



**Board of Directors Meeting
June 12, 2020
10:00 AM-12:00 PM**

This meeting was held via teleconference due to COVID-19 concerns

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members present: Bob Buesing, Wil Blechman, Chris Card, Allison Davis, Gege Kreischer, Larry Pintacuda, and Linda Stoller

Staff Present: Phyllis Kalifeh, Kerri Cloud, Denise Bishop

Welcome:

Chair Bob Buesing welcomed those in attendance and called the meeting to order when a quorum was attained at 10:12 AM. Etiquette for virtual meetings was reviewed and everyone agreed to comply.

Reading and Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from March 13, 2020 were reviewed and approved (L. Pintacuda motioned to approve/W. Blechman second). The need to review Children's Forum policies was noted in the minutes, and Larry said that he would take responsibility for setting up a calendar establishing dates to review each of the existing policies.

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

Bob initiated a discussion about the letter that Wil wrote, which was published in the Miami Herald. It was suggested that Wil personalize the letter and it be sent out broadly from the Children's Forum. Bob felt that with the impact of COVID-19 has highlighted the need for early child care from an economic perspective. He stated that he appreciate the role Vance Aloupis has had in perpetuating the discussion at a state level. Gege added that in southeast Florida, program coordinators have begun to contact her to discuss business practices in light of the CDC recommendations for early education programs. She agreed that the Florida Chamber of Commerce and Vance had done an exemplary job addressing some of the issues. She said that the cost of implementing the CDC guidelines is astronomical and it is creating hardship for many programs. Wil also suggested that we bring this subject up under New Business because he had some thoughts he wanted to add as well.

Chair's Report: Bob Buesing:

(The Mission Minute segment and Chair's Report merged during this meeting)

Bob shared that Karen Buesing (Bob's wife) is an employment lawyer and that she has created a COVID-19 plan for a child care program in Tampa. They had a tremendous need for resources, so she was able to pull materials together for them and provide support. Bob suggested that the Forum host a webinar on child care businesses and what needs to be addressed and communicated within programs and to families as related to COVID-19. Bob urged Phyllis to take a leadership role in addressing the impact the pandemic has had on childcare programs. Phyllis agreed and said that we would begin the planning process.

Wil was concerned that the new restrictions recommended by the CDC might have a negative effect on the social and emotional development of young children and wondered how programs could implement developmentally appropriate practices while ensuring the health and safety of children and teachers. He suggested we look to Zero to Three to see if they had strategies to address these issues.

Phyllis shared that the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) had made suggestions to guide childcare programs in Florida, but there was no mandate to follow them. Gege added that young children don't naturally social-distance from each other, or from adults, and that she was concerned that many would not wear masks appropriately. Bob said that extra personal hygiene practices may not be enough to prevent or even contain the spread.

(Chris Card joined the Zoom meeting at 10:35a.m.)

Phyllis stated that many centers are screening children outside the building during drop-off before they enter their classrooms. She also shared that parents and family members have much more restricted access to the programs than they did in the past. Chris added that there appears to be vacuum of leadership and information with respect to these issues, and that while he understands we don't have all of the answers now, people in the field still need guidance and information. Everyone agreed that the Children's Forum was well positioned to take on a leadership role for the state.

Phyllis reminded the Board about the *Help Me Grow* statewide meeting that was coming up and shared that Wil was planning to serve on a panel of experts for the meeting.

Larry stated that as part of the nominating committee, he was putting forward Ted Granger as a possible Board member. Phyllis said she had spoken to Ted and that he was interested in serving if selected. Larry made a motion to formally nominate Ted, and Wil seconded the motion. All were in favor. Bob said that Ted Granger is one of the best connectors anywhere and that he was very excited to have him join the Children's Forum Board. Larry made a suggestion that we focus on bringing more diversity to the board as we move forward. Larry also said that he would take responsibility for providing Ted with an Orientation to Board policies, practices, and responsibilities.

Finance Committee: Kerri Cloud, CFO, Larry Pintacuda, and Chris Card had an opportunity to meet and discuss the financial statements prior to the board meeting.

- **Financial Statements:** Kerry stated that there was less than \$1M to spend for T.E.A.C.H. and that there was no doubt it would be spent prior to the end of the fiscal year. Phyllis shared that in response to COVID-19 and classes moving to an online format, T.E.A.C.H. designed and received permission to offer new initiative that provides scholars with \$500 toward a new computer; the reimbursement works similar to submitting a book claim. The Outreach Department is getting the word out through social media and email blasts. The state budget needs to be delivered to the Governor by June 16, 2020 and Governor will sign the budget on July 1, 2020. Action posed to accept the financial reports. Gege Kreisler made a motion to accept and Larry Pintacuda seconded the motion. All approved.
- **CEO Travel and Expense report:** The CEO travel and expense report was reviewed and approved (Motion by W. Blechman/ Second by G Kreisler). The document will be mailed to Bob for his signature.

