from July 7th are approved”

2. Nest Surveillance Server Replacement Presentation

MOVED by Katherine, SECONDED by Jimmy

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT $44,646.00 is transferred out of the SUB Repairs and Renewals Fund for the purposes of paying for the replacement of CCTV servers in the Nest.

The motion passed unanimously.

Keith: We have a server that works with the Nest’s surveillance system. The RCMP has been complaining in the last year that the resolution of the footage stored in the server is too low because it’s getting old. We would like to replace that server with a higher end one that can store higher resolution video. This includes the cost of license configuration and tax. We looked at buying the server ourselves and configuring it, but that turned out to be more expensive so we’re buying the server from Securicom. The current provider is no longer providing server licensing so that’s why we need to switch. We have 44 security cameras and we need a license to connect them to the server and then a license to the software to manage the surveillance system. The new system will have a lot of memory so it will be able to run constantly and store footage with high quality.

James: Does the footage get stored indefinitely or does it get written over?

Keith: We have a video surveillance policy where we can only store 2 weeks of footage at a time

James: What’s the expected lifespan of this?

Keith: About 5 years.
Jimmy: What is the benefit of Securicom over Cypress Technologies other than cost?

Keith: We also use it in the LIFE building and it’s working flawlessly so far.

Cole: Also with the current server, none of the security cameras are synced up with each other.

Keith: Right now, we use motion activation with the cameras to save space. The new system will always be on so all motion will be there.

3. Student Services Wage Restructure Discussion

Written statement from Lucia:

1. Figuring out how to reconcile that most student-staff positions in Executive portfolios and Services (especially the latter) require significantly more skills to perform than other student jobs such as those in typical service-focused divisions like Food and Beverage

2. Reconciling that these student staff take on significantly more responsibility and decision-making independence in their roles compared to others, sometimes making choices that have significant impact on finances, advocacy, and student/organizational wellbeing

3. Figuring out how to address the fact that while most positions don’t have explicit “qualifications”, most hiring managers for these student-staff positions almost always seek some sort of baseline qualifications that would exceed what could be considered as having “no experience”

4. Figuring out how to address that certain student-staff have to deal with a significantly higher degree of emotional labour and burden for work that is a part of their job description, and would usually be handled by personnel with “experience” and therefore would be comparatively paid a higher wage.

Mathew: How does the process of restructure wages work?

Lucia: We can work with other Committees like the HR Committee. We just have to report monthly on what we’ve investigated and provide an outline of our decision moving forward.

Cole: I think for now we can have Keith examine this and then later get the Finance Committee’s thoughts.

Keith: I think a lot of the issues are perceived issues. I don’t think they’re real issues but I’ll report back.

Lucia: We’ll see if it’s feasible within the budget

Prepared by Katherine Feng
Keith: I don’t think it’s about feasibility. I think it’s really a question of whether it’s legal or equitable.

Mathew: How about hazard pay?

Lucia: A lot of other employers have now ended hazard pay. If we do it, it will be retroactively for March and April.

Cole: Lucia went over the things Executive identified as the reasons we’re considering this. Like Keith said, we’ll have to look further into this to see if these are actual issues or not.

Keith: Any pay structure we come up with has to be equitable to all the different groups of people?

Katherine: I agree that it should be equitable to everyone, but what specific groups are you referring to?

Keith: Students who work in student services versus other areas of the AMS. We don’t want to reward any group more than others.

4. Code Changes to Chair Requirements Discussion

Lucia: We’re having a discussion on code changes regarding whether Councillors should be allowed to Chair Finance Committee. Governance believes you don’t need to know too much about finance to run the Committee.

Keith: I think that this is wrong. I think the VP Finance should be the Chair because they work directly on the budget. I understand where the Governance Committee is coming from. The Chair role involves a lot of administrative work, which could be delegated to the Associate VP Finance.

