



Board of Directors Meeting Agenda
September 23, 2023
Drury Inn & Suites St. Louis Forest Park – Jewel Room
2111 Sulphur Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63139

Missouri Humanities' mission is to enrich lives and strengthen communities by connecting Missourians with the people, places, and ideas that shape our society.

Board Members in Attendance: Petra DeWitt (Chairperson), Trish Erzfeld (Vice Chair), Sudarsan Kant, Jason Sides, Juan Meraz, Marvin Silliman, George Pettigrew, Thomas Brandom, Betty Coleman (Zoom), Marilynn Bradford (Zoom)

Staff in Attendance: Ashley Beard-Fosnow (Executive Director), Ashley Vogel (Office Coordinator), Christina Highsmith (Marketing Coordinator)

- I. Welcome** **Petra DeWitt**
- II. Call to Order** **Petra DeWitt**
 - i. Chairperson DeWitt called the meeting to order and asked all attendees to introduce themselves and their titles.
 - ii. Roll Call** **Ashley Vogel**

The roundtable introductions were accepted as the roll call. A quorum was established.
- III. Approve Agenda** **Petra DeWitt**
 - i. *Juan Meraz motioned to approve the agenda. Sudarsan Kant seconded. All in favor. The agenda was approved.*
- IV. Approve June 17th, 2023, Minutes** **Petra DeWitt**
 - i. *Thomas Brandom motioned to approve. Trish Erzfeld seconded. All in favor. The 6.17.23 Board meeting minutes were approved with no adjustments made.*
- V. Executive Director Report** **Ashley Beard-Fosnow**
 - i. Ashley Beard-Fosnow shared her screen and reviewed the highlights of Missouri Humanities' 2023 fiscal year, including attendance growth, Horizons, Emmy nominations, YouTube growth, membership growth, and the NEH Chair visit.
 - ii. Ashley BF will continue to fill out the Final FY23 outcomes until October 31. She will then send out a completed form to the Board.
 - iii. FY24 focuses are ...
 - i. Innovative programming through films.
 - 1. The City of Independence asked if Missouri Humanities would partner to host a program allowing high school and college students, and filmmakers to film 5-minute segments regarding cultural assets to drive tourism. We would come in as a funding partner at \$10,000. Ashley BF requested to move funds from the travel budget to cover the competition with the community of Independence. With Board approval, the next step for Ashley BF would be to attend the



Independence City Council meeting. George Pettigrew would like to attend this.

2. *Marvin Silliman motioned to allow Ashley Beard-Fosnow to transfer \$10,000 from "Travel Programs" to "Partnership Expenses." Thomas Brandom seconded. All in favor. Ashley Beard-Fosnow's request was approved.*

ii. Private Fundraising Growth.

1. In FY22 we raised \$67k. Fundraising in FY23 is not complete, but thus far we have a total of approximately \$84k. Ashley BF would like to eventually move these funds to the Edward Jones account to prevent confusion on how these funds were acquired in the future. Chairperson DeWitt recommended committing to moving future donations to this account as well.
2. Chairperson DeWitt clarified that these are emergency funds with no other purpose. Ashley BF clarified that we wouldn't want to make consistent withdrawals, but we are able to move the funds with some flexibility.
3. *Marvin Silliman motioned to move current and future raised funds to the Edward Jones account for the current 3-year-funding cycle. Betty Coleman seconded. All in favor. Motion approved.*
4. Marvin Silliman noted that Tony Reahr believes an organization like ours should not have the aggressive approach that we currently do.
5. *Marilynn Bradford motioned to transition our Edward Jones account's aggressive approach to a conservative approach. Betty Coleman seconded. All in favor. Motion approved. Ashley Beard-Fosnow will discuss this with our broker.*

iii. Cultural Heritage Tourism: AmeriCorps.

iv. Expanding Connections.

1. We are trying to increase awareness of our organization, encourage people to attend events, and convert attendees to members/subscribers.

iv. Ashley BF reminded the Board that these reports are also delivered on a monthly basis in emails.

v. **Programs Update**

Lisa Carrico

- i. Lisa Carrico represented MH as the Library Center for the Book Missouri Affiliate and participated in the National Book Festival. Our two 2023 Great Reads from Great Places are *The Rhino Suit* by Colter Jackson and *The Last Children of Mill Creek* by Vivian Gibson.
- ii. Lisa continues to work towards the Heartland Book Festival in partnership with the Kansas City Public Library. We are currently 6 days away from the



event. Both of our Great Reads from Great Authors will be presenting. A Missouri Humanities table will be present.

- iii. On October 11, Missouri Humanities will be supporting a discussion with Jane Smiley. Early November will focus on Hunt, Fish, Gather. The Military Trails program is going strong and there is a high demand for coins. We are planning for our 2024 Signature Series: Missouri Marvels.

vi. Digital Marketing Update

Christina Highsmith

- i. Christina Highsmith shared a few graphs showing social media statistics.
- ii. Our ad trends by paid reach and paid impressions are currently up 100%. She shared social media new likes and follows on Facebook and Instagram. Our current audience on FB is around 12,659, a large majority of these users are women 65+. Our current Instagram audience is 1,142 and includes more men and middle-aged users than FB. Most people engaging without content are from KC, St. Louis, and Springfield.
- iii. She presented a graph displaying how the majority of people get their news. We are really interested in creating more short-form videos in combination with long-form videos, mobile optimization, quality over quantity, inbound marketing/SEO.
- iv. Sudarsan Kant asked if there is a plan to develop a MH app. There is not currently, but it is a good idea. Christina clarified that we will use the same platforms, but will adjust our wording to target different groups.

