



## Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

Friday, January 31, 2025 | 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Board members present:** Bob Buesing, Gege Kreischer, Diana Ragbeer Murray, Allison Davis, Kyle Baltuch, Ted Granger, Claudia Davant

**Staff members present:** Erin Smeltzer, Lauren Wofford, Denise Bishop, Melissa Clements, Jessica Cherry, Lori Stegmeyer, Bill Kirchhoff, Lindsey Smith

---

Bob called the meeting to order at 10:04 am

Bob called for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous board meeting on October 15, 2024, Ted moved to approve and Gigi seconded, all were in favor.

Bob started the Mission Minute off by sharing that the YMCA program in Florida is the largest provider of child care in the state and that they are looking for grant to supplement wages for employees so he recommended they contact the Forum to help them find funds for this.

The meeting moved to the financial review and approval. Lauren Wofford, Chief Financial Officer, shared our November through January budget and noted that Osceola increased their budget by \$75K to their INCENTIVE\$ program and an increase in our Forum Forward memberships. The SEEC and JP Morgan Chase grant also increased bringing us to the bottom line showing it increased to \$228K.

Erin explained that we have 8 entities that are a part of our Forum Forward program, these members have direct access to our expertise about everything happening in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) world through monthly meetings and the opportunity to meet with Erin directly for her to answer questions and give her guidance on various things happening in the legislative process and ECE system.

November showed a net operating income of \$35k, we are heavy expense first half of the year so we will see it increase in the second half of the year when the bulk of our revenue comes in. Our balance sheet shows that our accts receivable is lower, accounts payable is relatively the same and there are no significant changes on other lines.

Kyle shared accolades for Erin and Lauren and their work to double the revenue at CF and keep it organized and in the green.

Bob asked if we needed a mid-year budget adjustment and Erin shared that we had already adjusted it and showed everyone where it had been adjusted.

Bob called for a motion to accept the financials as presented, Gege motioned, Kyle seconded, all were in favor.

Erin shared that we are in contact with a financial planner to help us with our retirement and investment accounts. We are currently losing out on \$80-\$90k/year in interest on our accounts and we are looking into how we can gain a consistent income stream through an interest bearing account.

Bob shared that he would like the team to make sure we are monitoring how secure these new investments are what laws are in place to protect us, and other nonprofits, to make sure we are safe in the event something unfortunate happens.

Diana asked for clarification on if we had a middle of the road membership option for Forum Forward that might attract people who work with children or in the advocacy field. Erin shared that the Forum does not have that option but loves the idea and will take the idea back to the Forum Forward team to see what it could look like to offer something like that. Erin moved into an update on our financial plans, and shared that we are looking into a proposal for an investment account

Erin moved into the Legislative update. She shared that there have been changes to the way the House lets bills be presented and that some Representatives are hesitant to run bills on the House side due to the changes.

Bob asked if there was anything the board members could do to help. Claudia shared that input is always helpful but that at this time we needed to be on the sidelines and try to let the heat in the legislature cool down and try not to get in the way.

Erin shared that creating a narrative that our programs are a core component of the early childhood education system is the best way to keep our programs positioned in a way that they are valued and protected.

Bob the meeting to the Partner Update, Erin shared that we are now a part of the Florida Philanthropic Network with FACCT, and Children's Movement. Our Bainum grant is going wonderfully, and they have stated that they plan to increase our grant next year.

Bill shared that we had a few security hurdles in December and while nothing was compromised the team decided to increase our security provider contracts and added

another layer of security which blocks anything from running on a computer that has not been previously approved. He shared that we have scrutinized our audit requirements relating to security and are improving those.

We have added Tennessee to our SAAS contract, and they have paid in advance. Arkansas and Iowa are moving along nicely. We expect the Arkansas TEACH portal to launch in the next few months, it is ready to go they just aren't quite ready to launch yet.

Bob asked if we carried cyber security insurance and Erin shared that Lauren, Jessica, and Bill researched and secured cyber security insurance a few months ago. Erin shared that Lauren and Jessica had already placed internal controls on our payroll system that protected us in December from any damage. Bill also shared that he plans to retire on June 30<sup>th</sup> of this year and that we will advertise his position soon so that there can be some overlap between CTO's and the transition can be as smooth as possible.

Jessica shared that we are reviewing our benefits and retirement plans, and we were looking at a new payroll system and then we found out that our current system Paycor has been acquired by Paychex which is a wonderful company. Our hesitation is that there will be an implementation system on the horizon and we have no idea what it looks like so we would rather be in the drivers seat and decide when to make the change and how to. It will be a lot of work for the next six or so months but in the end it will be a very beneficial switch for us. Bob asked what our timeline looked like and Jessica shared that we are not quite sure because we are still going through demo's and proposals so her hope is it will be sometime in the fall.

The meeting moved into program updates and Melissa shared SEEC 260 educators gain their national CDA. We are working through 225 applications 100 complete, 85 of them are in their last phase of their review for TEACH, and they will start coaching and training for some of the cohorts on February 17. The hope is for the program to be fully running by the end of march.

2,500 assessments to date fiscal year – expect to fo 4,500. LENA 190 classrooms for coaching across 6 ELCs. LENA would like to increase our payment rate to implement a 1:21 management process. Denise asked If th management side of LENA is tied to the appropriation?

Around 1 hour 24 min – bob shared something about a Medicaid change

Lori shared that Child Care Servies Association (which is our licensing agent for T.E.A.C.H. and INCENTIVE\$) has gone through a rebranding and are now known as Early Years so a new TEACH logo will go out soon. By the end if January we are right in target and have spent about 65% of our budget.

Denise shared that HMG has a new affiliate in Alachua county and is done through an MOU b/c is funded through their Children Services Council so we now have 15 affiliates through 43 counties. She shared the more that we can share success stories of the program the more traction it will gain and it's importance will be seen. We are working with a PR firm here in town that has been very helpful in creating a strategic advertising campaign and it has all been received very well!

Denise moved into sharing updates about our Gold Seal program and that

More DCF training is coming. Felicia is getting wonderful feedback from the folks she is working with because she is very knowledgeable and always willing to help. The Department has been thrilled with our help, they see it as above and beyond and are very thankful for this program.

Ted asked what kind of outcome measures we have from T.E.A.C.H. and HMG and Denise shared that we have impact reports from each year but getting to the outcome is difficult. We can see what has been output so the PR firm is helping us find a way to track and share how children and families are being assisted through HMG and the impact they are having. Denise is hopeful that if we can partner with the Autism Institute that they will be able to help bridge the gap between output and outcomes.

11:38 am the meeting moved to closed executive session.