



Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting: In person (Tallahassee, FL) and virtually

**Welcome**

Bob Buesing, Board Chair

**Reading and Approval of Minutes\***

Larry Pintacuda, Secretary

**Mission Minute**

Board Members

**Chair's Report**

Bob Buesing, Board Chair

**Finance Committee Report**

Lauren Wofford, CFO

- Financials Review and Approval\*

**Forum Update**

CEO and Forum Staff

- Legislative Update
- Partner Update
- Program Updates

**Closed Executive Session**

Bob Buesing, Board Chair

**Adjournment**

*\*Items marked with an asterisk require board action*

**Board members present:** Bob Buesing, Christian Winterbottom, Allison Davis, Claudia Davant, Gege Kreicher, Chris Card, Ted Granger, Diana Ragbeer Murray

**Staff present:** Erin Smeltzer, Lauren Wofford, Jessica Cherry, Denise Bishop, Lili Murphy, Melissa Clements, William Kirchhoff, Lori Stegmeyer, Lindsey Smith

Bob Buesing called the meeting to order at 12:06 pm and started by reviewing the meeting minutes from the meeting on July 16, 2024. Christian Winterbottom motioned to approve the minutes, Claudia Davant seconded the motion, all were in favor.

Bob moved into the Chair's Report and shared that the vision of getting the philanthropist community to see the vision The Children's Forum has and praised Erin for being one of the first calls that people make when they need help, and one of the first calls they make when they have available grant money and want a reputable organization to have the opportunity to put it to good use.

Bob moved to Lauren Wofford, CFO, to review the financial packet. Lauren shared Erin's Travel and Expense Summary. This was reviewed by the Finance Committee on October 14, 2024. Bob called for a motion to approve the Travel and Expense Summary, Christian Winterbottom motioned, Chris Card seconded, all were in favor.

Lauren shared our 2024 unaudited Fiscal report showing that we have a \$92k operating income. Erin shared that we have a few line items that are higher because we had difficulty estimating the cost of furniture. She also shared that we amended the budget to bring the marketing for Help Me Grow Florida back to the state level so that we could have more control over the spending.

The balance sheet was very comparable to last fiscal year. And the statement of cash flows showed steady movement in our month-to-month accounts receivables and payables. Bob asked for clarification on when our audit was scheduled and Lauren shared that we are waiting for our engagement letter but expect it to arrive soon.

Current year financials, July and August so far, we have brought in \$4.5M in revenue and a gain of \$23,000 in the last few months. Erin shared that we really needed the increase in TEACH money because the ARPA funds would expire in September of this year so the budget that the board previously approved changed. Orange county no longer has any funding, Osceola decreased but they are working on getting more funding so they can sustain their program, Broward took a 15% cut. Our increase in TEACH and balancing in other areas helped us sustain our financials. Erin shared that we are being awarded a \$500,000 grant from JP Morgan and that it will not require us to add any new staff, we

are moving current staff and retaining some of the staff members we had from a previous grant that expired.

Our balance sheet final invoices to DEL are not due until September and that is why the number is higher for them. This reflects work that was done in June and Claudia asked for clarification on this. Lauren shared that they have a 90-day certified work period so our invoice to deadline is later and then DEL's is even later than ours, so it takes quite some time to get paid back. Chris shared praise for the finance team in being able to manage the increase in revenues and expenses and carrying the accounts receivable and stated that it was remarkable for a non-profit to be able to operate this way.

Motioned to approve Bob, Chrisitan moved, Gege seconded, all were in favor.

Erin shared the legislative update and details surrounding the potential of the Center for Early Childhood Excellence, Erin is purposefully staying out of the conversations in case it goes to procurement because TEACH may be a program requirement. This process is moving along, they have support in the House and the Senate is finding someone to champion it. The preliminary step is at a pilot level, then they will pick up part of the portal level and they are looking to increase TEACH by \$10 million for the first year to cover this, all of this would not go fully to TEACH for the scholarship, the extra money would go to the application and the staffing. Bob asked if we have a budget with enough detail, Lauren shared that they have planned for 87 additional full-time positions that have been budgeted down to benefits.

Erin shared that we are trying to get Help Me Grow to be the front runner for early screening for autism and communication delay and that we are trying to get this program into proposals.

Claudia asked for clarification on why the Center is desired and Erin shared that anyone is able to get a certification in just about anything from just about anywhere but when professionals go to turn that certification in for credit they find out that it is not an approved class so those professionals cannot get credit for it. The Center provides a one stop shop, so to speak, so that all credentialing is tested and awarded in one place, and it is also saved in the same database, so it is more easily accessible.

