

Kumoricon / Altonimbus Entertainment

Regular Meeting of the Membership on June 17, 2023, 01:00 pm

Via Discord and Twitch

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Robert Trotter.

At the initial quorum count, the meeting continued once 20 members signed in as present, thus meeting quorum. In total during the meeting, 33 members signed in as present out of 623 total, with 20 needed to reach quorum.

Minutes

The minutes from the membership meetings of April 17, 2023 and May 20, 2023 were approved without objection.

Reports

Chair

Robert Trotter, Chair, presented slides *[lightly copy-edited]*:

- Working on a staff appreciation event
- Hiring staff

Infrastructure

Ash "Bunny" B, Director of Infrastructure, presented slides *[lightly copy-edited]*:

- We are hoping to have hotels open before July! Thank you everyone for your patience!
- We're hiring more staff in all subdepartments!
- Jurying for Artist Alley/Small Press has been going well and we look to be done soon, though [we] might be working on it until July due to high volume as we mentioned in May!
- We hope you all are having a safe, wonderful end of your spring and we look forward to our many updates for all of you in July!

Membership

Brittany Goldsby, Assistant Director of Membership, presented slides *[lightly copy-edited]*:

- 2023 Current Registration Numbers
 - Attendee pre-registrations: 1,824
 - VIP: 13
- Pride sale:
 - \$10 off through June 19
- Meetings, meetings, and more meetings :)
- Finished finalizing the items that are going in the VIP bags.
- Our Departments:
 - Accessibility
 - Cosplay Repair

- Kumori Staff Station
- Registration Hall
- Reg Software
- Development
- Staff Spotlight:
 - Reg Hall Staff
 - Staff Goal: 90

Brittany also reported:

- Anyone with customer service experience and/or experience working a register is invited to apply for Reg Hall Staff.

Operations

Ange Abuyen, Director of Operations, presented slides [*lightly copy-edited*]:

- Security: Still pending
- Ops staff training: Roll-out to begin after finalizing dates and times
- Ops Office: Working on some pivots to accommodate latest policy update
- Recruitment: We found some recruits! We still need more staff though <3
 - Ronin - general level Ops Staff
 - Shinobi - veteran staffers apply
 - Further inquiries on staffing opportunities can be sent to operations@kumoricon.org
- TEAM BUILDING IS COMING
 - Operations will be hosting a series of team building activities online in the coming weeks leading into Kumoricon. Details, dates and times will be sent out on the Kumoricon staff Discord server. We hope you can make it!!

Programming

Drew Herget, Director of Programming, presented slides [*lightly copy-edited*]:

- Panel applications are open!
 - <https://www.kumoricon.org/panel-application>
- AMV Contest entries are open
 - <https://www.kumoricon.org/amv-contest>
- “How to Audition” for Lip Sync Showdown
 - Scan the QR code to watch!
 - <https://youtu.be/e0Ggyc9jESQ>
- Keep an eye out for more!
 - <https://www.kumoricon.org/events>
- Currently in search of:
 - Panel Tech Staff
 - Programming Booth Coordinator
 - <https://www.kumoricon.org/open-positions>

Publicity

Panda, Assistant to the Director of Publicity, presented slides [*lightly copy-edited*]:

- We are busy announcing guests that Relations has secured!
- Look! Pins!
- [Staff needed]
 - Assistant Director

- Moderators
- Newsletter
- Copy Editor
- Market Research

Panda also reported:

- Guests are being announced; continue to check our social media accounts for the latest updates to the con lineup and everything else we are doing!
- To make up for having no news, look! Pin making action shots!
- Here is the staff we need now!
 - We are wanting to expand our use of Twitch and Discord, but both of those areas need moderators. If you have moderator experience, please email us.
 - Our Newsletter needs teammates to help bring information to our membership.
 - Similarly, we need more copy editors. Proofreading and checking grammar and tone and voice is your responsibility.
 - We need a Market Research coordinator who understands data analytics and customer behavior metrics.
 - And finally, the Publicity team is looking for potential leaders who would be interested in future executive roles for our AD positions.
- If you are interested in any of these positions, or something else on our org chart, email publicity@kumoricon.org.

