



**Board of Directors Meeting
April 1, 2022
10:00 AM-12:00 PM**

This meeting was held via teleconference in an abundance of caution due to COVID-19 concerns

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members present: Bob Buesing, Chris Card, Claudia Davant, Ted Granger, Gege Kreischer, Shawna Pointville

Staff Present: Phyllis Kalifeh, Denise Bishop, Lauren Wofford

Welcome:

Chair Bob Buesing welcomed everyone to the meeting. The sequence of the agenda was shifted to allow action items to be addressed while the auditors were present and there was a quorum. The meeting started at 10:10 AM with a review of the Audit report.

Audit Report:

The audit report presented by Carr, Riggs & Ingram covered the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. CRI issued an unqualified opinion. The Statement of Financial Position shows a 2:1 asset to liability ratio with \$15.4M in revenue. It was a clean audit and a clean report. They also reported an audit for The Children's Trust 2021 contract. There were no internal control findings, and it was also a clean report. In summary, the audit went smoothly. Bob asked for a vote to accept the Audit Reports. Chris Card moved to accept. Gege Kreischer seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all.

Please refer to the attached summary for more specific details.

Reading and Approval of Minutes*

Bob noted there was a misspelling of Linda Stollar's name in the minutes, and with that correction made, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December Board meeting. Chris Card motioned to approve; Gege Kreischer seconded the motion.

Mission Minute and Chair's Report:

Bob shared a very personal experience that highlighted the importance of a stable home environment and access to quality early care for the healthy development of a child. He and his wife Karen are now the legal parents of a 4-year-old child to whom they provided surrogate parenting for much of his young life. This led to a rich discussion about the amazing resilience of children and the need for all young foster children to have uninterrupted access to quality early care and education. Gege emphasized the need for all early educators, and teachers in general, to have professional training in trauma-informed instruction and care.

Nominating Committee Report:

Phyllis gave Larry's report since he was not in attendance. Larry has recommended that Ted Granger fill the role of Vice Chair that was vacated by Wil Blechman's retirement and later passing. It was opened to discussion and Ted questioned whether he was the best person for the position given his relatively brief time on the board. Gege stated that while Ted was new to the Forum board, he was not new to the work and suggested that he had exactly the right skillset and experience needed for the position. Bob asked for a motion to approve the committee nomination. Chris Card made a motion and Gege Kreisler seconded it. The motion was approved by all.

Bob discussed the progress of the CEO search committee and shared the recruitment plan. Larry Pintacuda is leading the search process and Diana, Ted, and Bob have joined him on the committee. Bob said that while this will ultimately be a Board decision, the committee will supply a recommendation. Bob asked if there would be a need for a follow-up meeting in May and suggested that perhaps one should be scheduled in case it is needed for the Board to make final decisions.

Finance Committee: Lauren Wofford, CFO, Larry Pintacuda, and Chris Card had an opportunity to meet and discuss the financial statements prior to the board meeting. Ted Granger said that he did not get a chance to review the financial documents prior to the meeting because it was unclear where they were filed. He was given guidance on how to access the financial materials on the Board webpage.

- **Financial Statements***

Lauren Wofford, new CFO for the Children's Forum, provided an overview of the financial statements, which are uploaded on the Board website. She shared an overview of the statements explaining about the Covid-19 loan and repayment process and the Division of Early Learning's monitoring report (December 2020-October 2021), which showed no findings. Bob conducted the exit interview for this monitoring and said that the monitoring team from Thomas, Howell, and Ferguson was very complimentary of the Forum staff and provided a clean report.

Please refer to the attached summary for more specific details.

- **CEO Travel and Expense report***

Phyllis shared the CEO travel and expense report for this quarter and explained that the Forum includes all charges that were made to a Forum credit card. We do this to follow the

recommendations of our Non-profits First accreditation. Bob asked for a motion and Ted Granger motioned to approve; Chris Card seconded the motion. All approved.

