**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**June 14, 2025**

**Catalyst Center 508 N. Main Street Perryville MO 63775**

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), John Robinson III (Treasurer), Juan Meraz, Betty Coleman, Dawn Smith-Popielski, Jason Sides (Secretary),

**Board Members Attending Virtually:** Marci Bennett, Peter Hofherr, George Pettigrew, Marilynn Bradford, Sudarsan Kant

**Board Members Absent:** Alicia Starr

**Staff Members in Attendance**: Ashley Beard-Fosnow (Executive Director), Ashley Vogel (Creative Initiatives Coordinator), Chrissy Sommer (Community Engagement Director), Kaija Laney (Operations Coordinator)

**Welcome Guests, Board Members, and Staff** **Trish Erzfeld**

1. **Call to Order** **Trish Erzfeld**
2. **Roll Call** **Ashley Vogel**
	1. Ashley Vogel conducted roll call. A quorum was established.
3. **Approve Agenda** **Trish Erzfeld**
	1. *John Robinson motioned to approve. Juan Meraz seconded. All in favor. The agenda was approved with no adjustments being made.*
4. **Approve March 12, 2025, Minutes**  **Trish Erzfeld**
	1. *Dawn Smith-Popielski motioned to approve. Juan Meraz seconded. All in favor. The minutes were approved with no adjustments being made.*
5. **Strategic Planning Betty Coleman**
	1. Betty Coleman discussed feedback of the Mission Statement and asked Board members to have this document with them. Betty Coleman asked Board members to assess which mission statement was their preferred one out of the four presented. She asked that they do not tweak or change statements.
	2. The votes were as follows:
		* 1: 2
		* 2: 3
		* 3: 5
		* 4: 0
	3. The third option was selected for the new mission statement. Betty also asked for preferences between two vision statements. The number of votes were as follows:
		* 1 (No change): 6
		* 2: 5
	4. Betty suggested going back to the objectives already present in our strategic plans. She asked Board members to assess each objective with the following question: are we going to keep the objective, tweak the objective, or trash the objective?
6. **Executive Director Report** **Ashley Beard-Fosnow**
	1. Ashley Beard-Fosnow touched upon the termination of MH’s NEH grant. As a result, in May the Executive Committee decided to suspend the August Grants cycle. Ashley BF touched upon our 12-month development plan. Ashley BF asked Board members to bring their Board Manual Binder with them to the August budget workshop. She discussed 21-26 Strategic Objectives and how our programs align with MH goals. Ashley BF shared 3 Big Ideas from 8.15.23, including Films, Private Fundraising, and Capacity Building, with a priority of Marketing to make them all happen. She reviewed FY25 Budget Amendment Goals from 8.6.24 and the FY25 budget. Betty will review the Strategic Plan in September, and Ashley BF noted that refocusing on Operational Effectiveness might be an opportunity to refresh and clean up processes.
	2. Ashley BF shared the Board and Stakeholder Survey results. Mini and Major grants received the highest rating for both the Board and Stakeholder.
	3. Ashley BF discussed cash flow issues due to the timing of our state award and our FY25 obligations. She presented the title and verbiage for the 2026 Signature Series – The Story of Us.
	4. Ashley BF updated the Board on AmeriCorps, noting that there are delays that impact this programming opportunity. She explained that the status of various ServeMO funds are uncertain.
	5. Membership  **Chrissy Sommer**
		* Chrissy Sommer shared a chart showing the history of how much money Membership May has provided since 2022. She shared the strategies used to promote Membership May. She also showcased her ongoing monthly task list for her Membership Plan.
			1. Chrissy Sommer left the meeting.
	6. Operational Duties  **Kaija Laney**
		* Kaija Laney provided an introduction and a brief background of her work. Her duties include HR, invoices, insurance, and office operations, and she functions as the point of contact for the Teachers’ Workshop in Marshfield.
	7. *John Robinson motioned to move into a closed session. Juan Meraz seconded. All in favor. The Board moved into closed session.*
		* Ashley Vogel and Kaija Laney left the meeting.
	8. NEH Funding Update
	9. State Funding Update
	10. *John Robinson motioned to leave the closed session. Dawn Smith-Popielski seconded. All in favor. The Board left the closed session.*
7. **Committees**  **Trish Erzfeld**
	1. **Finance**  **John Robinson**
		* Financial Report
