

Board Candidates Q&A Session Transcript

6:00pm - 7:30pm EST Thursday, January 20th, 2022

Zoom (Registration required)

Note: The recording of the Board Candidates Q&A Session began several minutes after the meeting itself began. Prior to the recording, Grant (he/him) welcomed Members to the meeting, reviewed the Agenda [Land Acknowledgement, About the Board of Directors, Introductions, Board Candidate Presentations, Questions and Answers, Board Candidate Closing Remarks, AGM Reminder and Conclusion] and provided the following land acknowledgment:

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of many Nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

We also acknowledge all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past - and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly forcibly displaced Africans brought here as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent.

Recording Begin

Grant (he/him)

I would also note that tonight's session is being recorded. So if you do not wish to be in the recording just feel free to turn off your camera. Perfect recording has now started. So with that, I just want to transition now to a brief presentation about the board just so everyone is aware about the role of the board at Pride Toronto.

So overall we oversee and manage the strategic affairs of Pride Toronto are made up of a minimum of five and maximum of 12 board members, and the Executive Director Sherwin Modeste has also joined us with joined with us this evening is an ex-officio nonvoting member of the board.

Our board director terms are approximately three years, and we're allowed to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. This is an unpaid volunteer position. In terms of our meetings we meet regularly at least once a month, with exception to maybe the summer months, and our meetings are typically about three hours in length. During COVID, this COVID pandemic we have met virtually, I have never had a board meeting in person yet. So

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it's been a lot to adapt to, but it's no different than everyone else here in this room. As I said, the role of staff, our ED is an official member of the board and we also have supporting us the ED's Executive Assistant, who helps with coordinating meetings and taking minutes. In terms of our powers. They are broad and, but some of the key responsibilities that we have are around setting Pride Toronto strategic priorities and upholding the organization accountable to making sure we're meeting those priorities, managing finances, through approving the budget, conducting audits. And of course, ensuring long term stability of Pride and we do that primarily through hiring and oversight of the Executive Director who then provides oversight of Pride Toronto's day to day operations.

Some specific roles and responsibilities for the board. Aside from the Officers. There are no formal roles for members of the board, we all collectively share in responsibilities around board level discussions and decision making, committee level work, including chairing committees, you'll see, you'll see our standing committees in a few slides, and those responsibilities include policy development and review, reviewing budgets and financial statements, shaping our advocacy, as examples of committee work. We also participate in community meetings and discussions. And, of course, we're all responsible ahead of meetings to review materials. And although it varies month to month, board directors typically put in about eight hours. Eight to 10 hours per month.

Now, with respect to Board officers, there are some formal roles: Co Chairs, which is myself and Yuri Hernandez. We preside over board meetings, provide advice and oversight and as a point of contact between the board, and the executive director. We act as that liaison between the board, staff, membership and the community. We have a treasurer. I don't think he's here with us tonight but Ande Clumpus, who oversees the finances of pride Toronto assists with budget development, and the audits. Signing checks for example, and just making sure our financial records are as accurate as possible. Not 'as possible', ensuring that they are accurate, period.

And then we have secretary, Brian De Matos. Secretary is responsible for maintaining the records and books of Pride Toronto, that includes all the minutes at board meetings and membership meetings. And of course, providing notice required for membership meetings.

Board of Directors has the power to shape its committee structure, but for consistency we have developed a structure with four standing committees: Advocacy, Equity and Human Rights, Finance and Audit, Governance and Policy, and Sponsorship and Fund Development.

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In terms of board recruitment, we undertook a board recruitment process around October. We put out a call for applications for candidate who support the Mission, Vision and Values of Pride Toronto and who are passionate about serving the 2SLGBTQ+ community here in Toronto and of course beyond, and very much balancing the need for diversity of candidates from our community, and well balanced in both professional and lived experience. This was what we were looking for from the applicants. So, in terms of the process itself again, a call for applications went out in October. We also undertook some community engagement to let specific organizations know to share the call for applications within their network. We interviewed six candidates. And as part of that interview process, we then selected four candidates to join the board slate. Three of whom are here this evening; who you will meet very soon.

And then tonight's Q&A session, I just want to note this is the first time we have done a Q&A session. We learned from the last AGM that there wasn't enough time for engagement. There will be an opportunity for Q&A at the AGM, but we wanted to make sure we had a separate space where members can learn and engage directly with the board slate candidates, and of course the AGM which I will provide details about at the end of this session. But Members should have received the formal notice earlier this week and that is where (which is January 26) that is where we will hold the elections.

So now we're going to turn to the Q&A session. Just an overview of how this will roll out: introduction and presentations five minutes per candidate. Unfortunately D-Lishus was not able to join us this evening so I will read a statement that she has prepared for this evening, and then Q&A session. I'll ask folks to please limit your questions to about two minutes so that we can ensure all members have an opportunity to ask questions. Each candidate who's here with us tonight will be asked to provide up to a two minute response. So when you ask a question, the three candidates here will have an opportunity to answer. And then finally, the board candidate closing remarks (one minute each) and again, I have prepared remarks for D-Lishus which I will read out for everyone's benefit. Oh, that's the concluding slides. So I'm going to stop my presentation for now; I will share at the end again for the AGM details.

Sorry, one second. Perfect. So, we're going to now do the introductions and presentations. We'll do it alphabetically by first name. So, I would like to ask Courage to introduce herself and deliver her presentation.

