

Florida Humanities Council  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Friday, May 18, 2018  
Riverside Hotel – Fort Lauderdale

## **MINUTES**

Present: Casey Fletcher (Chair), Wayne Adkisson, Juan Bendeck, Frank Biafora, Kurt Browning, Peggy Bulger, Jose Garcia-Pedrosa, Joe Harbaugh, Bud Park, Nancy Poulson, Sandy Rief, Audrey Ring, Michael Urette, Glenda Walters, Steve Seibert, Barbara Bahr, Laurie Berlin, and Patricia Putman

Guest: Lena Juarez

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Chairman Fletcher called the meeting to order and began with a moment of remembrance for Tom Lang. **Later in the meeting, Fletcher requested a motion to approve the February 2018 Board Meeting Minutes. Kurt Browning moved, Sandy Reif seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

### **The Great American Read**

We watched the video promo for the upcoming nationwide PBS series The Great American Read. Patricia Putman noted that FHC & the Florida Library Association are collaborating in some of the promotional efforts and encouraged members to both participate in and evaluate the episodes. She also announced that FHC is making small grants available to Florida Libraries that are interested in developing local programming in conjunction with series.

### **FHC Treasurer**

**Fletcher announced that upon being asked, Sandy Rief has agreed to serve out the remainder of Tom Lang's term as Treasurer. Fletcher requested a motion, Browning moved, Nancy Poulson seconded and the vote carried unanimously.**

### **Corporate Documents**

Steve Seibert gave an update of the internal documents he has been working on with staff and board members. He plans to have final drafts ready to share with the Board in September.

- 1) Employee Manual – Updating FHC's sexual harassment, whistle-blower, conflict-of-interest and social media policies.
- 2) Office Lease – Conversations with USF have begun
- 3) Bylaws – Tom Lang had been consulting with FHC on the bylaws. Jose Garcia-Pedrosa has generously agreed help move us forward.
- 4) Sunshine – Working on the revision/deletion of the Sunshine section of the bylaws

Bylaws Discussion – Is 25 the right number of members for the FHC Board? Should we have more emeritus members? Tighten/clarify the language about emeritus terms of service and procedures about addressing issues pertaining to inactive members. Consider developing a trustees group.

Board Conflict of Interest Statement – Members received a Conflict of Interest disclosure statement to complete and return to staff. This document will be distributed annually for all members to update and sign.

### **Agency Reserve Fund**

Fletcher reported the Executive Committee met in April and heard a proposal from the Tampa Bay Community Foundation about the advantages of opening an Agency Reserve Fund. The initial investment is a minimum of 25K, and the management fee of only 1%. The Committee is proposing that we move to establish this investment fund with a startup amount of 25K.

Discussion: Mike Urette asked if we could open the account with more than 25K. Fletcher replied that he would like to see how the relationship goes for a bit of time before making larger deposits. Urette then noted that partnerships with community foundations are very significant and legitimatizing and will open doors for potential donors to learn about and access FHC.

**Fletcher called for a motion, Poulson moved to establish a 25K Agency Reserve Fund with the Tampa Bay Community Foundation, Joe Harbaugh seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Included in the motion was an instruction to refer the topic back to the Finance Committee to consider increasing the investment at some point and to cover administrative matters pertaining to the fund.**

### **Legislative Report**

Lena Juarez informed the board that FHC is to receive 500K from the state this fiscal year. She pointed out how remarkable this is because cultural agencies throughout the State took massive funding cuts mainly due to the Parkland tragedy. So much of Florida's cultural funding has been rerouted to school security measures this year.

Juarez also noted that the Governor, the entire Florida Cabinet, all house seats and half of the senate are up for election this year. The next Florida legislative session begins in March 2019 and leadership positions will not be determined until December. Juarez strongly recommends that we look to elect board members from the Bradenton and Miami areas in September.

Seibert reported on the federal budget in which the House has NEH at \$155M, a small increase over last year.

Discussion: Audrey Ring suggested we prepare and mail a post-election "dashboard" package to all legislators that includes a tailored letter of congratulations to newly and re-elected members.

### **NEH Visit & Self-Assessment**

Patricia Putman reviewed the process of the site visit and stressed the importance of attendance at the September meeting. Ring suggested that we deliver welcome packages to the evaluators prior to their arrival. The package could include an Executive Summary, board bios, vision/mission statement, and FHC talking points.

## Steve Seibert's Three Buckets

### THE LIST

- What does the FHC do?  
*We provide access to the humanities...through our partners*
- How do we do it?  
*Our work can be explained by imagining three "buckets of activities:*
  - 1) Grants
  - 2) Special initiatives
  - 3) Templated programs
- Principles guiding our programming:
  - 1) Florida-focused
  - 2) Prioritized support for small to mid-sized organizations
  - 3) Assures humanities content

### REVIEW

#### Financials:

2 Million Dollar Budget

- 1.4 Million in Federal
- 500K in State
- 100K-150K in Other

Our **most effective work** is through partnerships rather than Council-conducted programming.

