



**Board of Directors Meeting
October 26, 2022
2:00 pm -4:00 pm**

Hybrid format (In-person and Virtual)

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members present: Bob Buesing, Chris Card, Gege Kreischer, Diana Ragbeer Murray, Linda Stoller

Staff Present: Erin Smeltzer, Denise Bishop, Melissa Clements, Lauren Wofford

Welcome:

Chair Bob Buesing welcomed those in attendance and called the meeting to order at 2:17 pm. Bob talked about Erin leading her first board meeting. Bob is meeting with her more frequently and has found the monthly reports and updates helpful. Chris specifically said he appreciates it.

Approval of Minutes:

The Board approved the minutes from the July 7, 2022 meeting. (Motion: D. Ragbeer-Murray/ S: G. Kreischer).

Mission Minute (*Opportunities for Board members to be emissaries of the Forum's mission*):

Diana shared that the Children's Commission, which was created in honor of Dr. Will Blechman, is increasing collaboration in Miami and a summit was recently held to discuss initiatives. Francis Suarez, the Mayor of Miami, was involved with Summit and there were a considerable number of partners also in attendance. The Children's forum was mentioned.

Chair's Report:

Bob discussed the Florida Philanthropy Network (Corporate and Personal involvement). The Network distributes approximately \$500M per year. Sheff Crowder is moving to a birth to career focus. They are trying to get educational foundations on board. Bob is trying to get them to think birth to career. Erin offered to talk to the Florida Philanthropy network if the board thought it would be helpful.

The Conn Foundation continues to facilitate a pilot that encourages turning vacant elementary school classrooms into preschool classrooms. The Institute is looking for promising practices that can be modeled and scaled (e.g., classrooms in assisted living facilities in Arkansas).

Bob shared about the adoption of his son who is thriving in kindergarten now.

Finance Committee:

Lauren Wofford, CFO, Larry Pintacuda, and Allsion Davis met and discussed the financial statements before the board meeting.

Please refer to the attached summary for more specific details

- **Financial Statements:**

Budget Review- Budget is growing by \$4.4 million.

- Osceola and Orange counties are implementing INCENTIVE\$: New contracts
- ELC MD interested in INCENTIVE\$: New contract
- Bainum ECPW Fellowship grant: Continuing contract
- IT (Information Technology) and Communication Project: New contract
- Children’s Week revenue from committed partners: Continuing initiative
- ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act): 5-year contract

Specific funding through ARPA will end, but Miami-Dade will continue funding.

IT and Communication Project- The IT department is working on mirroring our technology to be replicable for other states. Overhead for this project is low and we may have a viable market with other states. This could prove to be a profitable endeavor. We would provide a menu of possible enhancements would be available for a fee. Erin will include info in the monthly updates.

Next 2 years, we expect an uptick from ARPA funding. We will create a shell of a contract that can be provided to other states.

Chris asked about the funding source we used to build the portal. He said he was getting to the ownership rights question. We had some historical conflict with an ownership issue for online event system and have addressed this concern with all subsequent contracts. He encouraged the Forum to be vigilant and use caution. Finally, he asked if the deliverable was the actual portal or data from the portal, and it was determined that the deliverable was access to the data stored within the portal specific to the funder.

Bob asked how long ARPA funding will be available. Erin said it will be available until May-June 2025.

Class assessments brought in staff to saturate regions which has proved to be much more cost effective. Lauren is working toward developing a new process for managing budgets. Erin shared that her goal is to have Burn Reports produced to look at the status of budgets monthly.

Chris asked if federal dollars/contracts were structured as cost reimbursement. Erin said it depends on how the contract is written. There is typically a reduced administrative cost with a fixed rate contract. We are trying to move away from cost-reimbursement contracts when possible. Ideally, we would like to move the Early Learning Career Center (ELCC) contract to a fixed rate contract.

Bob asked how often the finance committee meets to which the response was Quarterly. Lauren and Erin offered to meet more frequently if that would be preferable.

Lauren shared that the accounts receivable was high at the time the report was run, but we have since collected all receivables. We currently do not have funds in CDs. Bob asked about the operating budget and questioned if we had adequate cash flow. Lauren said that we are a little bit light on our operating budget and should have 90 days cash flow. Lauren will include the ratio markers in the next financial reports

There was a motion to accept the Financial Statements (Motion: C. Card/ S: D. Ragbeer-Murray). All Approved.

- **CEO Travel and Expense report:** Reviewed- Identified 2 typo errors. There was a motion to approve the CEO Travel and Expense report (M: G. Kreischer; S: C. Card). Approved with two typographical corrections.

Audit: Lauren Wofford

The fiscal department will participate in several audits coming up. The DEL audit for the Children's Forum is scheduled for November 7, 2022, along with the T.E.A.C.H. audit and the Single audit with Carr, Riggs & Ingram. Chris asked if DEL sees our interim financials and Lauren said they do not.