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Courage (she/her)- interpretation provided by Christopher (he/him)

Okay. Yes, and the interpreter can see me. Okay, great. Hello everybody, just wanted to introduce myself. My name is Courage, I am a Black Deaf queer woman, and I'm interested in being on the board of directors because I think that it's important for my community, for the Deaf community and as well the LGBTQ+ community to be involved in this process and to be represented on this board. To feel that camaraderie amongst communities and the board is something that's very important. And I would like to see representation by the Deaf community involved. I have been a participant in several different Pride events, several different LGBTQ+ events over the years and I think it's time to see more Deaf community involvement.

So, I would like to see more Deaf people on the board as well, as interpreters involved, interpreters at events, and for this to be a cohesive community, instead of a divisive community. So I am here to advocate for my community, to represent a safe space, and to work together with everybody here because Deaf community is such a small community, but it is a beautiful community, and we want to show different events: theater, different things for us to participate in, to have those be accessible and expand those opportunities for the Deaf community. Thank you.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you very much Courage. I'll now deliver the statement from Deidre 'D-Lishus' Walton, which has been prepared.

D-Lishus has more than 15 years experience doing community activism and organizing in Toronto, beginning with membership on the Women and Trans Bathhouse Committee. She has board experience and is conversant with nonprofit governance structures, reporting regulations, strategic planning and grant writing. She also. Excuse me. She works as an equity, diversity and inclusion consultant with nonprofit organizations. With her EDI skills, she can contribute to Pride's efforts to be more inclusive, honour the fullness of 2SLGBTQ+ identities and help to center BIPOC voices and priorities within the larger portfolio of Pride Toronto's work. When she envisioned and implemented the first ever BIPOC 2SLGBTQ+ space in Canada 15 years ago, she faced an outpouring of hate mail from the larger LGBTQ community. These reactions made it clear how necessary spaces for BIPOC folks were. She wants our community to become a place where no one else experiences what she went through when creating safe, safer spaces for those who remain marginalized at the intersections of multiple axes of difference.

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The Pride parade started as a protest against police brutality and while times have changed, they have not changed equally for all of us. She can furnish an intersection of analysis that speaks to the ongoing experiences of Black, Indigenous trans, gender non conforming and disabled people who are still subject to higher levels of police scrutiny, and violence. She can also bring that long term historical lens to help contextualize the work, and that helps to prioritize the health and well being of our community as a whole. Thank you.

I will now pass it over to Elizabeth Bate.

Elizabeth (she/her)

Evening, and thank you for having me here. My name is Elizabeth Bate and I use she/her pronouns. As a longtime member of the queer community in Toronto and the surrounding area, I am excited to be a potential new member of the Pride board or the Pride Toronto board. I'm happy to be able to speak to you tonight and answer any questions that you might have. To start, I'm currently working in communications and development with the Green Party of Ontario. I've spent the last 15 years gaining experience in the journalism and communications industries and have reported for newspapers across the country, specializing in counsel and business reporting. I've also worked for the Liberal Party and the government of Ontario, as a field organizer, campaign manager, fundraiser, as well as in various communication roles. Words are my superpower. I'm an innovative and award winning storyteller, who delights in crafting a beautiful piece of writing. I have spent a life building this skill set, and there would be no greater joy for me then to bring it to the Board of Pride Toronto.

In addition to my work experience, I'm no stranger to activism. I like to tell people that I was born with a protest sign in my hand. Currently I'm a volunteer at Holy Blossom temple, where I'm also a member. I am the communications coordinator for the Women of Holy Blossom, which is a women's advocacy group. I'm also the founder of a new 2SLGBTQ+ group, so that queer members of the temple community have a safe place to call home. I also volunteer with the Shore Centre, formerly Planned Parenthood. I drive people to medically necessary appointments and sometimes help them reach those appointments, even if it means helping them through people blocking their path. If you know, you know, I am a champion for the rights of others and I believe in standing behind those words. In my biography, I say that first and foremost I lead with love. That sounds great on a bumper sticker. But what does it actually mean? For me it means leading with an open heart and an open mind. It means promoting a space for a thriving diverse community of 2SLGBTQ+ folks and allies to create, discover and exist in a place, where there is joy and life, while still

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acknowledging the very real daily struggle many of us face. It means creating a safe space for historically oppressed voices to be heard. It means always doing what is right and correcting mistakes of the past. One of my goals and sitting on the pride Toronto board is to help facilitate the repairing of reputations and relationships with artists and with Black and Indigenous queer communities. Moving forward with love means acknowledging the mistakes, misguided approaches and misunderstandings we have faced or perpetuated in the past, and finding a way not just to move forward but to make amends.

Each day we wake up and are given an opportunity to fulfill the promises we have made. And I want to do my best to honour the commitments I am making now. And the ones that were made before I got here. No one person can do that alone, so that's why I'm overjoyed at the prospect of working with such a great team to further these aspirations. As a member of the reformed Jewish community, I believe in **tikkun olam**, a belief that you must do all the good you can. That it is our responsibility to do the hard work of putting the pieces of the world back together.