Relations

Amber Feldman, Director of Relations, presented slides *[lightly copy-edited]*:

- Guest announcements:
 - Voice Artists:
 - Jeannie Tirado
 - J. Michael Tatum
 - Jason Liebrecht
 - Music Guests:
 - Jonathan Young
 - Caleb Hyles
 - Cosplay Guests:
 - Cosplay Coven
 - Falinxie
 - Midnight Pursona
 - Sakura Rangers
 - Content Creator Guests:
 - Rock M. Sakura
- We may have announced nine guests, but we're not stopping there! We still have eight coming soon, and more still in the works!
- We will officially be bringing back the fashion show this year, so be on the lookout for fashion brands!
- I can't announce much more yet, but rest assured we've got some exciting new things up our sleeves this year. We hope you like them!
- Please keep feedback coming, as we do read the guest requests and feedback!
- We are currently looking for:
 - Guest Driver Coordinator
 - Guest Drivers
 - Guest Gopher
 - Guest Liaisons
 - Cosplay Guest Liaisons

- Autographs Staff
- Industry Staff
- Green Lounge / Green Room Staff

Secretary

Marie Jackson, Secretary, presented slides *[lightly copy-edited]*:

- Ratifying even more staff
- Nearly caught up on minutes
- Formal staff training materials are in the early planning stages

Treasurer

Timothy Trotter, Treasurer, presented slides *[lightly copy-edited]*:

- The bills are still very tight for 2023. Many departments have actively been moving us in the right direction. We are still looking at all opportunities to save responsibly and any suggestions are welcome.
- Our warehouse is now fully moved. This was a large endeavor far away from con dates. Many thanks to our Supply and Logistics Manager, Trevor, all Load-In / Load-Out Staff, and any other team members that assisted. Can I get a [celebratory gif]?
- The Treasury team won't have much additional work until the convention. We are always looking for more LILO as there are plenty of mid-year events.
- Staff Openings:
 - Assistant Treasurer (1 Position)
 - Treasury Staff (4 Positions)
 - Load-In and Load-Out (Several Positions)
 - (General, Coordinators and Drivers)

Outreach

Devin Hunter, Outreach Committee Chair, presented slides *[lightly copy-edited]*:

- No events happened/happening in June
- Spending all of our time organizing upcoming events. If you want to help, suggest events, or just chat about related topics, come to a workgroup meeting. The workgroup meetings are open to all staff!
- Stay up to date on upcoming events and workgroup meetings!
- Next meeting: June 20 @ 6PM on the staff Discord
- Upcoming events:
 - KuroNekoCon July 7-9, 2023, Spokane, WA
 - Portland Pride Festival July 15-16, Portland, OR
 - Asian Celebration July 29, 2023, Eugene, OR

Devin also reported:

- We are looking for staff to help with some upcoming events.
 - KuroNekoCon could use someone already in the area as the carpool to the event is getting full.
 - Portland Pride usually has a large amount of interest from staff.
 - Asian Celebration could use volunteers for crafts.
 - If you're good at making cat ears and enjoy seeing kids excited to put on their first pair of homemade cat ears, contact Outreach.

Unfinished business

There was no unfinished business.

New business

There was no new business.

Good of the order

Good of the order is accepting submissions!

- You can email good.of.the.order@kumoricon.org!

Joining staff

- Want to join staff but not sure what you want to do?
 - Visit <https://www.kumoricon.org/open-positions> to read about all the positions we have available.
- Know what you want to do or need some help making a decision?

Visit <https://www.kumoricon.org/staff-application> to apply or take a small survey so we can help you figure out what to do.

