



**Board of Directors Meeting
October 26, 2018
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members Present: Wil Blechman, Bob Buesing, Allison Davis, Gege Kreisler, Larry Pintacuda, Linda Stoller

Board Members Present by Phone: Claudia Davant, Chuck Hood

Board Members Absent: Chris Card

Staff Present: Phyllis Kalifeh, Kerri Cloud, Denise Bishop

Welcome:

Chair Bob Buesing called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. when a quorum was attained.

Reading and Approval of Minutes:

Bob asked for additions or corrections to the minutes of the July 13, 2018 meeting. Hearing no changes, Bob called for a motion to approve the minutes as written. The minutes were approved (M/S; Pintacuda/Stollar); motion carried.

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

Phyllis thanked Wil for his presentation at the Forum PD conference on Brain Development in Early Childhood and shared that it was very well received by the staff and management.

Bob discussed the Ready Nation conference he attended in NYC. It is held every two years and is comprised of business leaders from around the country and has primarily an economic development focus. He shared that there is a pervasive interest in issues related to early learning.

Chair's Report

Bob discussed his experience at the "Talk, Read, Sing" conference and shared that one of the keynote speakers, John Pepper of Proctor and Gamble, made a strong pitch for starting any initiative at a regional level and then scaling up as appropriate. Bob encouraged other board members to consider this strategy across Florida because the state is essentially represented by

many regional communities with varying needs and resources. Bob said that Palm Beach has been an exemplar for the Hillsborough community, and that Hillsborough County has also partnered with Pinellas County on some early learning projects.

Gege talked about her recent experience at the “Learn and Play Tampa Bay” event held at the Glaser Museum. Gege shared that she realized quickly that she was the only member of their Board of Directors who had any early learning background. Bob and Gege both talked issues related to early compensation, and about how challenging it is to get wage supplement programs implemented. Competition from companies with \$15 starting hourly rates make it difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff in early care and education programs. Members of the Board discussed the importance of “messaging” with the general public. Communities need to understand the importance of early education to society. Discussion on this topic continued later in the meeting.

Wil asked about the use of local media to expand outreach. He discussed using television, radio, print, and social media. This led to an extended discussion about the ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey).

Phyllis talked about her recent presentation to the Business Partners in Broward County. It was also very well received.

Larry asked about the strategic messaging that the Forum does to communicate our mission, programs, and activities. They discussed the Forum Newsletter that goes out quarterly, and working toward increasing our presence by maximizing opportunities to “cross pollinate” with organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce emphasizing a “cradle to career” focus.

Wil asked if anyone knew when the video No Small Matters would be released. The video emphasizes the importance of early brain development and will be an effective general public outreach tool.

Bob said that he was looking forward to an upcoming opportunity he has to speak to the Tampa Mayoral candidates about early learning. In addition, Bob shared data from Kids Count comparing Hillsborough County to the State data. He shared that data for other counties are available. Wil commented that we are having a difficult time addressing the issues of academic proficiency and graduation rates, and Chuck added that state colleges are spending significant resources to offer remedial courses for students entering the programs.

Bob discussed the new role that the University of South Florida (USF) has doing research in early learning and child development, making them a national player in the development of policy and practice within the field. The center is called the Right Path Center and it includes nine research professors. Bob has encouraged them to use Hillsborough County as a research laboratory. Larry asked if a representative from the Center could provide a presentation to the Forum Board and the Board could in turn, invite OEL to the meeting. Bob said he would inquire about the possibility of a presentation.

Finance Committee: Kerri Cloud, CFO; Allison Davis, CPA

- **Financial Statements:**

Allison shared that the cash balance was currently low because of a large reimbursement for T.E.A.C.H. in June, and that it is the cyclical nature of the contracts that causes the shifts in balance. On December 1, 2018, Pinellas County is launching their WAGES program. Recipients will be targeted by zip code addressing the needs of at-risk communities specifically.

Kerri and Allison both discussed the challenges inherent in cost-reimbursement contracts, which describe most of the contracts the Forum currently holds.

- **Budget 2018-19**

The Forum has a \$4.6M total operating budget. Kerri walked the Board members through the budget report. Phyllis talked about the Kindergarten Transition Summits that were included in the budget under *Other Forum Activities*.

Potential funding sources for the Florida Early Learning Disaster Relief (FEDLR) collaboration initiative were discussed; consideration was given to requesting support from OEL to assist with the administrative work associated with the collaborative. There was also discussion about expanding partnerships to include the private business sector. This will be discussed in more detail under New Business.

Motion to approve the Budget (M/S; Blechman/ Pintacuda). The current Budget Report was approved by the members.

- **CEO Travel & Expense Report:**

Motion to approve the financial statements and the CEO Travel and Expense report and the motion was seconded (M/S: Stoller/ Pintacuda). The current CEO Travel & Expense Report was approved by the members and signed by the Chair (attached).