I know we can work together to make Pride Toronto's community, a place of safety, friendship and love. We are our flagship project. Each year, inprecedented times at least, we filled the streets with sound and colour, and light. I know how important that is; to demand the space we are otherwise denied, to make our voices heard, to joyfully celebrate who we are and what is ours. Having been a sunburnt, Parade marcher with various organizations throughout the years, I know the love and joy that comes from being together; from dancing in the street; from getting a hug from a surrogate mom or dad found along the parade route, even if they are just our parents for the day. I know what it's like to be a teenager seeing their first Pride and feel a sense of belonging and acceptance. I know what it means to truly need this community. This community is a family. We are examples of freedom, hope for life that exists without fear, a voice for those that don't have one. We are suicide prevention, facilitators of important discussions and resources for those who need help. I want to be here to make good on those promises. This is my community, and I want to do more to make it the best it can be. This is my Pride. Thank you for your time.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you so much, Elizabeth. And finally, I will pass it over to Moka Dawkins for her presentation.

Moka (she/her)

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Hello and good evening everyone, so nice to be here with you tonight. My name is Moka Dawkins, pronouns she/her. And just to give you guys a little introduction of myself. My affiliations with Pride Toronto started back in the early 2000s. As a performing artist for Blockorama. I was a dancehall competitor and dancehall King, back in the day, back in my days. So just to bring light to some of my past events that I have celebrated with Pride. I'm currently, I am looking to take my status as a transgender woman and really place it in economic structures to really promote the growth and value that trans women and men have in society. We are very under looked, we are always discriminated against. And we faced the most barriers when it comes to housing, employment, and other survival livelihood sectors. So my application to this position, to be a board of director, is really in the spirit of things that I have seen in my lifetime, things that I have witnessed other trans individuals go through. And some of them who didn't make it. I like to take their spirit and move it on in succession for who we are as a people and what we really stand for. That's all I really have to stay at my introductory. So, I'm excited to talk to you guys in a bit.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you so much Moka. That concludes the introductions and presentations. We have just under an hour for Q&A. I'll be flexible at timing, given how much time we have, but please try to keep your questions to two minutes. Again, I'll provide each candidate, about two minutes to respond to any questions. I will go in order of those hands raised. So I'm here as your facilitator, otherwise I will just be in the background. If anyone has questions please raise your hand and we'll pass the floor over to you. Oh, sorry, I should say if you're uncomfortable asking the question by video, please feel free to type it in, into the chat box and I will read it out for everybody. So I'll interchange as that happens. Dave, I'll pass it over to you, go right ahead.

Dave (he/him)

Thank you Grant. First of all I want to say, I'm really impressed by the candidates. I think there's a good diversity in candidates that have been selected, so that's great. My question is for all four individuals. Somebody can answer; four can answer if they want. So being on the board of Pride is about advocacy for the community, but also self advocacy. And I mean in order to be an effective advocate for the community, you have to be a strong advocate on the board for yourself. And oftentimes it's going to be politically contentious. So my question is, how are you going to balance your own needs, your own well being on the board, compared to your capacity to provide advocacy for the community. In other words, how does your mental health/ how are you going to take your mental health being on the board when things get tough, so that you can effectively advocate for the community

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members that you're there to represent? If that makes sense. I don't even know if that made sense.

Moka (she/her)

Do we just jump on and answer?

Grant (he/him)

I'm going to facilitate. So, I will, in this round, I will go alphabetically by first name, so I'll pass it over to Courage.

Courage (she/her) - interpretation provided by Christopher (he/him)

Okay, Great, thank you very much for that question, Dave. Sorry, just one second. So the first thing that I do is I take care of myself first, things like deep breaths. You know, finding support if I need support. But keeping in mind that if anything was to go awry or we go through those difficult times, it's important to talk to somebody to help; to have a team to develop that team spirit, and make sure that we can all reach a common goal. And also making sure that others around us are okay as well, as we work through these difficult times; to find that peace within ourselves. So that's how we can, that's how we can do the work through difficult times, and move on to the next task.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you, Courage. Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (she/her)

Thank you. Thanks for the question. It's a really good one. So like Courage, I believe in speaking to somebody. Mental health care is health care. And so I, you know, I advocate therapy for everybody, including myself, so that's something that helps keep me. You know in a good mental headspace. I also believe in deep breaths, and I'm a runner. So, you know, it doesn't mean I'm a flight risk, it just means that I pay people, in order to run in circles. So I did my first half marathon, just prior to the pandemic and I'm still out here on a treadmill in my basement and that helps to keep me in a really good mental health space.

Grant (he/him)

Awesome. Thank you, Elizabeth. Moka go ahead.

Moka (she/her)

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Personally I have reviewed Pride's ethics standards, their ethical policy, and it does fall in line with my personal beliefs on how community should be emulated to our surrounding populations. So if I was to come across any difficulty, to be honest, I wouldn't mind using some intersectionality and really relying on other community establishments out there to kind of help direct where we are in dilemma with. And for myself I do personally see a psychologist. So I do have a little bit of help back there and I am a person who also enjoys to work out and exercise, and stuff like that so that's how I take care of myself and how I will take care of any assignments or projects that may cause disruption within the board.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Moka. Thanks everyone for your answers and thank you, Dave, for your question. I don't see any hands raised yet, but please feel free to submit your question by chat. Raise your hand. I see my fellow co chair, Yuri Hernandez, raising your hand so feel free to ask a question Yuri.

