



**Board of Directors Meeting
March 19, 2021
10:00 AM-12:00 PM**

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

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members present: Bob Buesing, Claudia Davant, Allison Davis, Ted Granger, Gege Kreischer, Diana Ragbeer-Murray, and Linda Stoller

Staff Present: Phyllis Kalifeh, Kerri Cloud, Denise Bishop

Welcome:

Chair Bob Buesing welcomed those in attendance and shared that Wil is at home recovering from surgery. Bob called the meeting to order when a quorum was attained at 10:10 AM.

Reading and Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from December 11, 2020 Board meeting were reviewed and approved with two minor change suggested. (T. Granger motioned to approve/W. Stoller seconded).

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

Gege shared that from a business perspective, Robin Pearlman is promoting the T.E.A.C.H. and INCENTIVES\$ programs as critical strategies in addressing the early education compensation issue. Phyllis has added Robin Pearlman to the PD Advisory Board for T.E.A.C.H. and the connection should prove to be very positive.

Ted asked how the federal CARES money will impact funding for T.E.A.C.H. Phyllis shared that there is a significant increase in the amount of money coming into Florida FDOE/OEL for early learning and child care services. (i.e., \$2.5B) and that decisions still need to be made about state and local priorities and subsequent distribution of the funding. Bob suggested that we work on a proposal to submit to OEL and Phyllis said that was in the works and that the Forum is developing a proposal called "INCENTIVES\$ to T.E.A.C.H. Phyllis has helped Tammy Tener with the Florida Family Child Care Home Association (FCCHA) develop their legislative priorities and create a proposal. Phyllis said that she thinks the key is to collaborate to stabilize the industry infrastructure. Bob agreed and said we need to keep our voice active and our proposal on the table. Diana asked about a partner-based systemic approach, and Phyllis explained the role of the Early Learning Consortium explaining that these initiatives are clearly

within the wheelhouse of the Forum since we focus on workforce issues in early learning. Gege added that it will be important to bring in the Business workforce too and described the industry as the “workforce that drives the workforce” noting that the Forum is seen as a leader in workforce advocacy for child care and early learning. Ted asked if Florida Association of Child Care Management (FACCM) was on board with the proposal and Phyllis said that she has included Jennifer Shields and Roy Keister, both of whom are leaders within FACCM.

Discussion of the graduated increase in minimum wage in Florida followed. It will have an impact on child care programs. There will need to be adjustments in state-level (OEL) payments to centers to off-set the minimum wage increase. An exemplar business plan that supports a sustainable model is critical. Bob stressed that this is our core mission so it will be important to keep out fingers on the pulse and to tap Board members for support as this unfolds.

Chair’s Report: Bob Buesing:

Bob shared that he is looking forward to being the MC for the Children’s Week Advocacy Award Reception and Ceremony. There is a VIP list of people invited to a small face to face reception and ceremony that includes partners, leaders in the EL field, and legislators.

Bob also shared an initiative in Hillsborough County that is a bottom-up demonstration project. The focus is on facilitating PreK-K teacher connections with monthly meetings. They are allowing private preschool providers to use vacant classrooms in some of the public schools to run their programs. Bob has spoken to Erin Smeltzer about the project to see if it might be replicated in other communities throughout Florida. He felt that if this could happen in other districts, it may be a significant financial support for private child care programs since there is no requirement to pay rent or to lease the space; the only obligation is to pay utilities and other program-specific costs. In Hillsborough, there is an emphasis on recognizing the feeder patterns so families and educators become familiar with each other earlier in the process. Gege added that in the mid-2000s, Head Start did a similar thing with 3-4 year olds in Pinellas County and it is a good model to replicate.

Bob has been recognized as a “Community Hero” through the Vinik Foundation associated with the Tampa Bay Lightning NHL team. As part of the recognition, a \$50,000 donation will be made to his chosen charity, which he identified as *Talk, Read, Sing!*

Finance Committee:

- **Audit Report**

Carr, Riggs and Ingram: Jeannine Bush shared the results of the audit report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. There were three components to the audit: Program Specific, The Children’s Trust, and a general audit for the Children’s Forum. Net worth of the organization is \$2.6M with a 2:1 asset to debt ratio. It was a clean audit with no noncompliance and no significant findings. All required communications were included in the report and specific details of the program findings can be found in section 3 of the submitted report.

Bob stated that as someone who sits on several boards, he is very impressed with the audit findings for the Children’s Forum. Ted agreed.

