

**Board of Directors
October 19, 2021
Meeting on Zoom
Agenda**

- I. Call to Order – *Barb Karper, President*
- II. Consent Agenda
 - A. Joint Board/ Foundation Sept 28th Meeting Minutes
 - B. Board Executive Committee Meeting October 11
- III. Treasurer’s Report – *Carolina Cordero Dyer*
 - A. Finance Committee Minutes
 - B. Credit card for Victoria at North \$1000
 - C. Increase Brittany’s credit card to \$2500
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- IV. Co-Executive Directors’ Report-*Angela M. Douglas*
 - A. Transitions
- V. Program Committee Update- *Sarah Fitzgerald*
- VI. Board Development Committee Update- *Marissa Saunders*
 - A. New Candidates recommendations
- VII. Anti-Racism Work
 - A. IDI plans
 - B. Caucus Updates
 - C. Thoughts on Retreat
- VIII. New Business
- IX. Unfinished Business
- X. Open Discussion
- XI. Adjournment

Next Board of Directors Meeting: November 16th 5:30 PM on Zoom

Board of Directors Executive Committee
October 11, 2021
Zoom Meeting Minutes

Present: Barb Karper, James Branche, Marissa Saunders

Staff: Sara Tucker, Randi Bregman, Angela Douglas

The meeting was called to order by Barb Karper at 12:07 PM.

Review the Agenda:

- Should we add in the open discussion? It's a good idea to have.
- Under retreat we should ask about the challenge posed to the group
- Discuss at finance and bring to vote at board meeting the need to increase Brittany's credit card limit to \$2500 and to approve a \$1000 credit card for Victoria from North shelter

Board Development

- Committee will discuss candidates during Wednesday's committee meeting, they will be ready to bring forward new board recommendations at the board meeting
- Will figure out then whether to bring up for a vote during this meeting or just present recommendations.

Staff Matters

- Things are hard without a senior accountant, we thought there was someone, but we are still looking/ Senior accountant is competitive for the nonprofit world
- Issues with FE on Friday afternoons and issues with giving Sherry access to everything Corey had at Key Bank
- Transitions and turnover- An in-depth presentation will be done during the finance and HR committee
- Finding staff is difficult, shelter is almost at full staff, and we are restructuring advocacy
- The Finance and HR Committee will figure out how much to present at full board meeting

Anti- Racism

- IDI-Marissa said more meetings have been set up.
 - Sara T will create a full list from one Marissa will send of trustees and members who have completed the IDI and completed a session with the certified administrator
 - Marissa will look into the people who completed the IDI outside of VH and how to incorporate theirs into VH.
- Barb was impressed with the number of attendees and the level of engagement at the retreat

The meeting was ended by Barb Karper at 12:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Sara C. Tucker, Development/Executive assistant

AUDIT, FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

From the 18 – October – 2021 Meeting

Board Members Present: Carolina Cordero Dyer (Treasurer), James Branche, Kate Chmielowiec, John Huhtala

Ad hoc attending Staff: Angela Douglas, Stacy Lovelace, Sara Tucker

Called to order at 12:03 p.m.

Standing Business

Financials – We did not review the September financials as they are not yet available. The Finance unit is understaffed with the departure of Corey and Sherry continues to settle into her new role. We will review the statements at our November meeting. Committee members were encouraged to refer finance candidates to Sherry.

Personnel – We reviewed 4-year turnover analysis reports and had a very robust discussion. Vera House continues to struggle with high staff turnover especially in shelter and advocacy. Many recommendations were discussed including building career ladders for the departments with high turnover, increasing funding sources and staffing to reduce workloads, paid sabbaticals, a reduced work week, ongoing use of EAP for staff counseling and staff recognition events. Much discussion revolved around a concern for overall low pay rates and the impact on staff turnover. Next steps: Angela will oversee a staffing audit in order to determine recommended pay increases, workload adjustments, etc. This will be presented to the Board with the intention of review prior to finalizing the 2022 budget. The committee feels important that both the agency and the foundation address pay scales.

