



**Board of Directors Meeting
March 13, 2020
9:00 AM-1:00 PM**

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

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members present: Bob Buesing, Wil Blechman, Chris Card, Allison Davis, Gege Kreisler, Larry Pintacuda,

Staff Present: Phyllis Kalifeh, Kerri Cloud, Denise Bishop

Auditor: Jeannine Busch, CPA -- Carr, Riggs & Ingram Auditing Firm

Welcome:

Chair Bob Buesing welcomed those in attendance and called the meeting to order when a quorum was attained at 9:08 AM. Bob announced that the order of the meeting items would be adjusted to accommodate Jeannine Busch from Carr, Riggs, and Ingram who joined the meeting to share the recent audit report.

Audit Report:

The audit report from June 30, 2019 was reviewed. It was reported as an unmodified and unqualified, clean audit. Ms. Busch shared that there were no findings and Children's Forum is in a strong financial position. She drew the Board's attention to Notes 11 and 12 which explain new accounting standards. The separate engagement on behalf of The Children's Trust (TCT) also went smoothly and resulted in no findings and a clean report.

Tab 2 of the Board packet contains all of the financial statements (unaudited) from July 1, 2019-October 31, 2019.

Larry Pintacuda thanked the Children's Forum fiscal department staff for the effort they put into this and suggested that the Board send a note of thanks for the exceptional work.

Bob Buesing raised a question about the timing of the report referencing the audit date of June 2019 and the report date of March 2020. Kerri Cloud indicated that the audit is required within 180 days.

Wil Blechman moved to accept the report and Larry Pintacuda seconded the motion. All members present voted to accept the audit report dated June 30, 2019.

Approval of Minutes:

In reviewing the minutes from December 6, 2019, Bob noted that two names within the document had been misspelled (on p. 2 and p. 4). Phyllis Kalifeh said that she would make the corrections and with that acknowledgment, the meeting minutes from December 6, 2019 were approved. (M: Blechman/S: Pintacuda).

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

Bob started the Mission Minute by suggesting he wanted to have a larger discussion about the COVID 19 pandemic that was impacting south Florida and Hillsborough County. He is concerned with the impact it will have on the safety, healthy, and education of children. He deferred the conversation for later in the meeting.

Wil brought up the *No Small Matter* (NSM) viewings and asked what the revised protocol might be for large public showings in light of the coronavirus. Gege said that the Grade Level Reading Campaign had made an investment in the NSM showings, but that all of the theater showings were on hold until further notice.

Shifting topics, Gege went on to talk about the Power to the Profession (P2P) initiative and suggested that funding opportunities may become available for states, such as Florida, that have early educator competencies which are well-aligned with the NAEYC/P 2P. For now, unfortunately, all promotional activities are cancelled but she will keep Phyllis and the board informed of new opportunities as they resurface.

Gege and Allison were recognized as *Life Time Members* (LTM) of the Children's Forum; Gege recently joined and Allison has been a LTM for quite some time. Bob thanked them for their commitment to the Forum.

Chair's Report: Bob Buesing:

For the Chair's report during this meeting, Bob presented a ***Board Refresher Training*** to reorient members to their responsibilities and to provide support for new Board members learning their roles.

Major topics included: What is leadership? What is governance? and What are the legal responsibilities for members of a not-for-profit Board of Directors? The power point is included with the minutes. A discussion followed about the need for some of the Children's Forum policies to be reviewed and updated. For example, the Whistle Blower policy for the Forum was developed in collaboration with Karen Buesing, but it may be time for a thorough review. Phyllis shared that Children's Forum does engage in frequent policy development activities because they are required for the Nonprofits First certification the Forum holds, but there is always room for improvement. Phyllis recommended that the Leadership Team establish a calendar that sets specific dates for review of each of the policies in place for the Forum. These would include but are not limited to Personnel, Fiscal, and General Policies related to our funders, and then move to an annual review of the policies by the Board. The Forum does currently has an HR consultant who provides guidance to Forum leadership annually on such issues.

Phyllis added that since we maintain the Nonprofits First Certification, which requires a great deal of effort, we should add this to our Children's Forum letterhead and website. Phyllis will make sure that all of the materials shared during the refresher are available to Board members online through the private webpage.

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:**

Kerri Cloud shared the financial statements as of January 31, 2020. She noted there was a decrease in cash available in part because T.E.A.C.H. spent over \$1M in January alone. The Forum applied for and was issued a line of credit for up to \$750,000 that can be accessed if necessary. T.E.A.C.H. is watching closely to see what, if any, impact COVID-19 will have on scholarship awards, but there are several training organizations and higher education programs that are available online. The Outreach team at the Forum will make sure information about those programs is shared broadly with active, pending, and potential scholars.

T.E.A.C.H. is in the Legislative and the Governor's budgets for \$10M for FY2020-21. There was a call for a motion to accept the financial statements. (M: Blechman /Card/S)

- **CEO Travel and Expense report**

The CEO travel and expense report was reviewed and approved (M: Kreischer/ S: Card)

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

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

Phyllis suggested that the Forum highlight our Board members by collecting bios that we publish on our website. Jenna Brown, Director of communications, will reach out to each of the board members with a broad template requesting a short biography.

Phyllis also suggested that we generate a status or situation report (at some time interval to be determined) that we can share with our funders informing them of the impact COVID-19 is having on our capacity to meet deadlines and provide deliverables.

The status of the new office building is ever changing. The owner wants the Forum to start paying rent March 15, which is not realistic given the fact that the building is not habitable for staff. The Forum will continue to take pictures of the condition of the building as evidence for the delay.

With respect to the Legislative Session, Phyllis shared that the Early Learning Bill sponsored by Rep Grall and Sen. Harrell is probably not going to make it through this year.

Phyllis shared some potential opportunities for the Forum that are on the horizon including an active leadership role for Children's Week. There are discussions with the United Way of

Florida about the Children’s Forum taking over the administrative responsibilities for all of Children’s Week. It would provide high-level visibility and a greater emphasis on local activities would have a big impact. Gege was excited about the possibility and emphasized that an organic connection with local communities needed to be fostered.

With respect to COVID-19, the Forum is actively developing policies based on feedback and templates from key HR organizations and helpful input from Karen Buesing. Since this is emerging as a pandemic, there will be new expectations and legal responsibilities that will factor into policy development. Bob is concerned with hourly (non-exempt) employees who may have limited PTO. He suggested we come up with a plan for how to address with those individuals. We also need to keep a finger on the pulse of what is happening in the child care industry because the impact will be broad and significant.

Phyllis shared the newly published *Miami-Dade Workforce Study* report and Board members were impressed with the design of the report and the data included.

Gege wanted to be sure we engage in discussion at some point about how to address the anticipated response to increasing (nationally) the number of degreed teachers who work in early learning. This will be an issue in Florida as well.

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

Wil suggested that we amend the guiding principles to make more of a statement about the societal impact of early learning to demonstrate that it is a public good that should be funded as such. Wil said he would send some language to Phyllis that could be incorporated to reach this end.

Next meeting: June 12, 2020 (location TBD)

Closed Executive Session (N/A)

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Pintacuda
Secretary



Signature of Secretary

Denise Bishop
Recording

<<will be reviewed and approved at June meeting>>

Minutes Approved (date)



Signature of President

<<will be reviewed and approved at June meeting>>

Minutes Approved (date)