



**Board of Directors Meeting
July 7, 2022
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

Hybrid format (In-person and Virtual)

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members present: Bob Buesing, Chris Card, Allison Davis, Ted Granger, Gege Kreischer, Larry Pintacuda, Linda Stoller

Staff Present: Phyllis Kalifeh, Erin Smeltzer, Denise Bishop, Evelyn Thomas, Lauren Wofford

Welcome:

Chair Bob Buesing welcomed those in attendance and called the meeting to order at 2:15 pm.

Approval of Minutes:

The Board approved the minutes from the April 1, 2022 Meeting. (Motion: L. Pintacuda/ S: C. Card).

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

Bob took some time to describe the process for conducting the Forum Board meetings. He started by explaining the purpose of the Mission Minute. Chris Card shared with the board his recent experience providing care for his young grandchild and said that without a doubt, early educators should be paid significantly more for their work and garner unwavering respect!

Ted shared that his successor was on board for the United Way of Florida and encouraged Erin Smeltzer, new CEO of the Children's Forum, to build connections. Erin agreed and said that she had met with Kyle Baltuch for the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber is also committed to working together moving forward.

Bob stated that he is leaving his Board position with the Conn Foundation. He said that as he pursues other opportunities to share the mission and goals of the Children's Forum, he feels it is

important for the organization to be nimble and encouraged the team to review and revise the strategic plan. Erin and Phyllis both agreed.

Gege shared information about the “Let’s Talk Play!” event that was held at the Glasser Museum in Tampa Bay. Gege currently serves on their Board but will be vacating that position soon. She said the focus was on building a stable foundation through developmentally appropriate practices and seeing the curriculum as play. The event provided various learning stations for young children.

Chair’s Report: Bob Buesing:

Bob started this section of the meeting by providing a business/legal overview as it relates to the Governor’s Square building and the Forum’s lease. He explained that while the building is in foreclosure, the Forum is protected by a well-designed, legally binding lease that provides protection for the organization. He described it as a single asset. The cost of any repairs needed to the building can be deducted from the Forum’s rent if the owner and manager are not responsive to requests for action. Bob also stated that the Forum is no longer listed as a defendant in the legal proceedings because “they want to keep us as a tenant.” He also stated that the Forum’s lease survives a change in property owner. The owner put the building on the market. It did not sell, so he filed Chapter 11 Bankruptcy court.

Bob followed this discussion by sharing an interesting offer he received from the Inperium Inc consulting firm. It is a for-profit company that pursues the purchase of non-profit organizations with strong resources and contracts with government agencies. Board members discussed the pros and cons of this type of business offer. Chris Card said that he had prior experience with this type of business structure. Both he and Bob suggested that it was not in the best interest of the Forum and the Board agreed not to pursue the offer.

Bob shared with the Board that he and Karen are raising their newly adopted young son and he could not stress enough the role that quality early care and education has played in his development thus far. Gege said that she has seen Bob’s son in the classroom, and he is excelling. Larry shared that the relationship he has fostered with his grandchildren has been a gift to them all. There was a lot of discussion about positive parenting, grandparenting, and early education and Erin shared her strategy of asking her children to give two “bad things” that happened and three “good things” that happened during their day. It opens up conversation, gives them a chance to reflect, and helps them focus on the good that happens throughout the day.

Finance Committee: Lauren Wofford, CFO (Chief Financial Officer), Larry Pintacuda, and Chris Card had an opportunity to meet and discuss the financial statements prior to the board meeting (July 5, 2022).

- **Financial Statements:**

Lauren gave a summary of the financial statements, As of April 30, 2022, records show a net profit of \$24,230. Financial statements were included in the board packet (section 2), which members received and can be reviewed separate from these minutes. Lauren shared that we have a new INCENTIVE\$ contract with Osceola County that has an anticipated start date of 7/1/2022 and are in discussions with Leon County to enter another INCENTIVE\$ contract that would be

funded through the newly established Children's Services Council. Anticipated start date for Leon County is 10/1/2022.

There was a motion to accept the financial statements. All approved. (M: C. Card; S: G. Kreischer).

- **CEO Travel and Expense report**

Consistent with NonProfits First, the Children's Forum provides all necessary documentation to accompany the CEO travel and expense report. This report was reviewed and approved (M: C. Card/ S: L. Pintacuda). For a more detailed review, please see section of the submitted documents.

- **President's Report: Phyllis Kalifeh**

Phyllis shared her last President's summary to the Board before stepping back from her position as CEO. The summary is included in the Board packet (section 3) and can be consulted for specific details. Phyllis provided an update on the following topics:

- Nonprofits First Accreditation has been renewed.
- The transition plan for Erin to take on the role of CEO for the Children's Forum has been comprehensively mapped out and is being implemented throughout the month of July 2022.
- Planning for the Early Childhood Policy Fellows (ECPW) initiative is underway. The first meeting of the ECPW Fellows will take place later in July as a preconference meeting at One Goal. AELC is implementing a similar advocacy initiative with the Bainum grant they received. Other grant recipients, including those from the EL Consortium, are still designing their plans. There was discussion about "Provider Organizations" needing to come together with one voice on the issues that affect early care and education. Gege said this needs to consider messaging from Florida and messaging at a national level. She suggested that the biggest concern right now is the stability of the workforce.
- Phyllis shared that she and Erin have been discussing legislative planning with Claudia. Included in the discussion are plans to address HMG (Help Me Grow) expansion, implementing INCENTIVES\$ statewide, and pursuing other opportunities to impact the EC industry throughout Florida.
- Phyllis shared that the relationship the Forum has with the Florida Afterschool Network (FAN) has been positive and FAN. Bob said that Sheff Crowder is emphasizing a Birth-Career focus in their work as well to include older children and youth.

Larry asked Erin what supports she needs to move this agenda forward. Erin said she wants to get the lay of the land before she makes any decisions or changes. She suggested making the October 2022 board meeting a strategic planning session. Her plan is to build and foster relationships with key stakeholders throughout Florida as well as other states, and to have monthly meetings with Matt Mears, Chancellor of DEL (Division of Early Learning).

Chris shared that he is concerned that there is a lack of qualified service providers who are trained and have the experience to work with at-risk children. The Joint Referral Collaboration project, coordinated recently by the Forum with Morgan Evers and DEL, was an effort to get at that concern.

Gege and Larry engaged in a conversation with the rest of the board relating to the enormous impact of ECE (Early Care and Education) staff shortages in Florida. Discussion included concerns about the “Fiscal Cliff” many educators could face, and this led to further discussion about the BSA and Wage and Hour Law.

Phyllis closed out the meeting by giving a short, heartfelt speech about each board member and then provided them each with an award.

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

As stated previously, Erin would like to reserve the next quarter board meeting as a strategic planning session. She wants to get input from members on what their priorities are so we can build the metrics to achieve the goals as stated.

Next meeting: October 27, 2022 (In-person)

Closed Executive Session (N/A)

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Pintacuda
Secretary

Denise Bishop
Recording

Minutes Approved on: October 26, 2022
[Date]

Signature of Secretary: 

October 26, 2022
[Date]

Signature of Chair: 

October 26, 2022
[Date]