Partner Update:

Bill shared that Tennessee called TF and wanted to talk about forming a portal contract with us and we negotiated and executed it and that our goal is to bring other states on

as well. Lori shared that they wanted to start with Wages because it was a little simpler, then they would pick up TEACH. This could potentially be a 3–7-year project. Bill shared that whatever solution they had would continue our contracts with them.

Mellisa shared that we were awarded a \$500,00 grant from JP Morgan after about 6 months of waiting for approval with half up front and half in the middle of the contract. CLASS and Workforce will overlap with this grant.

Erin shared that we have a great connection with the Florida Chamber Foundation and that their new Director of Early Learning and Literacy, Makayla Buchanan, and her have formed a great professional relationship and they are speaking at FLAEYC next week about why businesses should care about early learning. They have also asked Erin to speak at their conference in two weeks in Orlando on the same subject.

Ted asked for clarification on our “intellectual property” that we have in the portals that are being built with other states. Bill shared all the precautions they are taking and some of the language being used in the contracts to protect us from any of our work being able to be taken from us.

Jessica Cherry shared that she is working on a Forum wide salary review to see how other non-profit organizations structure their salaries. She shared that we are paying about 12-15% more than what other non-profits are paying their teams. We are paying 12-28% less for the C-Suite, currently we are comfortable with this pay structure. She is also working on getting insurance for our out-of-town employees so that we can sponsor a plan for them and move away from giving them a stipend for Healthcare Marketplace.

We are working on cyber security insurance. Next week we are scheduled to have our mediation for the Chelsea Lister Case, our insurance deductible has been met for this so anything that is settled in court will be paid for by our insurance company.

Denise shared that now that she is Chief of Staff she is looking into how we can integrate all our programs, projects, and departments into one unified Forum. She shared that she is working to increase communication amongst all the programs, she is also looking into where cross-training can happen so that some departments can share the workload with others who may not have as much going on. Her goal is to get a good view of all contracts and deliverables so that our fiscal and IT teams have a better idea of what is happening and when because those two teams have a hand in everything we do. Another area Denise is examining is the full operating costs of each of

our programs and leadership training for our staff to have the resources to grow and develop in different areas.

Bob asked if HMG was still a Parent Referral program Denise answered that is designed to be a system that connects families to resources, and there is a case management aspect that is to maintain contact with the families to make sure they have the resources they need while they are getting services and also while they are waiting for them.

Bob suggested that we hire someone to help advertise this and find a better way to describe it quickly. Erin clarified that the case management part of HMG sets us apart. People think that HMG could be duplicating services but that is because so many programs do assessments, but HMG is has continuity of care, coordination for assessments and services which other programs do not have.

Ted shared that he worked with HMG and that he resonated with the word "system" as opposed to "program." He asked for clarification on what screen tools are used, how it was used, and how it would be shared. Erin answered that there is a screening tool we use is ASQ and will use School Readiness as the pilot for this and it will integrate SoCo checkup (9-24mo), CBCL would be an addition to ASQ and not a replacement. This ASQ screener is from the CDC, the recommendation is to use both.

Erin updated that the chamber is opening an account for childcare relief for natural disasters. The Bainum foundation will help with the seed money for this account and the Forum will be a part of the manpower of fundraising for this account.

Lori added that they are checking in with their scholars to make sure they are still able to continue their education and that we will support them however we can. She shared that Workforce is very busy and that there have been INCENTIVE\$ staff that has been pulled over so they can help there. Three Miami folks in the Early learning career center have moved over to the Workforce team since they have many transferrable skills, they are also bilingual, so they have been able to take some pressure off our other bilingual staff members. Lori shared that we have spent 34% of our scholarship allocations. In July only we spent two million dollars in scholarships, and we added 1,000 new scholars. Our Miami registry has transitioned into a statewide registry which is really helping our TEACH team and will help with the new projects we bring on from the JP Morgan grant.

Melissa shared that we work with 19 ELC's, 16 assessments, 6 coaching, 3 of those are getting both coaching and assessments. All 19 of those ELC's have been interrupted at some point by Hurricanes Helene or Milton, 12 of which have been given the "all clear" to resume services. We have about 80 assessors in the state who are mostly contracted

and the majority of them are in the clear to resume assessments. Melissa is concerned about the psychological effects of the storms, and she is worried about how well these assessments will go. Erin shared that DEL could allow a score variance based on the weather impacts.

Lili Murphy shared that Florida After School has a contract in the works for a resilience and character-building program. In DC Lili and Erin had the chance to connect with other states on how they continue the care from early learning to after school care for older children.

Bill wanted to share the IT finished moving all the servers and that our generator is working and connected to our servers. Bill explained that our cybersecurity insurance plan should cover us in the event of a data breach. We are working on consolidating our security measures and will have a third-party come in to assess it and give us a certificate that we can present to our funders.

1:52 pm the meeting moved to Closed Executive session