



Element 11, Inc.
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ELEMENT 11 2020: “HINDSIGHT 2020”

<< EVENT CANCELLED >>

AFTERBURN REPORT

Published November 2020

The Mission of Element 11 is to *ignite* a community of creativity and self-expression.

Board of Directors

Andrea “AJ” Silva - Chairman
Matt “Vagabond” Chiodo - Vice-Chair, General Manager, Secretary
Felix DeSiena - Treasurer, Finance Director
Jordan Lenaburg - Production Director
Sean Plant - Arts Director
Rebekah Myers - Communications Director
Crystal Miller - Safety Director
Cami Chatterton - Volunteer Director

Cabinet

Sanctuary - Holly Hatfield
Medical - Andrea Warner
Ranger Liaison - Janis Mayfield
Center Camp - Rio Wimmer
Public Works - Justin Hogue
Volunteers - Anne Simmons Russo
Ballyhoo - TaCara DeTevis
Theme Camps - Mike Miller
Dangerous Arts - Kelly Bergsdolt
Mutant Vehicles - Eric Spike Clayton



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INTRODUCTION

What a strange year folks. 2020 started out so well. But then things went South. There were so many ups and downs- and in the end we were forced to accept the inevitable and cut our losses. Element 11, like so many others (including Burning Man itself), was left with no choice but to cancel our event. This Afterburn Report will discuss what E11 accomplished, where we fell short, and what comes next.

Element 11 - Hindsight 2020 was originally scheduled for June 25th-28th. The start of the year was positive and productive. For several months, we were able to make great progress towards our 2020 Festival. However, in mid-April, we were notified that the Box Elder County Commissioners were no longer granting Mass Gathering Permits due to Covid-19, and they would not allow us to hold our event as planned.

Following this large setback, the E11 **BoD** examined state and federal guidance, and looked to the expertise of our Medical Director Crystal Miller. After much deliberation, we concluded that we lacked the opportunity, resources, and confidence to host a safe event for this year. As such, E11 chose to not pursue an alternative venue, and chose to officially cancel our event.

At this time, it appears that our assessment has held true, as the general landscape continues to worsen. Element 11 is currently 100% volunteer driven, and volunteer bandwidth has dropped significantly due to the tremendous effect of this global pandemic. Basic operations were paused from April through July to allow our volunteers and our community to attend to their personal safety. E11 will remain at minimal operations until our community has adapted and recovered.

Despite all of these factors, Element 11 is still very fortunate- our organization was in a very stable position when this crisis struck- and we are confident that we can weather the storm. E11 remains very strong due to the planning and organization of our Directors, and due to the commitment and vibrance of our community. Finance Director Felix DeSiena has worked diligently to maintain normal business operations during the summer months, and has transitioned our administrative functions and financial assets into a new system that will enable us to quickly restart operations when Covid subsides.

The Mission of E11 is to ignite a culture of creativity and self-expression. As we begin the next phase of planning, we feel confident that Element 11 will not only survive, but will also evolve the ways in which we fulfill our mission. To finish out 2020: we will be offering art grants to our community via 3 new Covid-safe programs: via direct targeted gifts; through the creation of a new micro-grant program designed to foster art during the off-burn season; and through a new exciting partnership with Illuminate Salt Lake (a local street art festival that has substantial artist overlap with E11). As we approach our yearly leadership changes and Lead recruitment efforts, we will have an eye to candidates and volunteers who have a strong imagination and positivity for the future of the Element 11 Burner Community.



Winning 2020 Ticket Design – Laurie Rader

ARTS

Sean Plant - Arts Director

The decision to cancel the event this year had very unfortunate timing. The E11 Art Committee was in the process of finalizing contracts with art grant recipients when the pandemic burst into our local community. We had intended for this year to have the largest grant program that E11 has ever awarded: over \$40,000 awarded to more than 40 collaborative applicants. When Covid struck, many artists had not yet begun fabrication or fundraising for their projects. However, many artists continued to work in good-faith throughout the summer- several even completed their art projects for an Element 11 and Burning Man that never occurred.

We are currently working with these artists to provide the support that we offered prior to cancellation, and to involve them in other local opportunities for fundraising and installation. Most, if not all, of these projects should have the longevity to be a part of the next E11 Festival, whenever that may be. In pursuit of these goals, we have partnered with the Utah Arts Alliance to provide \$10,000 of funding to community artists to allow them to complete their art and show it in a Covid-safe environment. We are also designing a micro-grant program to encourage creative projects from artists who are stuck with fewer resources and more free time. And as always, we are working to encourage and support our community to make Burner-style art in whatever capacity they are able.