V. Committees –

Petra DeWitt

vii. Advocacy

Ashley Beard-Fosnow

- i. Ashley Beard-Fosnow provided two new pieces of information.
- ii. Senator Caleb Rowden appointed Senator Tracy McCreery to serve on the MH council Trust Fund Board.
- iii. Speaker of the House Dean Plocher appointed Representative Bruce Sassman to serve on the MH Council Trust Fund Board.
- iv. In addition to Treasurer Vivik Malek and MH Treasurer Peter Hofherr, the Trust Fund has 4 members. There can be up to 9 members on the Trust Fund. Ashley BF noted that although there are rumors of who else may be appointed, no other members have been confirmed. The treasurer, Peter Hofherr, would hold these meetings.
- v. Marvin noted he would like to serve on this Board if possible. Ashley BF will review the language if members on the Trust Fund Board would need to be actively-serving Executive Committee Board members.

viii. Finance

Trish Erzfeld

a. Financial Report

Trish Erzfeld



- a. During the month of August, cash increased and was \$728,062. The Edward Jones Investment account decreased. Our current ratio is 15.8. Our year-to-date programming expense was 78% as of the end of August. Our total assets were \$5,069,499. Total current liabilities were \$284,987.
- b. Ashley pointed out that “Travel Funds” is under-budget and is where money is being transferred to “Partnership Expenses.” Several items are under budget because they are set to be paid out near the end of the fiscal year. To summarize, we are in a great financial position.

b. 2024 Budget

- a. This document has been discussed previously in the budget workshop and in EC meetings.
- b. *Juan Meraz motioned to approve the 2024 3-year budget. Thomas Brandom seconded. All in favor. The 2024 3-year budget was approved.*
- c. Trish Erzfeld and Chairperson DeWitt believe it might prove beneficial to still meet regarding a yearly budget to ensure we’re on track, but it could be a shorter meeting combined with a general Board meeting.

ix. Grants

Betty Coleman

- i. MH had 230k grant funding to award. The Executive Committee approved moving \$17,007 to pay the partially-funded grants.
- ii. The total amount awarded was \$247,007. 26 were fully funded, 5 were partially funded, and 25 were denied.
- iii. We funded a total of 99 grants this year. The new software, Foundant, is working fantastically, though we are looking to optimize the process.
- iv. Oftentimes, the grants denied funding are due to them being better suited for the Arts Council.

x. Soul of the State Initiative

Jason Sides

- i. Jason Sides is still speaking with others regarding the focus groups. One potential partner is confirmed, but the other is still working through some details.

VII. Old Business

Petra DeWitt

i. Legal Issue for Closed Session*

Ashley Beard-Fosnow

- a. *Thomas Brandom motioned to enter a closed session. Trish Erzfeld seconded. A roll call vote was conducted. The following voted in the affirmative by roll call vote: Chairperson DeWitt, Trish Erzfeld, Marilyn Bradford, Thomas Brandom, Betty Coleman, Dr. Sudarsan Kant, Dr. Jason Sides, Marvin Silliman, Dr. Juan Meraz, George Pettigrew. None opposed.*

- i. The Board of Directors moved into closed session.*



b. *Thomas Brandom motioned to leave closed session. Betty Coleman seconded. A roll call vote was conducted. The following voted in the affirmative by roll call vote: Chairperson DeWitt, Trish Erzfeld, Marilynn Bradford, Thomas Brandom, Betty Coleman, Dr. Sudarsan Kant, Dr. Jason Sides, Marvin Silliman, Dr. Juan Meraz, George Pettigrew. None opposed.*

i. *The Board of Directors returned to open session.*

VII. New Business

Petra DeWitt

ii. Election of Officers

Marilynn Bradford

- a. Chairperson DeWitt unfortunately must resign from the Board of Directors due to outside commitments. She established a Nomination Committee chaired by Marilynn Bradford and consisting of Marci Bennett, Betty Coleman, and Nicholas Inman.
- b. The Nominating Committee met and created a potential slate of officers:
- i. Trish Erzfeld as Chair. Jason Sides as Vice Chair. Peter Hofherr as Treasurer. Nicholas Inman as Secretary.
 - ii. *Thomas Brandom moved to approve the slate of officers as presented. Jason Sides seconded. All in favor. None opposed. The slate of officers was approved as presented.*

VIII. Adjourn

Petra DeWitt

i. *Trish Erzfeld motioned to adjourn. Marvin Silliman seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Meeting adjourned at 12:53 PM.*

Next Board Meeting – December 9, Cape Girardeau

Missouri Humanities is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: 9.23.23 Board of Directors Meeting

Time: Sep 23, 2023 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84258403519?pwd=MGIJc3dIK2lxVGo3VXU1dFhMZ2l0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 842 5840 3519

Passcode: 456447

**This portion of the meeting may be closed if such action is approved by a majority vote of members who constitute a quorum, under Section 610.021 RSMo.*