Yuri (they/them)

Thank you Grant. Hi everyone. So yeah, I have a question for all four candidates. My question for you all would be so, you know, there is a lot of time that we need from you in the future. Just putting it out there, and there's a lot of work to do. We have several committees to work on. You know we're constantly building new committees as well. And with that being said, you know, are you capable of providing, you know, about 10 hours or so a week of your time to volunteer with us. And I'm saying a week. It's normally what we ask for, like per month. I'm saying a week, just in like hindsight. You know, like what is the most time that you can provide for us, a week and you know, is it realistic for you to actually, give this time to us. Just because like Moka has mentioned a lot that this is like really deep work. And you know, along with Dave's question, this is something that we're all extremely passionate about. So even though this is a volunteer role, the time that you will spend thinking about this, while you're not at a meeting, that there is that time. So, you know, I want to be clear when I say that it's something to think about in the future, how much of that can you give both time and mental time as well. So if you could kind of answer in terms of, you know, how do you feel about that. Do have that space right now? Yeah, what is your availability like?

Grant (he/him)

Perfect. This time I'm going to start with Moka and then go backward by first name, so go ahead Moka.

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Moka (she/her)

Okay, great question. I'm currently in school full time so anytime after 3:30, I am definitely available to assist with all needs that arise. Already with my past commitments with different organizations around the community, time has never been a problem for me, as long as I am given fair notice of any upcoming political events, community events or anything that requires my attention and might need me. I will definitely be there to commit to it. So I could give more than a good work week, so like a good 45 hour work shift in the evenings, if it's needed for the progression of our community, and what we stand for.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Moka. Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (she/her)

Thanks for the question. So it's a really good one: they say if you want to get something done give it to a busy person and I'll admit I'm a busy person. But I definitely have the time to give, I am really excited about this opportunity. And I am extremely excited to participate with everyone and really give it my full attention. I do work a full time job, and I do have other volunteer commitments. But my work schedule is pretty flexible and I have the love and support of everybody in my other volunteer commitments to be taking on this new role. So I know that I'll be able to give it everything I have, including mental space. So yeah.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you, Elizabeth. Courage, over to you.

Courage (she/her)- interpretation provided by Christopher (he/him)

Thank you, Yuri for the question. And what is really important to me, is just time management. You know, of course, having any commitment is important but being committed and involved with something - that's important. And as I mentioned before about the Deaf LGBTQ+ community, you know they've invested in me, and I want to invest back in them and that means, you know, giving up time and being part of this committee and being committed to it. So I will make the time for this; to be busy, to focus on this, to focus on my art, but I'm all in. I'm all in for this, and I did think about this well before I actually applied to be on the board. I envisioned what was important to me and why I wanted to invest in this community and to bring my community into the growth of Pride Toronto. So I did put in great thought to it and yes I am all in. Thank you Yuri.

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Grant (he/him)

Thank you. I apologize if you look like... My face looks like I'm doing this, because my WiFi keeps cutting out, so my apologies. Any raised hands or questions in the chat. Going to the chat to see if there's any questions. From Yuri again, what role do you usually take in a team: lead, support, mediator, challenger. This time I will start with Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (she/her)

Thank you very much. I think for me it depends on what's needed, I like to think of myself as one that can be one of, you know, any of those roles, depending on the situation. I think I'm a strong personality sometimes, so often, I'm either a leader or challenger, but I love to be a support person and a champion and a cheerleader for other people. And I also, you know, I, I enjoy being able to be, maybe enjoy is the wrong word, but I can be a facilitator and a mediator between other people if and when it's necessary. So, I mean, I think it would just depend on the situation but I could definitely take on any of those, those particular roles in the team. Thank you.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you, Elizabeth. Pass it to Moka.

Moka (she/her)

Thank you. I like to see myself as a leader. And with the leader. Being a leader you sometimes, you have to provide support, you have to provide facilitation, understanding. So I think that role plays into the others that you had mentioned. So I see myself as a leader but I could play any position. I could play a support role. I could play a mediator role, that really doesn't bother to me as, that really doesn't bother me as long as we are productively getting our objective completed in a timely fashion that was supposed to be getting completed in.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Moka. Now I'll pass it to Courage.

Courage (she/her) (interpretation provided by Christopher (he/him))

Well, I feel that I was born a natural leader and again as Moka was saying, you know, being that comes with being a facilitator, a support person and so on, but I'm really keen to keep things going. And so that's I think my role.

Grant (he/him)

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Perfect. Thank you Courage. I don't see more questions in the chat or raised hands but I'll give it a minute, so please feel free. This space is for you, for the members. Please feel free to ask a question. Frank. Go ahead.

Frank

Thanks, Grant. First of all I'd like to commend and I'd like to thank all of the candidates for putting your names forward. There's something to be commended for that. Now each candidate was asked to respond to several questions, including this one: Pride's membership has voted to ban instruments and symbols of policing, including uniforms, cars and weapons from participating in the Pride Parade, and Street Fair. If elected to the board, how would you ensure that this commitment is upheld? Okay, and I read your responses to the questions and thank you for providing them. Now again at this point I could ask a question, but it actually would be a rhetorical question because I know the answers. Now, again at this point I could ask a question, but it actually would be a rhetorical question because I know the answers. So let me say, I'd like to make a remark. I'm not going to call it a question; I'll be upfront so my remark is simply this: If you're not already aware, the meeting of the members where this vote was taken was held in January of 2019. So that's what, three years ago. And I don't know if you're aware of what the outcome of the vote was, but it was 163:161. Now, in most ordinary kind of motions, the rule is 50% plus one. And that's exactly what they got. So it was 50.3% of those who casted a vote. So I just wanted to bring that to your attention if, I don't know, I don't expect you really to respond but I just wasn't sure if you were aware of what the outcome of the 2019 meeting was. Thank you for your time.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you, Frank, even though it's a remark, I will give the candidates the opportunity to respond. So first I will pass it to Courage.