Khronos - Father of Time. Project Design - Chad Wing



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BALLYHOO (COMMUNICATIONS)

Rebekah Myers - Communications Director

2020 has been a particularly challenging year for our Communications team. This is due in large part to the shifting information landscape surrounding Covid-19- specifically government guidelines, regulatory requirements, and community opinions. As such, Element 11 has been diligent in surveying all relevant information, and communicating clearly with our community regarding the position of our organization and our event. In the end, E11 was not able to proceed- this is because the state declined our event permits- in this way, the choice to not hold an event was made for us.

Throughout the year, E11 made our best good-faith effort to communicate information to our community as it arose. These posts were made primarily on Facebook and via our website (element11.org). These modes of communication were used because they are the spaces that our community most often occupies. Through the beginning of this year, Element 11 proceeded towards planning our event, and then was forced to cancel. We made every effort to involve the community, inform them of our reasoning and choices, and make information available in a clear and timely fashion.

Unfortunately, due to the cancellation of our event, Ballyhoo did not perform most of our routine functions, such as creating the WWW Guide, Survival guide, much of our branding, and so forth. We have therefore archived what resources we have, and entrust them to the 2021 leadership to reclaim and proceed into next year's event. We look forward to next year, and hope that our new Communications team will have an improved landscape to promote our next event.

CORPORATE RECORDS

AJ Silva - Chairman, Matt Chiodo - Secretary, Felix DeSiena - Finance Director

As in previous years, all of Element 11's bylaws, corporate records, finance ledgers, permits, meeting minutes, and other similar documents are stored electronically in our cloud, which is accessible only by BoD members. Bylaws, policies, Town Hall meeting records, and similar public documents are available to the community on our website. Duplicate backup electronic copies are also maintained by several BoD Executive Committee members. Hard-copies are also kept for various purposes at various locations- these documents include physical receipts and invoices, bylaws and how-to guides, and similar as required; however, this is not our primary record-keeping method. All documents such as invoices and receipts must be scanned and uploaded to the cloud at the earliest practicable date, and no original documents are maintained in physical formats. Financial information is available upon request. Although detailed financial records are maintained at all times, these documents are provisional and exist in a constant state of flux as documents are received and transactions are processed.

Budgets are managed for each department by the respective board member. Detailed reviews occur at all monthly board meetings and are constantly reviewed by the Board of Director as required, but these versions are not released to the public until documents are properly reconciled and verified to be accurate and complete. As such, summary information is provided to the public during quarterly Town Hall meetings, at our annual stART event, at the Element 11 Festival itself, in social media as appropriate, and intermittently in other formats when information is available in the appropriate formats. In addition, complete and thorough financial information for our organization can be viewed in two primary locations- 1) in the Afterburn Report released by our organization following our festival each year (usually August); and 2) in our nonprofit tax return which is readily available to the public from a variety of online resources.



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EVENT PRODUCTION

Jordan Lenaburg – Production Director

The decision to cancel this year's event came after we had already started ticket sales for the year. Tickets were going to be sold in a tiered sale, with increasing prices as the event came closer. Tickets were sold through Eventbrite, the ticketing platform which we have used in previous years. Tickets went on sale March 1, and we removed tickets from sale April 12. As a board, we made the choice to fully refund all tickets including transactional fees. This was a financially complex decision since we had previously committed to many art grants for the year, and would now have to examine those commitments without any income to fund those grants.

The gross refunded revenue was \$62,000. Of this, \$58,400 would have been revenue to the organization and \$3,600 would have been fees paid to Eventbrite. We issued a mass refund April 15, 2020 with the coordination and help of Eventbrite. Fortunately, no operational expenses were incurred from the Production department, as we had made the choice to delay ordering tickets and shipping supplies.

We had plans within the Production department to make multiple changes to the event regarding Gate, Box Office, and Center Camp. These changes were codified into E11 procedures, and while we were not able to implement them during 2020, we are excited to roll them out at next year's event.

FINANCES

Felix DeSiena – Finance Director

The Element 11 finances are doing very well. As many of you know, Element 11 is now larger than ever before- in terms of attendance, art grants gifted to our community, and in terms of assets held. The Board has worked diligently this year to ensure that E11 has a secure financial future despite the terrible events of 2020. E11 currently holds over \$200,000 in cash assets diversified in a variety of accounts and financial tools spread across four institutions. This diversification is a new structure designed to protect E11 and simplify our normal business operations.