- **Financial Statements***
 Kerri Cloud, CFO, Larry Pintacuda, and Chris Card had an opportunity to meet and discuss/approve the financial statements prior to the board meeting. Kerri shared the financial statements for January of 2021, which is seven months into the current fiscal year. She said that T.E.A.C.H. spending lagged a little compared to prior years, but with the impact of the pandemic, it was not unexpected. Phyllis explained a new T.E.A.C.H. proposal that has been developed that she would like to discuss with OEL. If approved (i.e., reducing the contribution from scholars and sponsors temporarily and increasing the bonus for Family Child Care homes) would provide relief for both sponsors and scholars and would increase spending providing more financial support to those who participate in T.E.A.C.H. Phyllis is waiting for a response from OEL. (Motion to approve the financial statements: L Stoller/ Second: G. Kreischer).
- **CEO Travel and Expense report*** The CEO travel and expense report was reviewed and approved (Motion G. Kreischer/ Second: T. Granger). The document will be mailed to Bob for his signature.
- **OEL Monitoring**-Thomas, Howell, and Ferguson completed the OEL monitoring; however, a copy of the report is not yet available. This will be discussed at the next board meeting.

Children’s Week Review-Jinan Higginbotham, Children’s Week Coordinator

Jinan provided an overview of the progress that is being made in the CW planning. With many Avenues to Advocacy webinars already completed, it is clear that the members of communities throughout the state are engaged even though the events are primarily virtual this year. A quick summary of the events include a viewing and discussion of the documentary *No Small Matter*, a Livestream of the CW Advocacy Reception, Celebration of the Hands at a local level with an opportunity to display hands at the TCC Innovation Center at Kleman Plaza downtown in Tallahassee, and Storybook Village To learn details of the events that are scheduled, please visit <https://childrensweek.org/>.

President’s Report: Phyllis Kalifeh

Action items:

- **Bylaws proposed amendment**
 - Waived prior notice
 - Motion to approve the Bylaw changes: D. Raybeer-Murray/ Second: G. Kreischer.
- **Vision, Mission, and Goals reaffirm***
 - Vision, mission, guiding principles and goals reviewed.
 - Motion to reaffirm: L Stoller/Second: D. Raybeer-Murray
- **Succession Plan Approval***
 - Succession plan for the CEO was discussed. It was noted that the plan was thorough and well-designed. Bob emphasized that Board oversight will occur during any transition period where the Forum is moving from CEO to Acting CEO. An annual review will be required.
 - Motion to approve the Succession Plan: T. Granger/Second: D. Raybeer-Murray

- **Nonprofits First Recertification:** Kerri is facilitating the recertification process for the Forum. As part of the process, the **Disaster Preparedness and Continuity Plan** for the Forum was updated and presented to the Board. This plan will be reviewed annually. Bob suggested we consider using the Cloud for storage to ensure security of our files. He said he is aware of a non-profit rate and said we may want to consider this as an option moving forward. Phyllis shared that we have been looking at options and Bill has been active in providing training staff in safe secure interaction through the web.
 - Motion to approve the Disaster Preparedness and Continuity Plan: G. Kreischer/ Second: L Stoller).
- **Children’s Forum Strategic Plan Review:** Phyllis provided an overview of the strategic plan which is updated and reviewed quarterly and is included with Board materials each meeting.
- **Summary of Activities:** Phyllis shared that she has invited Samantha Vance, Director of the non-profit *Ladies Learning to Lead* to share some of the space in our new building. She has agreed to sublet an office and a cubicle for her organization. Daniela Villasmil with the Children’s Movement is also sharing space at the Forum. Phyllis brought up a prior discussion the Board had about Family engagement in advocacy. She suggested we put that on hold temporarily because families are dealing with so many the issues related to the pandemic, employment, school for their children etc. She stated that it is a critical focus area, but the timing may be off. Diana said she is very interested in the family engagement piece of advocacy and suggested we perhaps start with a small group of parents who are interested in learning more and build from there. Phyllis said she would work with Diana to get a list of potential families and then secure permission for us to send them information through our Constant Contact email service.

Legislative Update: Claudia Davant, Adams Street Advocates

Claudia stated that the 2021 Legislative session was very different than what we are accustomed to from prior years. There will be more capital funding than before and it is not clear how resources will be allocated. T.E.A.C.H. and HMG have moved into appropriations and it appears that Chair Fine is supportive of both programs. Claudia said we will need to stay tuned as the process takes shape. Phyllis thanked Claudia for her support through this unique session.

New Business: Provide support for Wil during his recovery. Phyllis and Diana both offered to share his home mailing address with Board members so everyone could send him notes of encouragement. Phyllis said she sent him the board materials for this meeting so that he would continue to feel engaged.

Closed Executive Session


Next meeting: June 18, 2021 TBD if in-person or via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,


Larry Pintacuda
Secretary

Denise Bishop
Recording

Minutes Approved on: June 18, 2021

Signature of Secretary: 

Date: June 18, 2021

Signature of Chair: 

Date: June 18, 2021 _____