Courage (she/her)- interpretation provided by Jo-Ann (she/her)

To be honest with you, Frank, I wasn't aware of that voting, and it strikes me as a big issue. And I am in favor of banning the police and the presence of weapons because it's just a threat to our community at large. So, thank you for sharing that. I wasn't aware.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Courage. and Elizabeth.

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Elizabeth (she/her)

I'm with Courage, I mean, thank you for sharing that. I also wasn't aware of how close the vote was. And actually it strikes me as, again, it's a concerning issue, and I'm surprised by how close the vote was. Our community is incredibly intersectional, and the damage done to various communities of people is, is huge. By, I'm sorry, by members of the policing community, is huge. And, seeing police out there is incredibly re-traumatizing for a lot of people. And I just, I'm not in favour. If officers want to walk in plain clothes with other communities that they belong to, then I welcome them, but I don't think that it's appropriate for police to be out in uniform marching with us. Thank you for the statement.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you, Elizabeth. Moka, okay, go ahead.

Moka (she/her)

Yes, hi, Frank. Um, I was aware of the vote, but I wasn't aware of the outcome of the vote. So thank you for sharing those statistics with me. I do stand with Elizabeth and Courage in not allowing the police to march with us, and I do have my own personal reasons for that, which was a community outcry, where I had the police just blatantly, fully misgender me purposely on my documentary, which I mentioned in the response, which you could see. If you have been awarded the opportunity to see it; you will see there is definitely no chance to have my support for them marching. Especially with the community for me, it's still healing from the different instances of Alloura Wells, Bruce MacArthur, and a few other trans deaths that we had faces within the sex work community. So definitely, definitely you have my support in not having the march in uniform for the Pride Parade, and I will fight for that. If there's any objections, I will definitely be there to oppose them.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Moka. So that completes that round of questions. I see a hand raised, so I'll pass it back to Dave.

Dave (he/him)

Oh yes, I'm very mindful of people's comfort level. If you feel uncomfortable responding, it's totally okay, you don't have to respond. Sometimes I miss social cues. So I've limited my add, but I'm on the flip side of the question that I asked earlier. And I have to be mindful because I was on the board before and I resigned in October. So I don't want to say anything that might be perceived incorrectly. But I do want to know, because you're going to be exposed; being on the board gives you a lot of quote unquote 'power'. You're a director in an

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organization; you have decision making authority. And you can make decisions that potentially, you can benefit from. There is a conflict of interest policy in place, but I wonder sometimes if when decisions are made, it's made from a self interest perspective as opposed to the interest of the community. If you're faced with that dilemma, how would you respond to that, in terms of you benefiting from something more than the community benefiting from it? How would you respond to that?

Grant (he/him)

Thank you, Dave. We'll start with Moka.

Moka (she/her)

That's an interesting question. To be honest, I'm not there to represent myself. I have, I know how to speak for myself on different capacities. I am there for community. But if I have like that motherly instinct within me, where I feel like you know, me looking out for my community. I feel like this will be best. I'm not afraid to take it to my community. I'm not afraid to hear what they have to say whether it happens, whether it be, you know, paraphrase from what the actual situation is concerning. If I'm in that type of dilemma, I will definitely go down and speak to my community and find out exactly how this decision would affect them. And that's the care and implementation I would put into my decision making, if it was to be ever conflicted like that.

Grant (he/him)

Thanks Moka. Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (she/her)

Um, I think that's a great question, and I would like to think that my best self interest and the interest of the community are generally aligned. But in the case that they're not. And I think the best thing we can do like Moka said, is to listen. Listen to the community and listen to other board members. I think that, you know, having a board like this is really beneficial because we get to talk to each other and we get to ask for advice and we get to, you know, say, 'Hey, I have this problem. And can you help me figure out what to do about it.' And so that would be you know my first steps is listening to the people around me and asking for advice if I needed it. But then, in the case of a true, a genuine conflict of interest, I would also recuse myself from any vote where I didn't think that I could be objective. I think it's really important to acknowledge your limitations and if you think that you're not going to be able to be an objective voice, I think it's important to say that out loud, and let people take

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the reins away from you, so that you can still facilitate the best possible outcome for the community at large.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Elizabeth. Courage.

Courage (she/her)- interpretation provided by Jo-Ann (she/her)

I'm really thinking about this question. So I am in agreement with Moka's and Elizabeth's answers because being a board member, gives you an opportunity and a privilege to work with the board, and the community at large and so to Moka's point, I would seek guidance from the Deaf community, and I'm always wanting to be authentic and honest. I think my vulnerability is one of my strengths. And so I think being honest and being authentic and asking for help and those opinions when you need it, is going to end in the best results.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Courage. Again, please feel free to raise your hand or type in the question in the chat box. I don't see any hands raised or any new questions yet, but I'll give it a minute. I know a few members arrived late, so feel free to jump in if you have a question. Why don't I ask one? I haven't asked a question. What are you most looking forward to in 2022 for when it comes to Pride Toronto? And I will start with Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (she/her)

I'm going to be really honest, I'm looking forward to getting outside and being in person again. Can you hear me? It's asking me if I unmuted myself. Okay.

