



**Board of Directors Meeting  
Sept 13, 2019  
9:00 AM-12:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Board Members present:** Bob Buesing, Wil Blechman, Chris Card

**Board Members present via conference call:** Allison Davis, Claudia Davant, Larry Pintacuda

**Staff Present:** Phyllis Kalifeh, Kerri Cloud, Denise Bishop

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**Welcome:**

Chair Bob Buesing welcomed those in attendance and called the meeting to order at 9:14 AM. A quorum was present. Several items requiring Board approval from the June 28, 2019 meeting were addressed at the start of the meeting since a quorum was not attained at the last meeting. Because of this, the order of presentation of items is structured different from prior meetings.

**Reading and Approval of Minutes:**

The meeting minutes from both March 15, 2019 and June 28, 2019 were approved (M: Pintacuda/S: Card)

**Finance Committee:** Kerri Cloud, CFO

- **Financial Statements:**

Kerri shared that the Forum is maintaining strong financials and the end of June records showed all scholarship funding and WAGE\$ stipends/incentives had been expended. Chris Card reviewed the financial statements and had no concerns or questions. The financial statements were approved with a motion by W. Blechman and a second by C. Card.

- **CEO Travel and Expense reports** were approved for both the June 28, 2019 meeting and the current meeting (M: Blechman/ S: Card)

The affidavit for the resolution for the line of credit was approved (M: Blechman/ S: Card)

Kerri explained that the reason for the line of credit is because the Children's Forum is working from a cost reimbursement position with all contracts and are spending down our reserves prior to reimbursement. The high T.E.A.C.H. budget requires extended credit to pay up front. Kerri

shared that since T.E.A.C.H. is cyclical, there are times when we need to draw down credit and then will have an opportunity to pay it off upon reimbursement. The credit limit that was approved is \$750,000. Interest accrues when we draw from the line of credit, but we have an opportunity to pay back the credit almost immediately.

Chris asked if there was a requirement to zero out the credit line annually. Kerri responded that she was meeting with the bank on Monday to get more information and will report her findings at the next meeting if not before. Larry signed at the bank for the resolution.

Other action items included the 2019-20 Budget (Tab 2 in packet). Kerri indicated that the discussion would focus on the proposed budget and began by sharing program expenses.

### Help Me Grow:

**HMG** lost the nonrecurring funding (\$400,000) with the latest contract. Last year, the program was funded at \$2.4M in 2018-19 and for 2019-20, it is funded at \$1.8M. Will asked if there were any foundations that members were aware of that might consider supporting HMG. Phyllis said that we would pursue any and all opportunities and Bob added that if we can effectively prove the concept, we can turn it over to the taxpayers for support. Phyllis explained the affiliate structure and emphasized that coordination across services is required (e.g., 211, 24 hour services, Healthy Start Collaboration). Bob asked how Hillsborough was structured and if the Children's Forum (CF) administered any of it. Phyllis explained that the Hillsborough HMG was funded through the Early Childhood Council in that county, but that CF is the state coordinating office. Bob asked if we use "secret shoppers" to assess the experience from a consumer's perspective and Phyllis shared that we have had staff call and request support through the HMG affiliate in the Big Bend area. Phyllis also explained about both the Physician Champion model and the I-Pad project taking place in pediatric offices. Phyllis suggested that she and Larry meet with Claudia to discuss Help Me Grow in more detail. Everyone agreed that the messaging needs to be refined and we need to rely on local dynamics to communicate effectively the return on investment. A goal was established to reach out to other boards that are associated with HMG to improve the visibility and better communicate the impact of the HMG system.

### OEL and UNF contracts:

**Professional Development Task Force-** Phyllis shared about the contract that the Forum has signed with the University of North Florida, with the deliverables due by the end of November 2019. The Professional Development Task Force project is focused on developing an early learning professional development system that includes revised core competencies for educators, directors, and support roles and a redesigned career pathway for early and afterschool educators. The award was \$175,000 and the Forum will receive \$157,500 after UNF takes their percentage.

**Child Assessment Feasibility Study-** the second project was a direct contract with the Forum that was subcontracted to a qualified researcher to facilitate completion. This draft report is also due at the end of November 2019.

The board voted on the proposed budget that Kerri shared for 2019-20 with the understanding that there would be a mid-year review as well. The vote reflects the budget as of today

(September 13, 2019). Motion to approve: C. Card/ S: W. Blechman. Chris Card left the meeting at this point, but all action items were addressed prior to his departure.

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

Wil shared with the Board his access to the documentary *No Small Matter* through the Florida Kiwanis. He is able to use the link to the documentary for a showing through December 2019. He would like to see the Forum and Kiwanis collaborate to coordinate a showing of *No Small Matter* in Tallahassee. Phyllis and Wil plan to organize the event with the help of the Outreach team at the Forum.

