



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

June 22, 2024

Mark Twain Museum & Gallery • 120 North Main Street, Hannibal, MO

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: Trish Erzfeld (Chairperson), Jason Sides (Vice Chair), Juan Meraz, Betty Coleman, Nicholas Inman (Secretary), Marci Bennett (Virtual), George Pettigrew, Alicia Starr, Peter Hofherr, Sudarsan Kant (virtual), John Robinson III (Treasurer)

Board Members Absent: Marilynn Bradford

Staff Members in Attendance: Ashley Beard-Fosnow (Executive Director), Ashley Vogel (Office Coordinator), Nick Lopez (Program Coordinator), Caitlin Yager (Program Director), Claire Bruntrager (Director of Development)

- I. **Welcome Guests, Board Members, and Staff** **Trish Erzfeld**
- II. **Call to Order** **Trish Erzfeld**
- III. **Roll Call** **Ashley Vogel**
 - i. *Ashley Vogel conducted Roll Call. A quorum was established.*
- IV. **Approve Agenda** **Trish Erzfeld**
 - i. Chairperson Trish Erzfeld requested to add two items under New Business:
 - Nomination of a Board Candidate
 - Overview of the Trust Fund Committee
 - ii. *John Robinson motioned to approve the agenda with the requested amendments. Betty Coleman seconded. All in favor. The agenda was amended.*
- V. **Approve March 26, 2024 Minutes** **Trish Erzfeld**
 - i. *Marci Bennett motioned to approve the March 26, 2024 minutes. John Robinson seconded. All in favor. The March 26, 2024 minutes were approved with no adjustments being made.*
- VI. **Executive Director Report** **Ashley Beard-Fosnow**
 - i. Ashley Beard-Fosnow shared a presentation and provided an overview of the annual report. She referred to our four strategic objectives: Promote Cultural Heritage, Expand Connections, Innovative Programs, and Operational Effectiveness.
 - Cultural Heritage: In September, Chris Kempke will attend the Board meeting to give an update on our AmeriCorps Program. We also offer the Horizons Program. We are trying to market and get Missourians to recognize Missouri Humanities as a keystone in the humanities throughout the state.
 - Expanding Connections: We expand connections through the magazine, advocacy, and through our MO Speakers Bureau Program, and our Traveling Exhibits.



- ii. We are currently spending down operating grants for 2019. Last year in the budget workshop, the Board decided what initiative/program would be implemented to draw down those funds. They identified a documentary in partnership with Cat Neville. Ashley BF shared a trailer for the documentary. George Pettigrew asked if we are attaching any message to the documentary to encourage people to visit Missouri.
- iii. Ashley BF presented a stack of flyers that Board members are invited to take home to help share the work MH is doing. She also drew attention to a list of upcoming events.
- iv. One of the biggest ways we fundraise is through our Membership Program. Another way is through Board Friendraisers. Another major way we fundraise is through our Gala.

v. **Speakers Bureau & Traveling Exhibits**

Nick Lopez

- Nick Lopez presented updates on the Speaker's Bureau. There were 115 completed presentations in 2023. The application for the 2025-2026 cycle is about to close. Nick noted that there will be several changes to the program. The program will now run by the Calendar year. Our underwritten programs will increase to 5 from 4, and the number of speakers in the program will decrease. There is a new tracker called Formstack. George Pettigrew listened to the Buffalo Soldiers and attended 3 Speaker's Bureau programs. He noted that the emphasis on presenting to smaller communities is welcomed.
- The Museum on Main Street Crossroads Exhibit closed in Kearny. Overall Exhibit attendance was estimated at 16,807. The next exhibit will be Voices and Votes: Democracy in America. He revealed the new Partner Host Sites and discussed the opportunities available to the partner sites.

vi. **Digital Programs**

Caitlin Yager

- Caitlin Yager explained MH will be working on multiple Signature Series-theme videos. We are working on a film in KC with Gene Chavez to highlight the Latino culture on the west side of the state. We have 3 episodes of our Missouri Marvels Podcast out now. Michael Saldivar and Caitlin are traveling to film for Small Town Showcase.
- Humanities Tv launched in December 2023. One of the goals was to have 300 subscribers by the end of the year. It's June and there are over 807 subscribers. There are 59 videos total on Humanities Tv. She asked to get 100% Board participation by the end of the year by subscribing. The goal of videos on the platform is 100. MH is planning on nominating H-Tv for the Schwartz Prize at the National Humanities Conference.



- Our 2025 Signature Series is called Missouri Voices: Citizens & Civics. They are working on a documentary on Women in the Supreme Court. George asked if we are working with other organizations – Caitlin noted that it has a lot to do with their capacity. Caitlin clarified that while other Humanities Councils have digital programs, Humanities Tv is unique and an innovative program. Peter Hofherr asked if Caitlin has considered traveling and teaching other states about this. She hopes that presenting at the National Humanities Conference will be a start.

vii. Development & Gala

Claire Bruntrager

- Claire Bruntrager passed out a 1-pager of information for the Gala and two invitations. Most of our advertising and promotion are online. We are no longer mailing invitations. The auction will be on One Cause. This year's event is at the St. Louis Planetarium. A star show is included at the event. This year we will have light music and oral presentations, but most of the event will be focused on mingling. Tickets are \$100 due to venue costs. The goal is to raise \$30,000 this year. Claire noted the current sponsorships-equaling \$12,500. We are looking for higher-value auction items, such as Air BnB stays, vacation agencies, etc. The gala raises money through sponsorships, ticket sales, donations, and the silent auction and wine pull.
- Ashley BF asked if there are any Awards the Board may want to present this year. Peter offered to ask Kyna Iman for suggestions. Marci noted that Lincoln Hough would be great. Peter noted County Commissions and others who have a huge impact on our work. Marci asked about giving a Partnership Award and giving it to Steven Foutes.