Executive Session

- ◇ There were no matters to discuss in Executive Session.

Adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolina Cordero Dyer, Treasurer

VERA HOUSE, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS'/ FOUNDATION TRUSTEE JOINT MEETING
September 28, 2021
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

Present: Foundation: Julie Flack, Tim Giarrusso, Denise McGraw, Yvonne Scott Younis, Elaina Wellstead, Pierre Morrissette, Martin Hewitt, Bishop Dewberry, Jim King, Erica Wynn-Kearse, Jodi DeAugustine, Russ Sturtz, Gwen Sanders, Monique Wright-Williams, Lynn Horowitz. Board: Nakeia Chambers, Jalyn Clifford, James Branche, Joelle Margrey, Natalie Hempson-Elliott, Katie McBride, Kate Chmielowiec, John Huhtala, Barb Karper, Rebecca Ortiz, Darrell Buckingham, Sheri Rodriguez, Marissa Saunders, Talina Jones, Ashlea Schad, Carolina Cordero-Dyer, Sarah Fitzgerald, Otis DeLuca

Staff: Randi Bregman, Cindy Britz, Angela Douglas, Sara Tucker, Amanda Eyeam, Virgie Townsend, Jolie Moran, Loren Cunningham, Chris Kosakowski, Yolanda Cherbini

Excused: James Borer, Amy Breuer, Calvin Corriders, Alexandra Gorski, Buster Melvin, Gloria Barbano Weyl, Kathy Alaimo, Sarah Rourke

Call to order: Barb Karper called the meeting to order at 3:09 PM

Consent Agenda:

Board- A motion to accept the consent agenda was made by Darrell Buckingham and seconded by Sarah Fitzgerald. All voted to accept the consent agenda as presented:

- August 17, 2021, Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
- August 2021 Agency Financial Statements
- Agency Finance Committee Minutes
- Joint Executive Committee Meeting September 13, 2021

Foundation- A motion to accept the consent agenda was made by Julie Flack and seconded by Jodi DeAugustine. All voted to accept the consent agenda as presented:

- August 10, 2021, Foundation Meeting Minutes
- August 2021 Foundation Financial Statements
- Joint Executive Committee Meeting September 13, 2021

Gala Report – Denise McGraw

- Meeting Thursday, so far it is still both an in person and virtual event. Tickets are \$210, tables are \$2100 or \$2500 for a patron table. Virtual event is free.
- Ads are ¼ page for \$100, ½ for \$175 and a full page for \$350. We need silent auction items. If you have a contact, please reach out or let the committee know and they will reach out.
- A list of donations we have already will be sent out
- Board members suggested ways to broaden community engagement, something we are trying to incorporate. The virtual option is good for this, it is free. Some ideas shared - sliding scale, option for people to pay for others or a student fee, reach out to colleges to sponsor students. Tim offered to

sponsor students. Denise will bring these suggestions back to the gala committee.

12 Men Model- John Huhtala and Darrell Buckingham

- Hold off until the new year for new board members and foundation trustees. They will finalize for it to be in January/February. Darrell reinforced how helpful it will be for new people.

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

- Randi went over transitions
- Angela- COVID has made things more difficult, and we are all hands-on deck, every department is working to contribute to clients' needs. We've realized there is a need to work on systems, we often get caught in crisis mode.
- October 4th they will be looking at restructuring advocacy staff roles and functions. Work on making it cleaner, efficient, up the quality of service. The largest changes will be made mid-December through June of 2022
- We have a part time HR manager and realize we need someone who is full time. We will be posting that job soon.