Bob talked about the National Laundromat initiative and efforts by the Kiwanis to set up book corners for children and families to access while using the facilities. They cost about \$150 each to set up and are well-received. Wil added that now there are high school volunteers who are reading to children at the book corners.

**Chair's Report: Bob Buesing**

Bob had two things he wanted to discuss. First, he was on a conference call with Shan Goff, newly appointed Executive Director of the Office of Early Learning. The call was coordinated by the Business Alliance for the Chamber of Commerce. Bob shared that Shan Goff talked about wanting to increase participation in VPK, improve collaboration across agencies and associations, and that she indicated there was a strong commitment from the Governor and Commissioner of Education toward early learning initiatives. She discussed an increase of \$50 per student to the Base Allocation for VPK. This may not seem significant, but it is better than the reduction we have seen through prior VPK funding budgets. Shan also shared that the SBOE would like to see a greater emphasis on early learning in the strategic plan for Florida's DOE, which would include getting information about children from birth to 5 embedded in the plan. Bob sensed that Shan's focus was primarily on VPK to G3. This discussion provided an opportunity to expand on the Child Assessment work that the Forum is currently involved in. The Star assessment used at kindergarten entry has created some frustration in the field as children are performing poorly on the test, in part due to administration requirements, which is reflected on the readiness rates of the VPK providers who taught the children in the year prior to kindergarten entry. Bob spoke about the work Dr. Jason Anthony is doing through the USF and suggested we may want to explore his involvement in assessment research for this young age group of children. Bob shared that Shan also suggested that DOH as an agency, might be better aligned to address the needs of infants and toddlers throughout the state of Florida. Bob said that he discussed HMG on the call with Shan.

Second, Bob discussed **Ready Nation**, an initiative he is very involved with. He just returned from a meeting in Washington D.C. where he is filling the informal role as the Florida representative for Ready Nation. At a local level, Bob said he is being asked what can be done to improve readiness rates and he shared about *Talk, Read, Sing*. Bob said that Champions for Children has committed to bringing the coordinator of the *Talk, Read, Sing* program to Hillsborough County.

Bob said that he is frustrated that Hillsborough is not maxing out their millage and in essence is leaving \$30m on the table. He suggested that if they maxed out the millage, they could increase

the school readiness eligibility to 200% of the poverty level and increase VPK allocation to \$5000. This is a new area of advocacy and focus for him that he intends to actively pursue the issue at a local level.

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

Phyllis spoke about Rodney MacKinnon's transition from OEL and into the IG's office and reiterated that Shan had the potential to make significant changes in the OEL.

She then shifted to discuss the status of the new office building. The Tallahassee based staff will reside in 2807 Remington Green Circle until the construction is complete in the new building. Staff are working in tight quarters and some upper level managers are working remotely until the renovations are complete. She hopes that staff will be moved in by November and we can have the December Board Meeting and the *No Small Matter* showing at the new site.

There was a group discussion about the need for a branding update for the WAGES\$ program. Claudia shared that legislators and others misinterpret the mission of the program and assume it is either for children (direct support) or some type of welfare support for early educators. There was proposal made to change the name to **Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVES**.

Phyllis said we would have to run the name change by Sue Russell at CCSA because of our licensing agreement, but we could do that fairly quickly. Phyllis also shared that we are dealing with issues around administrative costs through the Hillsborough WAGES\$ contract. Advocating for a statewide administrative role is a legislative priority for the Forum this year.

In addition to the UNF PD Task Force contract and the Child Assessment study contract, the Forum has also secured a contract to conduct six **Transition to Kindergarten Summits** throughout the state. This is a continuation of work that we started in 2018. Bob responded to the discussion by sharing that there is a research project under way in Hillsborough exploring the patterns of six early learning centers connected with neighborhood schools. They are finding that children are spread out all over the county and that 75 children from early learning programs in a specific area went to 60 different elementary schools. This has increased awareness of the need to ensure parents are making informed decisions about school choice for both early learning settings and kindergarten. Phyllis suggested this might be good information to bring into the Kindergarten Transition Summits. There was discussion about the **Learners to Earners Summit** and how this type of research could be included. Finally, Phyllis shared that she was going to attend the Alliance for Early Success in Milwaukee, WI and that both Vance Aloupis and Madeleine Thacker were attending as well. It will serve as a good opportunity for discussion and collaboration with both of them. Phyllis is also attending the Children's Policy Network meeting which immediately precedes the Zero to Three conference in Ft. Lauderdale. Bob and Wil both plan to attend the Network meeting as well.

Phyllis reminded everyone that it was an early legislative session this year (January 2020) so we needed to be actively involved in advocacy efforts.

**Next meeting:** Friday December 6, 2019 in Tallahassee. 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Location TBD.

**Closed Executive Session (N/A)**

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Pintacuda  
Secretary



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Signature of Secretary



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Signature of President

Denise Bishop  
Recording

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

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Minutes Approved (date)

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

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Minutes Approved (date)