President's Report: Erin Smeltzer:

Please refer to the written report attached

Erin discussed the Early Childhood Policy Works (ECPW) Fellowship program supported through the Bainum Foundation. There is great collaboration and extensive opportunities for the Fellows to grow and share as colleagues.

Erin shared that Dana Trabulsy has joined the Forum as the Director of Public Relations and Special Projects. Her position as a legislator will not conflict with this new role and she is a pleasure to have on the Outreach team. She provides a wealth of information and experience.

- **Legislative Update: Erin**

We are still advocating shifting the nonrecurring T.E.A.C.H. funding to recurring funds. There was no increase to adjust for inflation rates.

HMG (Help Me Grow)- Statewide impact and funding estimates. Request to expand to statewide implementation would be approximately \$18.8M. The HMG team calculated a per child cost to be a conservative \$300 per child estimating HMG will serve 5% of eligible children (birth to 8-year-old) by county. Next year LBR is our hope. Diana provided feedback on potential outreach materials.

There was a discussion about FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) dollars and recovery efforts for HMG Lee County area following Hurricane Ian. We have reached out to the Affiliate (United Way of Lee, Hendry, Glades; Collier falls in their service area) in that area to see how we can help. Finally, HMGF is serving in a Consulting role with HMG Kentucky to help them structure their developmental screening system.

Workforce Initiatives Team (T.E.A.C.H., INCENTIVES, and Registry)

Kelly has helped to clarify the process for workforce Initiatives and the technology needed for the portal to operate efficiently

Miami- Registry and ELCC

Moved an ELCC staff person to the CLASS project. Looking for inflation rate modifications every 2 years in the contract.

Upcoming travel to NWLC (National Women's Law Center) - Washington DC

Bob asked if travel was going to be excessive and demanding for Erin. Erin responded that she was going to be selective about when, where, and for what purpose she travels.

Erin stated that our data collection is thorough and integrated. We have access to a great deal of workforce data and are brainstorming how we can create a dashboard for the Early Learning Coalitions. Erin knows from her experience with the AELC that they would find this valuable.

We may need to consider hiring a marketing professional to do some national outreach. Chris said that our data support our initiatives and give credibility to our programs and their outcomes. He said it is a good idea to invest in the IT department.

Bob asked what kind of research we are engaged in, and Erin shared that we are finishing the first phase of a statewide ECE (Early Care and Education) workforce study funded through the Division of Early Learning (DEL). She added that Kyle at the Chamber is interested in additional research in that area.

UF ECE Policy master's degree program. Dr. Herman Knopf wants to bring key stakeholders together to build the curriculum for this new graduate degree. T.E.A.C.H. will map out a scholarship model for the degree once the program admits a cohort of students.

We are also in discussions with Dr. Winterbottom at UNF to explore an ARPA research partnership. Bob said he thought we should pursue collaboration with our higher ed colleagues.

- **Building Update:**

Bob provided an overview of the status of the building. He shared that the lease was negotiated in 2019 and we are about 2 and a half years into a 10-year contract. We knew the landlord was questionable, but he has been exceedingly difficult to work with. He filed for Chapter 11 which stopped the building foreclosure.

This was a lively discussion and several questions were presented:

- Are there sufficient reasons to get out of lease?
- Can we persuade a judge to dissolve the contract?
- Do we need to consider hiring a security guard?
- What if we break the lease? We will be responsible for the rent for 7.5 years

Bob will monitor to see if Chapter 11 plan is approved. The defective windows may be a material default. We need to look at all material defaults and documents.

- **Children's Forum Strategic Plan Review**

Erin provided overview.

She stressed that we want to be an employee-centric organization that creates pathways for growth. The strategic plan draft was reviewed and discussed and a revised draft will be shared with the board.

Paycor- Advertising to Indeed. HR (Human Resources) Consultant will work on C Suite to CEO level.

Bill shared the IT component of the Strategic Plan-

- Old Platform- Much of it needs to be replaced using a new language.
- Create new frameworks and rebuild systems.
- Create a more secure technology environment.
- Review and update every 5 years.
- Use a language that is compatible and sustainable.
- Design and build -SAAS- Portal work. Portal can be tweaked to address all scholarship needs.
- Security- Critical component. Maintain highest practice in security.
- Replace servers within a reasonable time.

FORUM Communications Infrastructure

- Replace phone system
- SIP phones
- Cloud-based

Next meeting: January 17, 2023 (Hybrid) 2-4:00 pm

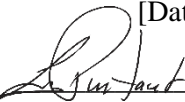
Closed Executive Session (N/A)


Respectfully submitted,

Larry Pintacuda
Secretary

Denise Bishop
Recording

Minutes Approved on: January 17, 2023 <<to be submitted for approval at the Dec meeting>>
[Date]

Signature of Secretary:  January 17, 2023
[Date]

Signature of Chair:  January 17, 2023
[Date]