COVID19 policy discussion

- Copies of the emails submitted to Good of the Order are available for review in the Attachments section below.
 - Secretary's note: Emails are included as written with no copy editing applied. Last names have been replaced with a last initial for privacy.
- Rob opened the discussion with the following statement:
 - We have received multiple emails to Good of the Order concerning our recent change to the COVID-19 policy and appreciate the feedback given. We see people's thoughts, and it was never our intent to make anyone feel less welcome at the event. The Board has worked together to come up with a policy that would best support as many of our attendees, guests, and staff as is reasonable. This was not a decision made lightly, and [we] took input from different sources including the CDC, WHO, local government, other events in the Pacific Northwest, as well as our predicted staffing numbers. The culture surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed in the last couple of months especially, and that change played a part in the shift in our policies from last year. Even though the policy has changed, we are planning on doing more than just encouraging people to continue masking with words in a policy. Our executive team is already working on solutions that will continue to make our space safer with the policies we have in place. Some examples are having N95 masks available for people to use, increased signage around masking, social reminders, and more. We want to build a culture at Kumoricon where people choose to wear masks when they are feeling sick or have been around someone feeling sick, similar to the masking culture in Japan.
- The following concerns were brought up, via Discord and Twitch chat, around the decision to summarize the emails received in Good of the Order:

- Secretary's note: Comments are included as written with no copy editing applied. Names associated with comments are the usernames used at time of writing.
- Amanda (she/her): I think it's kind of sad that you won't actually read the emails out loud. "as many as reasonable" isn't even remotely covered by your policy.
- Skipping good of the order emails is a BAD look. It sets a bad precedent. There's also at least one about HR policies in there, written by someone currently distributing masks. So he can't raise his hand.
- It was feasible last year, and still is, and you are actively silencing voices. Would you believe that disabled people have a much harder time planning to be available at specific times to raise their hands right now?
- Rob explained that the decision was intended to handle redundancy within the meeting, and that it isn't intended to silence any voices.
- Further concerns were raised surrounding the masking policy:
 - [Via Discord] Delfine | EDI Coordinator: I find it concerning that while a decision was made around no masks for the policy, it seems like there is a focus on culture shift when culture is informed by policy and others aspects of community. It's not a binary. I believe that there can be an acknowledgement for a shift in policy to hear out those most impacted and marginalized by covid. A lot of the time institutions and governments won't do this so I hope there can be a dialogue around what transparency and centering the most marginalized looks like in the kumomicon community. I don't think there is a response explicitly but a Convo for future?
 - Rob responded, this is certainly something that will be an ongoing discussion as the year progresses. If the trends shift, the policy could always change to reflect that in the future.
 - We would love to meet with the EDI team to coordinate more.
 - [Via Twitch] Ladyportlandia: So the testing is less feasible this year because the resources kumo worked with last year aren't available. But we can't ask another year of basic masking to help make our con more inclusive? We are positioned in the middle of November which is already flu and cold season, plus last winters spike of RSV cases and the usual uptick of Covid cases because everyone is meeting indoors. It seems like it would be safer for many of our con goers and volunteer staffers if we started to shift our culture towards masking if we didn't just step down from our intense precautions last year to next to nothing this year. Why wasn't the logical step to remove a set of precautions to one that still makes sense especially given that the con still has so many masks left over from last year?
 - We are following the recommendations of the CDC and the WHO, and the trends of similar events in the pacific northwest. We are always in discussion on this, and we appreciate the feedback.
 - [Via Discord] Zack/rain: There is a long time between now and con, there's no way to know what the landscape and transmission rates will look like when the time comes. It seems more prudent to err on the side of caution as long as possible.
 - Rob responded, that is true, and this is always an ongoing consideration.
 - [Via Discord] cornman?: So because other places aren't requiring masks you're just blindly following them? This will ultimately alienate a lot of people who can't risk being around thousands of people without masks. It's essentially "comfort of people who are able bodied" vs "ability to even attend for some who aren't".
 - Rob responded, It is not our intention to alienate anyone. We are following the government and health organizations who have moved away from a public emergency. If there is a need for further change in policy, it will be reassessed at that time.

Questions and Answers

- What is parking like at the convention center if we don't want a hotel?
 - Right now it is paid parking at the OCC, or finding a free park and ride lot and taking the TriMet MAX, which is what most staff do.