Grant (he/him)

I can hear you.

Elizabeth (she/her)

Sorry, sorry about that. Two years and you think I'd be able to manage the technology but anyway. So, yeah, I'm really looking forward to doing this in person again. COVID is scary and I'm hoping that by the time June comes around, that we are, you know, all in a position where we can get out and celebrate Pride together in person. And I, that's, that's going to be the best part for me. I miss it. I miss seeing everybody

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Elizabeth. Courage.

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Courage (she/her)- interpretation provided by Jo-Ann (she/her)

Same Elizabeth. Yeah, I'm looking forward to seeing people and seeing more Deaf performers and our community on stage, having more access to communication for entertainment. So yeah, fingers crossed.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you, Courage. Moka.

Moka (she/her)

I was really trying to contain myself to answer this question. Um I got really excited for it. Because my thing that I'm waiting for this year is Spice! Dancehall Queen Spice to come, perform at Pride. Like as I said earlier, you know I was a dancehall performer back in the day. I definitely, definitely, love love Spice, she's one of my favorite artists. I messaged Sherwin right away as soon as I heard. But that is one of the things that I'm looking forward to and just as Elizabeth and Courage had stated also, I'm looking back. I'm looking forward to getting back into that in person and other social interaction and group togetherness. Just to really feel that community love and spirit within the air, so yeah that's what I'm excited for

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Moka. Okay, moving on to the next question, Frank. Go ahead.

Frank

Okay, I may be just having problems myself tonight with Zoom.

Grant (he/him)

We hear you clearly though and see you.

Frank

Okay. All right, but at one point you asked Courage to respond. And I thought I saw the name Christopher, and you've also asked Courage to respond and I saw the name Jo-Ann. So who is Courage?

Grant (he/him)

Courage Bacchus is one of the candidates. I don't know what's going on with your Zoom.

Dave (he/him)

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I think it's the interpreters' names they're seeing.

Grant (he/him)

Yes, you, sorry, you're seeing the interpreters' names.

Frank

Okay, so the person I'm seeing now Jo-Ann; is that Courage?

Grant (he/him)

No, that's Jo-Ann.

Frank

Okay, could I ask Courage to identify themselves?

Grant (he/him)

So I just take a pause, I just want to be fair and share the space. Each candidate will have the opportunity to answer questions, I don't want to call out anybody individually for fairness of this, of this session. But when I ask a candidate to answer the question, their camera does come on, so it could be a WiFi issue, where they might not be showing up for some reason in your Zoom. Unfortunately, I don't know what the issue is there, but just what I call that up. You have a question though Frank?

Frank

No, that was it. Thank you.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you. I see Henry has typed a question in. So I don't think that's a question that each candidate needs to answer but I can answer it as someone on the recruitment committee. Do all four candidates currently meet the requirements of candidacy as set out in Pride Toronto's bylaws?

And the answer is yes. All four of them do. Any other questions? Sorry Henry, I didn't mean to sound pointed there. I just, I think it was a more of a question that that laid with the board, as it's our responsibility to make sure that anyone we're interviewing and selecting is/ does meet the requirements, I just wanted to. It is a good question.

I'm not seeing any hands yet or other typed in questions. I can ask another one. I asked a fun one before, I'll ask a more difficult one. At the board, we deal with difficult, sometimes very difficult issues. And as part of that, as members of the board, we also inherit responsibility

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to address issues that may have occurred before our time on the board. How would you approach that, how would you deal or think through issues that you may not have been here on the board to have experienced? Hope that makes sense. So I'll, I'll start with Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (she/her)

Thanks for the question. So, as somebody who's a journalist, I have that background, I think it's important to get as much information as possible. So, you know, instead of blindly reacting to a situation I wasn't a part of, or I didn't have a role in making a decision. I would start asking, you know, for information and doing research to find out, you know, what happened and what was involved in making the decisions at the time. But I think it's important to acknowledge mistakes that have been made, and sort of not to hedge on that. So if mistakes were made, or if there's something that people are trying to hold us accountable for even when I wasn't present. It's important to step forward and say that happened. We acknowledge it. We're sorry, we're trying to do better. And I mean as part of an organization, you can take responsibility for the organization without laying all the burden at your own feet. And then I think it's important to live up to that and start to, you know, whatever the issue, is whatever the problem, I think it's important to start to address it in a very real way and fix the problem, instead of just saying I wasn't here, it's not my problem and moving on. It's important to fix it.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Elizabeth. Courage.

Courage (she/her)- interpretation provided by Christopher (he/him)

Do you mind asking the question again?

Grant (he/him)

Sure. I'll paraphrase the question, I didn't write it down. I was asking that as board members, we often deal with very difficult issues. And in many cases, issues that may have occurred before our time on the board. And I'm just wondering how you would approach those types of issues?

Courage (she/her)- interpretation provided by Christopher (he/him)

Well, you know, to be honest, I'd have to make sure that an interpreter was there so that I could communicate that investigative process of the individuals who are there, or were there. You know, but if there isn't, if there isn't an interpreter present sometimes, I can not

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have the control of the communication in the present. So that's something that is really depending on if the access is there for me. So that's something that I have to be very transparent about, is I need to make sure that the communication access to do that investigative research. And also just from past experience like I have been blamed for things that I wasn't there, for before and often what happens with that is, is just miscommunication. Not only from me but from individuals involved. And so I don't want to be somebody who is resistant to take accountability for something, but to resolve the situation.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Courage. Moka.

