



**Board of Directors Meeting
January 17, 2023
2:00 pm -5:00 pm**

Hybrid format (In-person and Virtual)

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

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

Staff Present: Erin Smeltzer, Denise Bishop, Melissa Clements, Bill Kirchhoff, Lori Stegmeyer, Lauren Wofford

Welcome:

Chair Bob Buesing welcomed those in attendance and called the meeting to order at 2:09 pm. Erin shared that all future meetings for the upcoming year will be scheduled through a calendar invitation. She also indicated that documents related to the building at 1211 Governors Square Blvd were included in the invitation for this Board Meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

The Board approved the minutes from the October 25, 2022 meeting contingent on a correction to the spelling of Diana Ragbeer Murray's name (Motion: L/ Stoller/ S: D. Ragbeer Murray). All approved.

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

Diana and Erin shared that they have been collaborating to help with developing early learning legislative priorities for a local chamber initiative happening in Miami. Gege is organizing an Early Childhood Summit in Pinellas County. It is in the early stages of development.

Chair's Report:

Bob discussed Ready Nation, a philanthropic organization linked to PNC bank, and its focus on connecting business leaders with early education initiatives. He emphasized that the organization is focused on Florida and understand the challenges we face here. Ready Nation is invested in doing important work in Florida and Bob has been tagged as a resource.

Bob shared that Sheff Crowder from the Conn Foundation will become actively involved with the Florida Early Learning Consortium and is participating in a consortium meeting on Monday. Bob said he sees this kind of movement as an opportunity for an expanded role with philanthropic organizations in Florida as well as nationally. He asked Erin if the Forum has the capacity to pursue more research projects in the future. Erin assured him that there is capacity within the Forum.

Finance Committee:

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

- **Financial Statements:**

Lauren shared the current financial statements spanning from July - November 2022 explaining that the December financials had not yet closed. She added that funders seem to be paying in a timely manner as of late. Fixed assets have been reduced.

Please refer to the detailed summary for more specific information. Financial statements are posted as part of the Board materials at <https://flchild.com/board-of-directors-meetings/>

Non-Operating Activities:	
Interest Expense	\$ -
Changes in Net Assets	\$ 44,404
Net assets at beginning of period	\$ 3,996,131
Restricted Net Assets	\$ 481,736
Net assets at end of period	\$ 4,522,270

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

- **CEO Travel and Expense report:** Reviewed- Identified 2 typo errors on the document. There was a motion to approve the CEO Travel and Expense report (M: L. Stoller; S: G. Kreischer). All approved.

Audit Reports:

The fiscal department participated in several audits recently. A prepared audit sheet for the single audit with Carr, Riggs & Ingram was shared with the Board. The report was provided by Jessica Cotes and Jeaninne Busch of CR&I. They shared that the results indicate a clean, unmodified opinion with no material weaknesses or deficiencies. Jessica and Jeaninne indicated that the Children’s Forum Team was organized, timely with

materials, and easy to work with. There was a motion to accept the single audit. (M: C. Card; S: S. Pointville). All approved.

A draft report of this audit is posted on the Board Materials webpage.
<https://flchild.com/board-of-directors-meetings/>

Lauren provided an additional update regarding the fiscal monitoring with the Florida Department of Education, Division of Early Learning. There was one minor finding that related to travel from July that had not posted to the correct year. While Lauren explained to the auditors that it was due to a timing factor and not an error in recording, they did not remove the finding from their report.

The Broward ELC audit is underway and appears to be going well.

President's Report: Erin Smeltzer:

Please refer to the written report titled President's Summary posted on the CF Board Materials web page. <https://flchild.com/board-of-directors-meetings/>

Building: Erin provided an update on the building at 1211 Governors Sq Blvd in Tallahassee FL. A single report was created depicting all of the building deficiencies and concerns. She will stay actively engaged in the negotiation process and thanked Bob for his support and expertise. Bob provided additional information related to the litigation with the lease. A motion to reject the lease was discussed and the mortgage holder is asking for the building to be auctioned. Bob explained that from his perspective, our first choice would be to terminate the lease and vacate the premises. He said realistically, that is probably not going to be an option. He said the second option would be that all necessary repairs and concerns would be addressed in a timely manner and the Forum would continue with a modified lease. The Forum is prepared to start negotiations. As a point of reference, we currently pay \$26,000 per month in rent with the square footage calculated at \$18- \$22 per sf. There is a concern that we are paying for more square footage than we should given the dimensions of the interior office space.