Cole: I would make the argument that, like we see with Advocacy Committee, if a VP Finance wanted to sit on Finance Committee to control the process, the VP Finance would have no issue getting appointed as Chair. This just gives more flexibility to executives. The only negative impact I can think of here is during the budget creation process but usually that just works by the VP Finance showing the budget and explaining it and getting comments on it. The Board of Governors also works similarly. I can see the VP Finance sitting as chair in the summer to make the budget and then letting someone else be chair later. Our Chairs aren’t that powerful so they wouldn’t be able to hinder the process too much. The system also works similarly at UBC where Peter Smailes doesn’t chair the Finance Committee.

Lucia: During the budgeting process, I believe it’s important that I’m the chair, but throughout the year, the things we pass are more operational things that we just have to do. Mary (AVP

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Finance) can’t come to meetings and can’t write reports because she has to deal with daily operational stuff with clubs. Figuring out agenda items can take a long time. It also gives other people the chance to be a Chair and get more involved.

Mathew: If the VP Finance wants to stay on as Chair, would they be required to run against people in Council?

Cole: Yes, there would be an election in Council.

James: I agree with Keith. If the Chair leads discussions, I think it’s important, particularly for finance, to have more awareness of what’s going on financially in the Society.

Cole: As executives, we’re trying to reduce the rubber stamp feel of Committees and give Councillors the ability to lead and be more involved if they want to. That way they can lead discussions and take things in different directions.

James: Maybe we could look at how Committees work and have Chairs delegate some of their administrative responsibilities. I think if there are changes to the way Finance Committee is chaired, then the structure of the Committee as a whole will change too.

Cole: We suggested to Governance that we could also pay the Vice-Chair, but I’m not sure how much they considered that.

Mathew: Why do we pay Committee Chairs? What is the incentive behind that?

Cole: To create more accountability and provide more incentive to do it well. Have we ever had volunteer Chairs?

Keith: They used to all be volunteer chairs until Council decided they wanted monthly reports.

Cole: We definitely need to pay Councillor Chairs to keep them accountable. I think it holds them accountable and encourages them to do a good job. Currently all Committee Chairs are paid except the exec ones.

Brandon: I think it depends for different Committees. The situations are different. And what happens in the different scenarios? For example, what happens if we get an irresponsible Councillor as Chair while Finance Committee is looking over the budget? Do we have any control over what happens then? I think it’s better to keep it as it is because we don’t know how well a Councillor will be able to Chair the Committee like Finance where you might need to know why some decisions on the budget were made and be able to explain them. There are other ways to give councillors more responsibility

Prepared by Katherine Feng
AMS Finance Committee

Agenda for July 28th, 2020

Cole: That’s what this code change accomplishes. It makes it optional for VPs to Chair Committees. In the end, Council still gets to vote like with other Committees that have Councillor Chairs.

Katherine: First of all, I think that a lot of the more administrative tasks like preparing agendas and writing monthly Committee reports can easily be delegated if it’s too much of a burden, like Keith and James said. As Vice-Chair, I do administrative things anyway like sending out documents, writing monthly reports, and arranging email votes. Secondly, getting Councillors more involved is a great idea, but if Councillors need to constantly ask VPs about what discussion points they should bring up because they aren’t familiar enough with the AMS, I think that’s functionally the same as the VP being Chair. I also think the situation for the Operations Committee is a little different.

Mathew: I think even if the VP Finance is required to be Chair, we should have incentives for Vice-Chairs because they do a lot of work as well. Also if these code changes go ahead, it is important to have training for new Chairs so that they can do their jobs properly. I would also like to point out that a lot of people who ran for VP positions started off as Committee Chairs.

Lucia: I would like to make one last comment. I wasn’t always knowledgeable about finance. The councillors there could have chaired better than me in my first year. For someone to chair the committee with zero council knowledge is definitely possible, but in my first term, in the summer, other people could have chaired better than me. This year I’m a better Chair because I learned from last year and watched how other people did things.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is August 4th, 2020, 4-5pm.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm.

Prepared by Katherine Feng