Moka (she/her)

I would personally remind the individual, the groups who are bringing up the concern that one, I wasn't there at the present time, at that time in place, but I am in a position to fix whatever upsetting situations that they may have. So I would just in that sense, kind of just direct them to knowing where their anger should be placed. It should not be placed with me personally, but I understand why you could be mad at the whole organization in case there is something that is in the policy that really reflects those negative feedbacks that we are receiving from the community. In that sense, I would then be able to, you know, reassure them that with the change that has come within Pride and with the new board of directors, that we can fix these things. I would thank them for bringing up the situation to me, and follow up with them to let them know that I'm working on their concerns and that I take it serious.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Moka. We'll move on to the next question. Susan, your hand is raised. Go ahead.

Susan (she/her)

Hello, folks. Happy New Year all you fabulous wonderful people! Shout out to all of you hard working people. I'm Susan Gapka. And I think I'm a member, I'm on like so many committees; they keep recruiting me but um yeah I just was trying to help out with the conversation, so glad to see everyone here today, especially on such a cold day outside, um, my question is around governance. So I came in a little late so I apologize, around the closed vote thing. I was trying to send Sherwin a message saying I was the deciding vote on. We could talk about that when we could see each other in person. But um, but being on a board is a particular governance model where you have finances, and managing an Executive

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Director, making sure you have enough money to run the organization and doing like policies and procedures, but yet to be a member of pride...it's like a kind of a party and like a lot of events and that. So those are two very, very different things. Do as a member of the board, if elected, how would you sort that out because I think that Pride Toronto has more of a really unique governance structure; that's like, kind of part hands on, but not pure governance- where you're like completely not involved in Pride. In fact, sometimes the best, the best governance comes out of people with the actual experience. I hope that wasn't too confusing. I'm still looking at Sherwin there my buddy from, my buddy from another life. I'm sorry about that. I mean well, I mean well, um, and so yeah just about how would you make those decisions? I heard a little bit about conflict of interest and that. But how would you like sort of being an actual volunteer or going to events, and then making decisions in a boardroom? Thanks for listening.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Susan for that question. We'll start with Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (she/her)

Thank you Susan for the question and Happy New Year. I think for me, I'm, I'm a unique sort of personality where I'm both left brained and right brained, and I get to be, you know, I get to work at my, my math financial logical side on a board and I think that's what you're asking about and making decisions too. You know, if I'm involved involved on committees or I'm involved with certain volunteer opportunities with Pride that puts me in a conflict of interest position we can do those things that we talked about earlier, but also I understand that the health of the organization as a whole, means that all of those individual committees get to do their thing. We get to dance in the middle of the street in June, because we, because we have a board that makes financially responsible decisions. And so it would. I think I would be able to not only do both, but take Pride, excuse the pun in my work for doing, for doing both. Hope that answers your question.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you, Elizabeth. Moka.

Moka (she/her)

Hello, hi Susan. It's great to see you this year. Happy New Year. As per your question. To my understanding your concerns are like how are we going to balance like party life and boardroom meetings. I think the interesting intersectionality there is being in the boardroom and planning the event is actually the fun part for me. I'm not much of a partier

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anymore. I don't really go out, so that's not a concern for me. Really and truly, so there would be no conflict of interest, in my regard to say like, I was out in a social environment, and acted or behaved in a certain way that may kind of disrupt my reputation with Pride. I don't put myself in those type of situations. So that's how I will be handling the situation if that answers your question.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Moka. Courage.

Courage (she/her)- interpretation provided by Christopher (he/him)

Hi Susan. Happy New Year to you too. Hi there. So that's a great question, and to be honest with you I think that there can be a balance of both but it's important to prioritize the decisions. You know where my time is going to be taken, perhaps the mood that I'm in, the responsibility that's going to take and I'm somebody who is very energy reliant, I care very much about my energy. And I do enjoy being very spontaneous, of course. But it's important to listen to my feeling and see if I do want to participate in some of those things. So I do care for my energy and being on the board is something that I see that will give me energy and give me life and I think it's going to be very enjoyable. But you know to take breaks and to be social and participate in some of those things once in a while, sure. But, you know, it's important to just, you know, prioritize or prioritize appropriately.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you, Courage. That brings the end of that round of questions and thank you Susan for that. I don't see any hands raised, or new questions in the chat. We have about 12 minutes but that's. Oh here's another question, Dave. [In chat]How will each one of you ensure that the board is a safe space for your fellow board members? That's a great question and I will start with Courage.

Christopher (he/him)

Do you mind repeating the question?

Grant (he/him)

How will each one of you ensure that the board is a safe space for your fellow board members?

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Courage (she/her)- interpretation provided by Christopher (he/him)

Well, I think the most important thing is to understand what a safe space means to each person. Having something like a check in when we get started, to make sure that everybody feels okay, that we're comfortable where we are, and making sure that we're all on the same page, I think are some very important things. And to know that I'm not alone and my perspective is not the only perspective, but just have that team think, that group think and that perhaps team check in.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Courage. Moka.