			1. During the month of April 2025, cash decreased by ($450,237), leaving an ending cash balance of $344,726. Accounts receivable was $41,318 as of the end of the month. This balance consists of the NEH grant receivable. The current ratio was 2.19:1 as of the end of the month, representing a healthy ability to cover current liabilities as they come due. The percentage of YTD programming expenses was 93%.
				1. Due to the termination of the NEH Grant, MH will be using the 2026 state award of 2.38 million for operating expenses during the 2025 FY. There is no certainty about 2027 MO Trust appropriations until summer 2026. There is a chance that MH may receive some funding that was revoked. Ashley BF applied for NEH 2026 funding, though the future is uncertain.
		* FY 26 Budget in Development
		* Budget Workshop August 5th
			1. John Robinson encouraged Board members to create a list of their questions and send them to Ashley BF to discuss at the August 5th budget workshop.
			2. There will be a new Board member orientation occurring during the workshop that current Board members are welcome to attend.
	2. **Grants** **Betty Coleman**
		* May Mini Grants
			1. 61 applications were submitted. 58 applications were sent to the Grants Committee. 31 were first-time applicants. The Grant Committee recommended the full funding of 18 applications ($ 76,909.25) and partial funding of 4 applications ($8,300), for a total recommended funding of $85,209.25.
			2. The remaining money in this legislative year of $18,838.75 will be reallocated. The remaining amount for the grants budget for August Major grants is $200,000.
	3. **Advocacy** **Marci Bennett**
		* Marci Bennett was in Jefferson City during the special sessions. During this time, legislators discussed using the Arts and Entertainment Tax as a revenue source to pay off bonds. Marci believes that this may not impact MH. She commended Ashley BF for running advocacy efforts.
	4. **2025 Gala Dawn Smith-Popielski**
		* The 2025 Momentum Gala will be preceded by a Board meeting at noon. The Gala is across the street from the Board meeting location and will begin at 6 PM. We have a $10,000 sponsor and two additional $10,000-level pledges. There are multiple 5k-level sponsors. Claire Bruntrager has a donation tracker that lists all current gala donations as well as solicitation verbiage should Board members need. The total expenses for the Gala are $73,153 (including Claire’s time). The gala hopes to raise $54k, so it is a net loss of ~20k. This said, disregarding staff’s time, the Gala is the only event that breaks even on costs. Ashley BF touched upon the history of the Gala as an event and fundraiser.
		* The Board held a conversation about Lieutenant Governor Awards. The Advocacy Committee is considering the conversation, though Marci will be terming off the Board.
	5. **Missouri Center For the Book Alicia Starr**
8. **Old Business**  **Trish Erzfeld**
9. **New Business** **Trish Erzfeld**
	1. Board Nominations **Ashley Beard-Fosnow**
		* Multiple Board members will be terming off in October 2025. The Executive Committee has sent 5 names to the full Board for consideration: Allie Bennett, Crosby Kemper, Rabia Gregory, Victoria Hubbell, and William Mountz. Ashley BF shared an image showing the Board’s current geographical spread.
		* *Juan Meraz motioned to accept all candidates presented. Dawn Smith-Popielski seconded. All in favor. The five presented candidates were accepted to the Missouri Humanities Board of Directors.*
		* Chairperson Trish Erzfeld created an Ad Hoc Nomination Committee for the 2026 slate of Board Officers. Trish Erzfeld, Juan Meraz, Dawn Smith-Popielski, and Jason Sides volunteered to serve on the ad hoc committee.
	2. Ad Hoc Program Evaluation Committee **Sudarsan Kant**
		* With MH reconciling with a 46% decline in budget, Dawn, Juan, Chairperson Erzfeld, and Ashley BF have met twice to align MH programs with the new fiscal reality. The committee is helping Chairperson Erzfeld and Ashley BF evaluate the organizational priorities in regard to the mission and funding. A final draft will be produced and presented at a future meeting.

**Adjourn**  **Trish Erzfeld**

*John Robinson motioned to adjourn. Dawn Smith-Popielski seconded. All in favor. The meeting ended.*

**Next Board Meeting:** September 13, 2025; 12:00 PM – STL (Before the MOmentum Gala)

**Missouri Humanities is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

Topic: 6.14.25 Full Board Meeting - Perryville

Time: Jun 14, 2025 12:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86306035714?pwd=bqs6EbOVnvUkFu2G0t45DvCvYFF8Ka.1>

Meeting ID: 863 0603 5714

Passcode: 779251