

VERA HOUSE, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
JUNE 21, 2022
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

Present: James Branche, Darrell Buckingham, Benjamin-Ariel Charles, Kate Chmielowiec, Jalyn Clifford, Carolina Cordero Dyer, Otis Deluca, Gregorio Jimenez, Rebecca Ortiz, Dawn Penson, Sheri Rodriguez, Trista Rosen, Marissa Saunders, Ashlea Schad, Shewa Shwani, John Huhtala, Sarah Fitzgerald, Kelly Besaw, Ariell Mussi

Staff: Fran Bishop, Angela Douglas, Randi Bregman, Sherry Jones, Benita Rodriguez

Absent/Excused: Patricia McBride, Nakeia Chambers, Talina Jones, Joelle Margrey, Elizabeth Morgan, Roger Misso

Call to order: Marissa Saunders called the meeting to order at 5:36pm.

Marissa led a discussion asking board members to share an uncomfortable moment around racism, or to share one activity completed from an individual IDI. Some powerful stories were shared by members. For August, Marissa asked to be prepared to share two uncomfortable conversations that were had around racism, or one IDI activity and what was learned from the experience.

Consent Meeting Minutes: A motion to accept the May 17, 2022, Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes, and the minutes of the Board Property Committee Meeting, was made by Jayln Clifford and seconded by Darrell Buckingham. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report –*Sherry Jones*

- Went over the April financial statement highlights. We are ahead of budget partially due to the continued job openings. The financial statements were approved subject to audit.
- Audit results report was presented as well as the financial ratios.
- Discussed the accounting and reporting developments.
- Some opportunities for improvement were mentioned.
- Randi Bregman gave a shout out to Sherry's team.

Co-Executive Directors' Report - *Angela M. Douglas and Randi Bregman*

- Morgan Striggles, our new HR Director started 5/31.
- Talked about some other open staffing positions.
- The shelter is full.
- The recognition luncheon was on June 7th and the elder abuse conference was June 15th.
- Discussed the Pride parade on Saturday, June 25th and invited board members to join in the parade

- We will be receiving some funding from Deputy Mayor Sharon Owens for our work with community violence response.
- Benita Rodriguez spoke on gearing up for the Gala and being ready to dive into developing relationships with donors.

Anti-Racism Work

- IDIs – Marissa explained that of the 27 staff IDI’s done, 20 have been scheduled for review.
- Caucus of color had to reschedule.
- White Caucus will be having a reorientation for a brainstorming session on how to support anti-racism efforts with a particular focus on supporting the transition to Angela’s solo leadership.
- Marissa led a thought-provoking discussion on the The Double Terror of Being Black in America article that was provided. Members talked about what stood out. Angela said, “We have to start internally, before we can share externally.”
- Many books and links were referenced including:
 1. All Boys Aren’t Blue by George M. Johnson
 2. The Sum of Us by Heather McGhee
 3. The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot
 4. [Understanding Critical Race Theory](#)
 5. [A Bridge to Justice: The Life of Franklin H. Williams](#)
 6. [Who We Are Official Trailer \(2022\)](#)

Committee Updates

- Program Committee
 - Strategic Plan is going well. Consultants will be presenting to the board in August.
- Board Development
 - We have a number of candidates who have expressed interest in board service, and we will begin interviewing soon
 - We will have an article to share for reflection at each board meeting, with discussions facilitated by different members of the board development committee
 - We hope to do a joint retreat in September with the foundation focused on the new strategic plan.

Open Discussion

- Marissa Saunders was the recipient of the Exceptional Women of CNY award and thanked Randi and Angela for accepting it on her behalf.

Adjournment

Darrell Buckingham made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and it was seconded by Sarah Fitzgerald. All approved and the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Next Board Meeting- August 16, at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Bishop for

Jalyn Clifford, Secretary