This year E11 underwent a substantial financial restructuring. This restructuring was consistent with the designs discussed with the public during recent E11 Town Halls, and discussed at the Board-level during the past year. This new structure provides a variety of benefits and prepares E11 to grow in to a more professional stature as we expand.

As in previous years, the E11 finances are supervised, reviewed, and reconciled on an ongoing basis. Smaller daily transactions are monitored within each management team, and are discussed as needed at the Board-level. All transactions are supervised by the Finance Director, and are reconciled on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. The Board receives regular financial reports and deliberates on all change requests as they arise.

Even though there was not an E11 festival this year, we are still working diligently to support our community. This year, we have done so via an art grant partnership with the Utah Arts Alliance in support of the Illuminate arts festival, and via a direct micro-grant program for our community. These are discussed above in the **Arts** section of this report. We feel that these programs have allowed us to support our community in a substantial way without overextending our expenses during an otherwise-difficult year.

On the topic of Covid-19 and the current financial slump- we feel that it is critical that we take a cautious posture to ensure that E11 does not exhaust our funds as the current state of things continues into the indefinite future. As such, we feel that we have struck a balance that has allowed us to give to our community while maintaining the bulk of our monies in case of a worst-case scenario. Although we are optimistic, we must take exceptional care to ensure the ongoing wellbeing of E11 if we find ourselves in 2021 and beyond with a weak economy and ongoing restrictions to social gatherings.

E11 is proud of our current financial strength, and we hope that the E11 community shares in our feelings of hope and optimism! 2020 was a difficult year, and the E11 BOD has done our best to keep our organization safe and strong. We do not know when normal life will return, but we are certain that E11 will be ready and able to make an amazing event when we get there! E11 is healthy and optimistic, and we are excited to create a larger and brighter future!



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VOLUNTEERS & RESOURCES

Cami Chatterton – Resource Director

Volunteer Program

Following the cancellation of our festival, we have banked all of 2019's volunteer hours to be credited to 2021 tickets. Should the volunteers not be able to attend the event in 2021, they can bank their credit hours for one additional year into 2022. We also wanted to provide additional Covid-safe volunteer opportunities to our community- and we were able to integrate volunteering and art grants into one joint program with the Utah Arts Alliance. In addition to the art grants that E11 gifted to UAA for their "Illuminate: Light Art & Tech Festival", we are also encouraging and incentivizing Element 11 volunteers to sign up for volunteer opportunities with the production and operation of that event.

Resources

Keeping track of inventory is vital to our ongoing success. At the beginning of 2020, each department was tasked to organize and audit any inventory items under their supervision. These items most often include normal office supplies, event structures, medical supplies, radio hardware, and so forth. However, due to the pandemic, many BoD members and volunteers were unable to complete their inventory tasks this year. This was primarily due to stay-at-home orders, travel restrictions, changes to normal work schedules, and similar. These changes were highly disruptive, and as such, only a portion of our inventory audit was complete. As of now, we do not see that there is any cause for concern, and we plan to resume our regular inventory audits prior to the anticipated 2021 event.

SAFETY

Crystal Miller – Medical & Safety Director

The work of the safety teams, including medical support and Sanctuary, is done almost entirely at the event. With the pandemic occurring and the event being cancelled, there was not a lot to be done in this arena. Utah issued a set of stay-at-home orders early enough in the year to preclude substantially all of our training events including the customary CPR/BLS certification. Crystal Miller did make exceptional efforts in managing the E11 Covid response, and went above and beyond in her role as BoD medical advisor. The E11 BoD made every effort to be informed and reasonable in all decisions relation to COVID-19, and worked to remain in compliance with all CDC guidelines. 2020 is Crystal Miller's final year on the Board of Directors. As such, all medical tasks and assets have been stored and will be transferred to new leadership in the near future.

CONCLUSION

2020 has been a difficult year for Element 11. Our community has struggled, as have our volunteers, Cabinet members, Volunteer Leads, and Board Members. As a Board, we have done our best to listen to our community and represent their interests. We have strived to listen to the guidance of the CDC, state and federal authorities, and other interested parties. And despite this tumultuous year, our community remains strong, and our organization remains committed to moving forward into a brighter future. It is our most sincere hope that 2020 will end more gracefully than it began, and that 2021 will be a better environment for E11 and our community. And when Covid-19 passes, and our world returns to something more normal, Element 11 will be waiting- to put on the best damned festival we can!

We love you all. Stay safe. Stay strong. And we will see you on the other side.