**Because this meeting is virtual, the document needs to be signed by Bob and scanned to Phyllis*

President's Report: Phyllis Kalifeh

Phyllis provided an update on the sale of the building at 2807 Remington Green Circle in Tallahassee. The building sold for \$447,663 and the take away after fees was \$465,000. Phyllis said we would do a tour of the new building at the close of the Board meeting. Larry offered praise to Bob for his hard work and diligence working through the sale of the old building and negotiating conditions as we signed a lease and moved into the new building. Larry, Chris, and Bob formed a Building Task Force and became the primary point of contact for negotiations. There was a clear need to increase the pressure on the landlord/owner of the new building (1211 Governors Square Blvd.), but there is confidence that sufficient protections have been built into the agreement to maintain the Forum's security within the lease. Bob talked about implementing a "Utility Defense" to protect the sanctity of tenancy. He is willing to stay engaged as much as needed moving forward.

Phyllis shared the COVID_19 protections that are being put in place for staff at the Forum. In Tallahassee, concessions have been made for staff with pre-existing conditions, for those who are at high risk, and for those with children at home due to summer camp closures and child care issues. These individuals are permitted to work remotely as needed. In addition, staggered schedules have been implemented for staff working in cubicles to make sure we are at 50% capacity in those areas. Sanitation stations have been set up at all entrances for the first and second floor offices. Staff in Miami-Dade and Palm Beach are working remotely.

The Florida Afterschool Network (FAN) has coming under the administrative umbrella of the Forum. The Florida Children's Council relinquished administrative leadership and the Mott Foundation approved the Forum stepping into that role for the Network. Brian Hickey, Director of FAN, will become a Forum employee. Larry is currently the treasurer for FAN and will serve as a mentor to Brian.

Phyllis also discussed the Forum's role with Children's Week. The United Way and Capital City Events have been coordinating Children's Week for many years, but mutually have decided to let it go. Phyllis is in negotiations with Jason Zaborski from Capitol City Events, and Rick Owens

(UW) is willing to sign off on it. Phyllis is working on developing a final contract now. It appears as though sponsorships bring in about \$127,000 on average per year; however, this year may be impacted by COVID-19 so we need to take that into consideration. Wil agreed and said that we would need to ensure a clause was written into any contract holding us harmless if winter/spring events are canceled (Children's Week is in April 2021). Phyllis said we would have to look at alternate platforms for event planning if that were the case. Gege was surprised that the Forum was paying for Jason's Children's Week intellectual property since the Forum so involved from the inception, but Phyllis shared that Jason's contacts were of value. Wil said that it appears Rick Owens (UW) doesn't have the same level of interest in early childhood that Ted did and wondered how we could have a positive influence on that. Phyllis said she is working to engage him in activities that will tie him to early learning.

Phyllis discussed the new opportunities for funding that are available through the Office of Early Learning including a planning grant (\$15,000) followed by an implementation grant (\$135,000) focused on outreach and adoption of the new Early Learning Standards and Key Competencies and creating an approval process for specializations within the new Career pathway. UNF would be the prime on the contract, and they would subcontract with the Forum to do the bulk of the work. The Forum is still hoping to be included on the Florida Management System vendor list so more contract options become available.

The Forum also submitted, with UNF, a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the Early Education Investment Collaborative (EEIC) and we were invited to submit a full proposal. This was the only LOI invited to submit from Florida.

Phyllis said that she added the Children's Forum to a Coalition letter written to Congressional leadership. We were one of over 400 organizations to sign on. Phyllis circulated the letter to the Board, but asked if as protocol in the future, they would prefer she send it to them for review prior to including the Forum. Gege thought it might make sense to run it by Bob, but he indicated that he did not think that was necessary and that we should embrace and uphold the role we have as advocates for the field. The Forum has been reaccredited by Non-Profits First. The accreditation is active for 5 years.

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

The Board reviewed the strategic plan. Wil said he would like to know who the accrediting agencies are for Gold Seal and asked Phyllis to send a list to the board when possible. Phyllis explained that DCF coordinates this aspect of the program, but in her opinion, there are currently too many agencies. Gege added that this was also a concern brought up in Rep. Grall's bill last session and may come up again.

(Chris Card left the meeting at 12:03).

Phyllis shared a bit about how OEL is handling the pandemic with respect to school readiness programs and private pay and emphasized that the goal was to retain quality providers. Wil said he would love to see people remove the term "child care programs" from their vocabulary and replace it with "early care and education centers." Bob added that that he is involved in a Foundation funding meeting to discuss cross organizational planning, like with hurricanes and natural disasters and that early care should be included. Gege said that while middle class

families were cautious about going back into work, economically disadvantaged families were often essential workers, and as such, had to return to work. In these cases, subsidized child care would need to be available for these families. Gege felt that this crisis has brought to the surface a need for small business training for early care programs. Phyllis felt as though the Forum could take a leadership role in this initiative as well.

The meeting adjourned and the Board was taken on a virtual tour of the new building.

Next meeting: September 11, 2020 via Zoom

Closed Executive Session (N/A)

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Pintacuda
Secretary

Denise Bishop
Recording



Signature of Secretary

<<will be reviewed and approved at Sept. meeting>>

Minutes Approved (date)



Signature of President

<<will be reviewed and approved at Sept. meeting>>

Minutes Approved (date)