Moka (she/her)

I would have to agree with Courage's answer, and just really keep that dialogue of communication open. You know, being able to really say what you want to say. And the mannerisms that you may want, in the professional mannerisms, in which you want to say it is always an inviting and welcoming form of communication within organizations and governments and institutions. So for me, I believe, just by really communicating and keeping that dialogue open with no judgment towards other people and their feelings, is what's really going to work best and keeping the boardroom safe for all of us.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Moka. Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (she/her)

And thanks for the question, and I agree with the answers that have already been given. I think communication is key and making sure that you're checking in with other people. I also think that it's important that I and others as well, help make space for people. There's all kinds of situations where Black, Indigenous, people of color, women have not been given spaces in boardrooms to say what they need to say, and I think it's important that we make spaces for people that may not be able to advocate for themselves and give people a good sort of, a good sort of space to give their own perspective which it's already been said everybody has different perspectives and different histories that they're coming from. And it's important to recognize those and acknowledge those as being valid.

Grant, you're muted.

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Grant (he/him)

My apologies. I'm sorry, did I miss anybody for that response? I don't think I did. I could be wrong, it doesn't look like it. New questions, do we have any other questions from members. I'm not seeing any new hands raised, or any new questions in the chat. Last call. Okay, so I think, and thank you for everyone who asked questions and listened to the responses. This is our first time again doing this Q&A session separate from the AGM. So it's been a great opportunity to hear from all the candidates and I hope everyone too has benefited from the responses and the engagement that we've had with the candidates. I'll now move on to closing remarks. So, again we'll time we'll do it by first name alphabetically in reverse. So just about a minute for closing remarks, I will start with Moka.

Moka (she/her)

My closing remarks, I just want to thank everybody for taking the time to come out and hear me today and hear my candidacy for Pride Toronto, the board of directors. Greatly appreciate it from all of you. I do hope to be elected by you guys by you all, so I can further enhance resources. So I could further enhance ways of accessibility. And just the overall protection needed for the community, for the 2SLGBTQ+ community as a whole. I'm just really privileged and honoured at this time that I'm even here and I'm even considered as a candidate, so for me this is a highlight right now. So thank you so much for everybody who took the time to interview me.

Select me as a candidate. And again, thank you to all you members, for taking time out of your evening today to sit down, get to know me and hear what I stand for and hopefully that falls into line with everything you guys are looking for in your representation from a board of director candidacy member, so yeah thank you guys so much.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Moka. Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (she/her)

Thank you. I just wanted to say thank you to everybody tonight for the great questions and having me here, taking the time to listen to me, and for sharing pieces of yourself with me as well. It was great to hear from my other candidates, and I am so excited about this opportunity. I'm thrilled to be on the slate. And I am so excited to be working with everybody. So, I can't wait for the meeting next week. I hope that you elect me. If you have any other questions please feel free to ask and then we can get to work. Thanks again.

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Grant (he/him)

Thank you Elizabeth.

I will now read the closing statement from D-Lishus:

In recent years, Pride Toronto has faced a lot of backlash, in part, because she believes we have lost sight of our history, our complexity and our plurality. We need to honor the struggles for acceptance that brought us to the vivifying celebration of difference that the Pride festival embodies today. She wants to be a part of that. And she thanks you all for giving her the chance to do so. See you at the AGM.

And finally, I will pass it over to Courage.

Courage (she/her)- interpretation provided by Jo-Ann (she/her)

I am so appreciative to be involved with this group. Thank you to all the other candidates, Moka, Elizabeth. Thank you for allowing me to share my truth, my passion. I am so motivated I'm very much looking forward to what this year has to bring. And any questions, concerns, questions about access please feel free to contact me. And, yeah, Happy 2022!

Grant (he/him)

Thank you Courage.

That brings us to the end of the closing remarks, I will just pull up the last slide. There you go. I hope everyone can see that. I see, nods, so yes.

So, as a reminder, the AGM is on Wednesday, January 26. That's next week. Starting 6:30 to 9:30. You would have already received a formal notice from our virtual platform, GetQuorum. Please, open up that email and register; there's a registration link there. And once you register. I don't know how long the turnaround time is but you should get the calendar invite within a day. Once your registration is approved. By way of agenda, we will go through approval of the previous AGM minutes, then by law amendments, the presentation of annual report and the joining report from the executive director and co-chairs, presentation of the audited financial statements, and of course the election of new board. Not board meetings; new board candidates. That's a typo on my end, sorry about that. And of course, in each agenda item, there is time to ask questions. So, please make use of that time when you join us next week. And again, there will be a shorter Q&A session at the AGM, prior to the board candidate elections. I just wanted to let you know, you

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still have an opportunity if you think of new questions to ask. Hopefully you'll be able to ask them at the AGM.

And so with that I just want to thank everyone this evening for joining us. Thank you to the candidates for spending your time to share more about you, with the members. Looking forward to next week's AGM and I hope everyone has a wonderful evening and a great weekend.

Yuri (they/them)

Thank you all. Thanks for being here.

Frank

Thank you Grant.

Grant (he/him)

Thank you.

Yuri (they/them)

Amazing presentations by the way, very impressive. Thank you. Thank you, everyone.

Elizabeth (she/her)

Thank you

Sherwin (he/him)

Happy New Year Susan. Love you.

Susan (she/her)

You too over there. When will get to see you again. Is the meeting closed? Is it Grant? Susan here. Or somebody, just who if I have questions? There's a lot of documents that were sent. Is there someone that you know if you need to follow up with and ask questions before the AGM?

Brian (he/him)

It depends.

Recording Ended.

Note: any questions on AGM related documents can go to membership@pridetoronto.com