### DISCUSSION

- Important to focus on small/medium sized rural areas
- Rural programming is good for FHC's legislative legacy
- So what?
- If we cannot measure it, we cannot manage it. Do the most good in a measurable fashion
- We have a role in making Florida better for the future. Bring people together to talk to one and other
- Do we undervalue our worth and products by overworking measurements?
- Qualitative/quantitative. Judgement evaluations as results.

Frank Biafora recommended that we contact *Presence*, a company founded by USF graduate Reuben Pressman that develops strategies and methods for universities and colleges to increase student engagement. The company develops real-time polling and measurement instruments for academic institutions. **Bud Park moved that FHC go forward with contacting *Presence* to see if they can assist the Council with some of the measurement and engagement issues we confront. Harbaugh seconded Park's motion and it passed unanimously.** Following the vote, there was a suggestion that FHC conduct live tech interactions with audience members and display an FHC-logged welcome page at all programs.

### **Communications Report**

Audrey Ring reported as follows:

- 1) Members will receive a box of 100 FORUMs for distribution in their communities
- 2) There has been a 6% return on the FORUM survey (400 out of 7,000 responses)
- 3) Digital FORUM will have a soft launch in May
- 4) Visit Florida has contacted Juarez about placing FORUM at their N. Florida Welcome Centers. Barbara Bahr will coordinate.
- 5) Florida Stories rack cards are on display at the 175 Florida Welcome Center and the TDC's in Lake City, Alachua and Gainesville along with a variety of Chamber offices in Florida.
- 6) The Florida Stories App ad campaign is in print

### **Grants Report**

Joe Harbaugh reported as follows:

- 1) Board members have attended 15 programs in the past seven months with Sue Kim in attendance at nine
- 2) **Community Project Grants:** The maximum funding available for Community Project Grants is \$5,000 with an increase to \$7,500 being considered by the committee. The pilot program for Quick Grants of \$1000 will launch this summer. A move back to a two-tiered grant program is under consideration.
- 3) **Special Initiative Grants:** "100" Faces of War has three funded exhibition sites through 2020. The Great American Read series has \$3,000 "quick" grants available to libraries to develop complementary programming.
- 4) **Poetry Out Loud:** The Board viewed the FHC video promo from the statewide completion, and Patricia reported over 9,300 Florida students from 60 schools in 26 counties competed in local contests. Forty-four students participated in the statewide finals. Natalie Schiemk from Sarasota won the Florida POL competition.
- 5) **Florida Stories:** 18 tours published with nine in production. A new content management system with advanced functionality and significant cost savings was launched in the spring. We are in partnership with Visit Florida to spread the word through videos and blog posts. Flagler College has paid FHC to develop a campus tour.

### **Financial Report**

Sandy Rief presented as follows:

**The financial statements presented to the Finance Committee during a recent conference call were approved and are ready for full board consideration. Jose Garcia-Pedrosa moved approval of the financial statements, Harbaugh seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Putman reviewed the new travel and in-kind services report forms and encouraged members to report their time working on behalf of FHC.

Rief recommended board members send thank you notes to donors who live in their areas. Barbara Bahr and Danica Kelly can assist members with this.

## **Mission & Vision**

Bud Park led the discussion of the statement he drafted following the discussion at the February 2018 meeting.

### **Florida Humanities Council Draft Statement of Values**

We, the board and staff of the Florida Humanities Council, believe that...

- human beings understand and appreciate each other through words and ideas, which are the heart of the Humanities
- the Humanities are the soul of a civilized society
- the Humanities are an essential foundation for a democratic society
- the Humanities enrich life for everyone, not only the elites
- the Humanities close the gap between rapidly-accelerating knowledge and wisdom
- the Humanities give us a sense of place, a home in a complex world
- the Humanities play a crucial role in preserving, protecting, and disseminating the culture and heritage of society—for Florida, for the United States, and for the world

The wide-ranging conversation that followed Bud's presentation of the list included suggestions to rephrase, reword, delete, add to, clarify, etc. many of the of the bullet points in the document. During the course of the discussion, Ring read the text from the FORUM Magazine insert: "At the Florida Humanities Council, our passion is preserving and promoting the history, culture, literature, and personal stories that together create a sense of place that is Florida." The Board appeared to embrace this language and the conversation wound down with the understanding that setting the mission and values is an ongoing and fluid process and there is more work to do.

## **2018 Board Nominations**

Fletcher and Seibert reported on board recruitment and FHC's current needs:

- Regionally we are looking for members from Jacksonville, Bradenton, Miami, St. Augustine and Gainesville
- Candidates who are steeped in knowing Florida and the Humanities
- Diversity – FHC's board must reflect the faces of Florida
- Balanced skill sets

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 and was followed by an Executive Session where a resolution to extend Steve Seibert's contract was proposed and approved. The documentation will be archived separately from these minutes.