OFA Membership Fee Increase Talking Points:

Background:

1. Original mission was to create a code base to support RDMA capable technology and get that code base accepted by the larger community. That has been a huge success. Several distros bundle the RDMA code base. The Linux kernel community recognizes us. (more to come on this)
2. The original membership and current membership is primarily made up of vendor companies. (more to come on this)
3. For ~10 years the OFA was lead/run by Jim Ryan of Intel. It was his job and he did an incredible amount of work behind the scenes.
4. Due to #3 the membership was allowed to “check out” and the organization was not extremely vibrant.
5. Jim Ryan retired leaving a huge hole.

Complicating factors:

1. Recent changes, like the introduction of OPA and libfabric have introduced different approaches to parts of the code base.
2. As the RDMA code base expands, it overlaps and/or affects other parts of Linux and the Linux kernel
3. Due to #1 and #2, the need for a vendor neutral, well-informed maintainer, or technical expert, who can help resolve issues and provide guidance, is necessary to insure continued functionality of the code base for everyone.
4. Due to #1 in Background, our mission has changed. Surveys and discussions with contributors and members of the OFA indicate that the OFA is still needed and seen as “the place to go” for conversations and expertise in open source highly performant networks. The OFA is still needed, but volunteers from member companies cannot meet this new mission.

Why it matters to us:

1. We need a robust code base that works with multiple vendors.
2. This stuff underlies all the interconnects we have except Gemini – which is about 13 different fabrics – and growing.
3. This is too important to ignore and we need to be an active participant, not stand on the sidelines.

Solutions:

1. Hire an Executive Director to implement this new mission – which includes increasing our membership to include more end user organizations. (per #2 in Background)
2. Hire a maintainer to be the vendor neutral technical expert who can resolve conflicts and provide guidance for architectural decisions. This expert can speak for the entire Alliance of companies, thereby increasing our credibility with the Linux kernel community. (per #1 in Background – the Linux kernel community recognizes the RDMA “subsystem” but still sees it as “a bunch of drivers”, not a full subsystem)