Legislative Update:

Claudia shared a brief legislative update. Over 300 bills passed during this legislative session, and while it may have appeared based on the media that most of the bills passed along partisan lines, there were only 6 that followed that pattern. There was no increase in appropriations for Help Me Grow (HMG) and INCENTIVE\$ was not included/approved for statewide implementation. There was a recommendation that we shift the Help Me Grow messaging to focus on parent empowerment, Claudia suggested that we recruit a champion for Help Me Grow. Vance Aloupis was always a strong voice for Help Me Grow, but with his decision not to run for reelection, that is an area of support we need to pursue.

President's Report: Phyllis Kalifeh

Phyllis added to Claudia's legislative update by sharing that the T.E.A.C.H. program was in the budget for \$10M and HMG was in the budget for \$1.8M again. School Readiness and VPK programs should see an increase in the base student allocation (BSA), which will hopefully have a positive impact on wages and compensation. Phyllis said that the Workforce Study the Forum is conducting will supply current data on the state of the ECE field. There may also be a significant increase in the federal funding coming into Florida, could provide more resources for early learning and children's services in general.

Chris asked if there was any more information about the federal funding proposals. Phyllis said that while it was still on the radar, progress has stalled.

Phyllis also shared news about the award (\$160k for one year) the Forum received through the Bainum Family Foundation to build a project centered on advocacy work in early care and education. As a result of this funding, the Forum will recruit, train, support, and mentor a diverse learning community of 20 individuals to be effective child advocates who are competent in communicating the needs of the field and using their voices to facilitate positive change in Florida. The Learning Community will be called the Early Childhood Policy WORKS Advocacy institute., and participants will be Advocacy Fellows. Details of the project are included in the attached President's summary.

Gege said that she was aware of the other eight entities that were also awarded the same grant and looked forward to hearing about any statewide collaboration. She also said she felt the Forum was in the best position to lead this work in Florida. Gege asked what accountability measures were included in the grant. Phyllis that there are defined policy goals and output measures aligned with the scope. Ted added that he was concerned that there was not more purposeful collaboration amongst the eight awardees, suggesting that combined, the grant funding amounts would provide \$1.2M in resources. He thought this would create a greater impact for the EC system in the state. Chris joined in and said he too was concerned with a siloed approach to addressing the significant issues facing early care in Florida. Shawna added that in her opinion, the current system is broken. She said we need to include a frontline perspective and that it is critical that we align our goals and messaging. Bob suggested we may need to reach back out to the Bainum Family Foundation for clarification of their intent. He wondered if they were piloting 8 different ideas to see where the data lead us in terms of impact and efficacy or

instead are they looking for a unified voice at this stage in the process. Bob said that if Phyllis thought it was appropriate, he and other members of the board would be happy to meet with them to seek more information. Ted said he would like to see better defined parameter from the funder. Phyllis assured the board that the Early Learning Consortium would open communication on these issues.

The Help Me Grow Florida state coordinating office at the Forum is currently interviewing to fill the position of Statewide Director vacated by Alex Goldberg. Alex accepted a position with the Association of Healthy Start Coalitions. Phyllis will keep the board informed of the progress of the search, but there is a strong candidate being considered (Dr. Amy DeWitt). Phyllis concluded with a few comments about the search for a new CEO for the Children's Forum. She echoed much of what Bob said and added that the goal was to have a new CEO in place by July 1, 2022.

Please refer to the summary attached for more specific details.

- **Strategic Plan:** Phyllis recommended that Forum no longer maintain and incur the cost of IACET accreditation because we are not engaged in active training for people needing IACET CEUs. Bob asked for a motion to remove IACET accreditation from the strategic plan. Chris made the motion and Ted seconded it. All approved.

New Business: No new business was discussed.

Closed Executive Session (N/A)

Next meeting: July 7, 2022 2:00-4:30 PM in Meeting Central at the Children's Forum, 1211 Governors Square Blvd. Tallahassee, FL 32301

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Pintacuda
Secretary

Denise Bishop
Recording

Minutes Approved on: _____ to be submitted for approval at the July meeting
[Date]

Signature of Secretary:  _____

July 7, 2022
[Date]

Signature of Chair:  _____

July 7, 2022
[Date]