Legislative Update: Pursuing additional funding request for HMGF. Data to support the request have been shared with Claudia and with DEL. Erin and Claudia are conferring on who may serve as appropriate sponsors for the request in both the House and the Senate.

Erin has been asked to present an overview of EC policy development for the House Education Quality Subcommittee.

Overview of new projects and contracts:

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Spending Plan was revised through a stakeholder group and is awaiting approval from the Legislature. For this revised plan, DEL requested an estimate for T.E.A.C.H. expansion. The proposal includes an increase of \$1.7 million to increase the number of scholars we can serve as well as introduce new models.

The ELC of Orange contract should be executed next week to implement INCENTIVES in their county (\$1.5M). This will start February 2023. We are working with the ELC of Broward to increase contract by \$400,000. Additionally, we are meeting next week to discuss the development of a workforce registry for Orange county.

Arkansas AEYC has increased their Software as a Service (SaaS) contract, which would involve mirroring (i.e., duplicate and customize) our current Portal to \$125,000. This includes \$115,000 in development and \$10,000 in maintenance annually. Erin shared that the Forum is moving to flat rate contracts whenever feasible. The Board was adamant that the Forum get a declaration in writing that we own the software associated with the platform. It was suggested that Erin send a confirmatory email to North Carolina asking for acknowledgement of permission to pursue this contract.

Upcoming events and travel:

2/2/23 – Dana Trabulsy and Erin will participate on a panel for the Broward ELC to discuss the current state of the early learning field.

2/8/23 – Erin and Lori Stegmeyer will travel to the Florida Afterschool Network (“Network”) summit in Orlando. This will bring together many stakeholders and policymakers to discuss best practices and issues within out-of-school-time programs.

3/26/23-3/31/23 – Children’s Week: Celebration of the Hands Sunday, Advocacy Awards Dinner Monday, Children’s Day Tuesday at the Capitol. <https://childrensweek.org/>

Project Updates:

We completed the first draft of the statewide workforce study for DEL and are awaiting its release to the public. We are continuing to work on an executive summary of this report highlighting the most significant and impactful findings. After the report has been approved, the Forum will begin designing a marketing summary that can be published and distributed. Melissa Clements is also creating a PPT presentation with the findings.

The Assessment and Coaching team has completed almost 1000 CLASS assessments across the state to date.

There are around 2000 active scholars in the T.E.A.C.H. program as of today.

HMG just procured a new affiliate, The Children’s Home Society, for the Pinellas County community. The SCO is providing technical assistance and training to support this new team as they get the program up and running in their area.

Children’s Week has surpassed its partnership goals for this year and has also connected some key legislative leaders to the events. Just a reminder, it is the week of our March board meeting. We would love to have you all in town to join us for this event. It is going to be a wonderful week! To see the schedule of events, please visit <https://childrensweek.org/activities-and-events/>

The Forum HR committee is continuing to work on the Employee/Staff Handbook. There is a policy being drafted for the Forum’s parental leave benefit. Diana shared that they are working on developing a parental leave policy in Miami as well and she would appreciate it if we can share our draft with her once it is finalized.

The Board reviewed the proposed strategic plan for the Children’s Forum. There was discussion by the Board about devising their “end statements” for the goals that were established. This led to further discussion about the composition of the Forum Board. Shawna shared a field-based perspective on what is happening in early childhood programs for children, families, and educators, and said she wants the Board to be intentional in its efforts and to focus on advocacy.

There was a collaborative effort to wordsmith some of the strategic plan statements for the Board’s goals. Erin captured the edits on the draft Strategic Plan document, but it was decided that more time was needed to consider the written language that will be used. The Board will revisit this activity.

Next meeting: March 27, 2023

Closed Executive Session (N/A)

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Pintacuda
Secretary

Denise Bishop
Recording

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

Signature of Secretary: _____ [Date]

Signature of Chair: _____ [Date]