1. Peter Hofherr made a motion to present a Partnership Award to Steven Foutes at the Gala. John Robinson seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

VII. Committees

Trish Erzfeld

viii. Advocacy

Marci Bennett

- We will be working towards advocacy with legislators. With the Trust Fund Committee, we are building a strong network. We'll be setting a date for Advocacy Day soon.
- Peter Hofherr noted it might be nice if the legislative tour could include a Humanities stop for the Board and Staff to interact with legislators.

ix. Finance

John Robinson

- **Financial Report**



1. John Robinson reviewed the May financials. During the month of May 2024, cash increased by \$292,735, leaving an ending cash balance of \$770,009. The increase in cash is from Missouri grant funds received.
2. The grants payable balance is \$177,745 as of May 2024. The current ratio is 7.55:1 as of the end of the month, representing a healthy ability to cover current liabilities as they come due. The percentage of YTD programming expenses is 85%.

x. Grants

Betty Coleman

● **May Mini Grants**

1. Betty noted that Marvin Silliman was brought back onto the Grants Committee. He is excellent at his role and is doing well.
2. The total amount applied for is \$190,940. The total recommended funding for this round was \$108,800.23. 43 applications were submitted. The committee recommended fully funding 27, partially funding 1, and rejecting 15 applications.

xi. Center for the Book

Nicholas Inman

- Two Kansas City-based authors have had their novels chosen for the Great Reads from Great Places: *Mexikid* by Pedro Martin and *Bindle Punk Bruja* by Desideria Mesa.

VII. Old Business

Trish Erzfeld

VIII. New Business

Trish Erzfeld

i. Nomination of Board Candidate

Trish Erzfeld

- There is a nomination for a new Board member: Dawn Smith-Popielski. Ashley BF reviewed her resume and CV. Ashley BF noted about her cost accounting and network.
- Nicholas Inman motioned to approve the Board recommendation. Juan Meraz seconded. All in favor. Dawn Smith-Popielski was accepted as a Board member.
- Ashley BF noted a few other individuals who may be good to recommend to the Board.

ii. Overview of Trust Fund Committee

Trish Erzfeld

- Chairperson Erzfeld discussed the Trust Fund meeting that occurred in April 2024. She noted all in attendance and provided an overview of what was discussed during the meeting. They decided to pursue 2 years' worth of revenue maintained in the Trust. Marilyn Bradford recommended the fund maintain a balance of 2 years' worth of operating expenses that should not be depleted. The Missouri Trust Fund Board of Trustees elected Chairperson Trish Erzfeld as their chair.



iii. FY25 Budget Planning Discussion

Ashley Beard-Fosnow

- In House Bill 12 the Missouri Humanities Council Trust Fund is set to receive \$5,101,667. This is a significantly higher amount than our current budget of 2 million. She asked the Board how we should strategically use the budget. If the budget is signed by the Governor, these funds will be distributed before the Board Budget workshop occurs in August.
- Ashley BF noted that our goals for this budget are to align with strategic objectives, build our profile statewide, make useful investments, and not tie us to excess spending or an unsustainable amount of work. Ashley BF shared a brainstorming sheet of potential expenditures.
- Marci asked if the Arts Council and other establishments are encountering this situation. Ashley BF reviewed the appropriations of the A&E revenue.
- Peter noted that if we review the strategic plan, there's not an organizing factor. He believes using the organizing factor for the strategic plan would be a good idea. Marci suggested Board members review the list and note the top five selections they believe correlate to our Strategic Plan. Peter explained economics and the foundation of execution. Betty noted we could have an emergency Board meeting via Zoom to discuss this. She believes this is a good opportunity for staff to evaluate and align these ideas with MH's major goals. A discussion followed.
- Peter would love for the ED to express a vision for how this money and these pillars will be engaged throughout Missouri. George noted support for putting this money towards Grants. He noted that spending that money on marketing would create a bubble and would not provide good ROI. He expressed curiosity about equipment and staff support.
- Jason Sides expressed concerns about bringing in keynote speakers who may represent Missouri Humanities in an unapproved manner. Nicholas Inman noted that he deals with high-profile speakers all the time, and they give the same speeches all over the country and we can request a copy of the speech before their talk. Betty believes that our Speakers Bureau speakers have been carefully vetted. Ashley BF clarified that MH is open to other speakers - Jon Meacham was an example recommended by Howard Fisk. Claire and Caitlin noted that they'd been brainstorming speakers for the Gala for years. Caitlyn noted that we've had and promoted speakers throughout the existence of MH, but having a big-name speaker has the opportunity to bring attention and awareness to MH. Claire noted that we can avoid issues by viewing each speaker's previous presentations. It was noted that due to time constraints, the executive committee or the staff



should be able to proceed with the items outlined that fall within our current strategic objectives. Chairperson Erzfeld suggested that we think more about the ideas provided.

~~iv. Closed Session for Personnel & Contract Issues* Ashley Beard Fosnow~~

IX. Adjourn

Trish Erzfeld

- Due to time constraints, Chairperson Erzfeld entertained a motion to adjourn and forgo the closed session.
- *Nicholas Inman motioned to Adjourn. Juan Meraz seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 1:07 PM.*

Board Budget Workshop: August 6, 2023

Next Board Meeting: September 21, 2024, in St. Louis, MO (before MOmentum Gala)

Missouri Humanities is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: 6.22.24 Full Board of Directors Meeting

Time: Jun 22, 2024 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82297411182?pwd=VFhOdTJRUE0xMGJRVIJdGM5N0s1UT09>

Meeting ID: 822 9741 1182

Passcode: 852913