- When will the mascot entry form be open?
 - It's currently in the works, it should be out soon.
 - We know the page says late May. A LOT of stuff has delayed us this year, and while we have been able to do a lot towards improving the site, we are behind in other areas, but rest assured we know that and website is fighting for a timeline within the next month to get the contest up.
- Are staff block hotel rooms going to be available soon? Should we start booking it early?
 - Staff blocks are coming, no need to get an early room.
- Regarding HR questions:
 - The email received asked questions about an open HR investigation, and had other questions which need to be further investigated before being answered. There was not enough time from when the email was received before the meeting to address these concerns thoroughly enough.
 - Secretary's note: The email has been intentionally omitted from the Attachments section because an investigation was referenced.
- Would it be possible for you or the convention center to set up hand sanitizer stations as well to at least help?
 - This is our intention for the convention. Handwashing hygiene is important to help prevent the spread of germs throughout the convention space.
- Will you be offering refunds to people who bought tickets because they thought there would be a mask mandate?
 - Membership is working on this. Any questions you have should be directed to them via registration@kumoricon.org

Ange left the meeting at 1:59pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:01 pm by Robert Trotter.

Submitted, and revised and approved by the members,
Marie Jackson, Secretary

Attachment: Presentation slides

See file *kumoricon-minutes-member-20230617-attachment.pdf*

Attachment: Covid 19 policy discussion

From: Kouros Cosplay

Date: Tue, Jun 13, 2023, 9:28 AM

Subject: COVID-19 Policy Concerns

To: <operations@kumoricon.org>

Hello,

In light of your recent announcement that Kumoricon 2023 will not require masking, proof of vaccination, or proof of a negative test before attending, I am writing as a concerned community member asking you to please change your policy and require KN-95 masks at the event.

I understand that last year's vaccination and negative requirement was a logistical nightmare that garnered a lot of backlash, but given that COVID is still a massive health concern (that the government has simply chosen to stop reporting on), I can't think of any reason to drop the mask requirement.

As it stands, Kumoricon's COVID-19 policy simply does not align with science, with reality, or with the compassionate ideals that I have come to expect from this community event. I cannot in good conscience give my money to or otherwise support an organization that would display such brazen disregard for the health of its attendees and the health of the community.

People are still dying from COVID-19. People are still suffering permanent bodily harm from COVID-19. I implore you to at least do the bare minimum and require masks at your event.

I love Kumoricon and I want to see it continue to grow and thrive, but not at the expense of the health of my friends and fellow cosplayers. I will not be attending if the COVID-19 policy does not change and I will actively encourage others not to attend as well.

Thank you,

Asia W.

Attachment: Covid 19 policy discussion

From: Wesley T.

Date: Wed, Jun 14, 2023, 09:26

Subject: Covid-19 Policy Concerns

To: Operations <operations@kumoricon.org>, <good.of.the.order@kumoricon.org>

Hi there!

I wanted to reach out in regards to your updated Covid policy. I understand that the biggest complaints from last year were over how disorganized things were regarding vaccine checking. I understand that staffing shortages means cutting corners in certain aspects in order to keep things running smoothly. However, I strongly disagree with the choice to obliterate mask policies in their entirety.

One of the big reasons why I, and many others, continue to return to Kumo every year has been your policies that keep attendees safe. Particularly and especially for the numerous immunocompromised and disabled nerds in the crowd who have been overlooked by so many conventions in favor of dropping masks. Covid is most certainly not over, and never has been. There's been aggressive pressure from government entities to relax mandates, against the better judgement of researchers and scientists.

I fully believe that enforcing safe masking habits at the very least is fully worth the hassle, although ideally Covid vaccination should also be required. Might I recommend an online form to submit vaccination status prior to the convention, to ease up congestion in the vaccination lines?

I've heard of & signed the petition to enforce mandates at Kumoricon again, but I wanted to reach out individually to voice my concerns. To show in numbers that its expected of a convention to put attendee safety first, above all else.

Thank you for your time, and I sincerely wish for the best of this scenario.

- Wesley

Attachment: Covid 19 policy discussion

From: Brenda C.

Date: Sun, Jun 11, 2023 at 5:42 PM

Subject: COVID-19 policies

To: <hr@kumoricon.org>

Hello Kumoricon

I've been going to this convention for a long time and I'm planning to go this year as well! But these new COVID policies worry me, my friends, and the whole cosplay community that goes to Kumoricon as well. I strongly suggest you mandate masks at the very least. I know last year was a mess with health check and vaccinations lines, but I would and many others suggest you, the con staff. To make it mandatory to wear a mask. Sakura-con 2023 did it. So can you. Please listen to your community and make Kumoricon 2023 a safe environment. Thank you.