Board Discussion: (Potential sale of the office building)

The issue of sale of the building at 2807 Remington Green Circle, Tallahassee, FL 32308 was brought up for extended discussion. Allison Davis led the discussion. The primary focus was to explore whether it was more financially beneficial to buy, sell, or lease the office space required to support all Forum staff (based in Tallahassee) within one building. Chuck asked for an estimate to renovate the building, and given the amount of work that would need to be completed, it seemed cost prohibitive. Chuck then suggested exploring the idea of creating a for-profit corporation that could purchase either the existing building or another building if the 2807 Remington Green sold, and then lease the building to the Children's Forum. Kerri shared that most of our continuing contracts prefer to pay a monthly lease than to negotiate depreciate and cost associated with the Forum's ownership of the office building. Following so discussion, it was determined that a subcommittee (Chuck, Kerri, and Allison) should be formed that would examine all of the legal and financial aspects of each real estate possibility. Phyllis suggested that we would need a building at least 16,000 sf to accommodate all staff and programs under

one roof. With the Boards' approval, Phyllis will sign a contract with Woodham Commercial Real Estate to list the building at 2807 Remington Green Circle for sale (M/S; Pintacuda/ Blechman).

President's Report: Phyllis Kalifeh

Phyllis asked board members to complete the conflict of interest forms for this year.

- **Strategic Plan Progress:**

Phyllis facilitated a review of the strategic plan including modifications made at the executive leadership meeting in September 2018. A motion was made to approve the modifications made to the plan and to adopt the plan with prior approval to make minor edits.

Wil asked if there was a way for us to emphasize our focus on children from prenatal to five years. He is concerned that the repeated reference to children may suggest kindergarten through elementary school. He suggested that we insert new language: "Children from birth (or prenatal) to five and afterschool."

- **Legislative Report:**

Phyllis described the Children's Forum participation in the Early Learning Consortium, which is responsible for developing a cohesive, unified list of policy priorities for the early learning field. One of the priorities listed was an increase in funding to \$4.5M for Help Me Grow (HMG); this would allow HMG to be implemented statewide. In addition, there was a recommendation to continue T.E.A.C.H. funding at \$10M. Given that there is a substantial increase in CCDBG funding, there is potential for significant resources to be available throughout the state. Larry stated that since we were scheduled for a regular session (rather than early) this year, we would have some time to provide education about early learning issues to the new members of the legislature. He suggested that Claudia try to get Phyllis added to the Governor's early learning transition team.

- **Summary:**

In closing, Phyllis talked about the Shared Services Partnership between the Children's Forum and FLAEYC that runs through January 31, 2019. The FLAEYC conference that was held in September was a great success. Gege shared her insight and experiences related to the conference, and FLAEYC in general. She shared that Heather Siskind is coming on board as the president of the association and that there is optimism around her leadership potential. The association is encouraging qualified parties to run for positions on the board, and that there is a push to have more appointed positions as well. Phyllis said she is committed to the work for FLAEYC because she wants to see the association succeed for the benefit of the state.

New Business:

Florida Early Learning Disaster Relief (FELDR):

Phyllis went into more detail about the relief effort the Forum has coordinated to address the significant needs in the Panhandle. Currently, the focus is on marketing, partnerships, and financing the initiative. Phyllis guided the board through the website and encouraged them to explore it individually when they have an opportunity.

Wil shared his experience with Hurricane Andrew in 1992, which wiped out the early learning workforce in Miami-Dade. At that time, Kiwanis worked with MDC to create new and dynamic ways to educate the workforce. He highly recommended working with the community and state colleges in the affected regions. Wil said he would be happy to pursue support from the Kiwanis for the Panhandle as well. Linda added that she is concerned with the lack of attention the hurricane has in the current media cycle. Gege shared that following Hurricane Andrew, they created “packaged classrooms” for those centers that were affected and needed to get up and running again quickly. She suggested that communities develop written plans for recovery following this kind of a natural disaster.

Bob said we should look for foundation opportunities to support the funding. Since we are depending on the Children’s Forum tax exempt status, we will keep FELDR on CF financials.

Review of Personnel Policies:

The board members indicated they had reviewed the policies. There was a motion to accept the revised personnel policies and all approved. (M/S; Pintacuda/Blechman).

Before moving to the closed executive session, Wil brought up the need to communicate the importance of the early years to the broader public. Further discussion centered on developing a process to bring groups together who could generate outreach ideas. While the Forum is a leader in this process, unrestricted funds are limited. The EL Consortium may be a strong ally in expanding the message. Children’s Week was suggested as a venue for outreach, and there was further discussion about coordinating showing of the video “No Small Matter.” Other ideas for outreach included creating a public awareness campaign that might include public and local radio (i.e., EL Minute on NPR). The Forum would need funding to support the campaign, but Bob indicated that he would reach out to the Business Alliance to see if they could support it. It was also suggested that the Forum create more Impact Briefs to disseminate to the legislature and other key stakeholders. Wil closed by referencing the Ready Nation work. He said that Susan Watson contacted him (via Kiwanis) and they developed children’s reading centers for laundromats. He said the average cost was about \$200 per center and he would be happy to send more information about the project; it might be a viable option for the panhandle region.

Closed Executive Session

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Pintacuda
Secretary

Denise Bishop
Recording



Signature of Secretary

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

Minutes Approved (date)



Signature of President

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

Minutes Approved (date)