Anti- Racism

- Looking at White Middle Class dominant framework and working on concrete solutions
- Working with foundation on IDI, now we are looking to do all of board and eventually staff.
- Equity goals for the organization were discussed

Strategic Planning

- This is the last year of the current plan, we will close out in spring. We are working on finding a new consultant for a new plan.
- Piece of the new plan will be to continue increasing our national footprint like Randi being an expert witness, both Randi and Angela doing news interviews. Within the state OVS and OPPV want to come and visit Vera House as a model program. We will also continue to provide workplace sexual harassment training for a fee. We are being brought in for anti-racism consulting, gender bias training with police and a 12 men model curriculum for a fee
- Hopefully in the next 5 years we can get \$100,000-\$150,000 in revenue with our fee work
 - Right now, \$20,000-\$45,000
 - It would be charging for the work we are already doing, need to work on promotion and social media

Values

- Values were discussed.
- **UNCONDITIONAL CARE**
I SERVE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES AT SOME OF THE MOST DIFFICULT TIMES OF THEIR LIVES WITH UNCONDITIONAL CARE FOR THEM, OUR COMMUNITY AND MYSELF.
- **COMMUNITY**

I AM A VALUED MEMBER OF A COMMUNITY THAT ACTSCOLLECTIVELY TO ADVANCE JUSTICE AND SERVE ALL THOSEWHO SEEK OUR SUPPORT. I STRIVE TO INTERRUPT THESOCIAL NORMS THAT CAUSE HARM.

- **TRAUMA-INFORMED**

I UNDERSTAND HOW TRAUMA AFFECTS THE WHOLE PERSON, INCLUDING THE PEOPLE I SERVE AND MYSELF, AND I WORKTOWARD HEALING FOR ALL.

- **INTERSECTIONAL**

I CENTER THE TRUTHS AND IDENTITIES OF HISTORICALLYEXCLUDED AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE AND CONTINUOUSLYEDUCATE MYSELF TO IMPROVE MY CARE FOR ALL. I STRIVE TOINTERRUPT THE SYSTEMS THAT PERPETUATE OPPRESSION.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY**

I HOLD MYSELF AND MY COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABLE FORPROVIDING UNCONDITIONAL CARE TO VICTIMS, SURVIVORSAND COLLEAGUES, AS WELL AS DISRUPTING THE SOCIALNORMS THAT CAUSE HARM. I WELCOME ACCOUNTABILITYFROM OTHERS.

Unfinished Business - None

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:25 PM.

Next Board of Directors Meeting- October 19th 5:30 PM

Next Foundation Meeting- November 9th 4:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Tucker for

Darrell Buckingham, Board Secretary and Jim King, Foundation Secretary

VERA HOUSE, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' / FOUSDATION TRUSTEE RETREAT
September 28, 2021
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

Retreat began 4:30 PM

Staff (caucus leaders' presentation/engagement)

- Collective Work- collective is the bridge between the caucus of color and the white caucus that works to create the change and shifts that need to happen as identified in the caucuses.

- White Caucus- led by Loren Cunningham and Virgie Townsend, start off with personal reflection on what gets in the way doing the work and how White Middle-Class Dominant Culture shows up. How can we shift?
- Caucus of Color- Led by Angela Douglas and Chris Kosakowski, started off with staff of color coming together to talk about traumatic events. They got together to heal last year, looking for a space for community to focus on the issues and needs in their healing journey. Working on internalized racism.
- Reflections on the caucuses and their work
- Everyone is at a different stage in the work. The anti-racism work helps the organization to look at other ways oppression shows up and how we can challenge them.
- You will fail and make mistakes, we are human.
- White caucus- working on increasing the accountability to each other and owning our stuff. When and how to reach out to the caucus of color. Better at noticing microaggressions and working to stop them
- Caucus of color- it is personal, helps to grow and you show up for people. Angela mentioned the importance of honesty and having people let her know when she should not attend and to help check the power that leadership has.
- How to process, how to heal? How to change internalized racism that has been so ingrained and unspoken? Power kept Vera House tethered to white supremacy without knowing it.
- The work requires leaders to support, to help break the ideas of "I can't take a day off because I'll lose my job", stop the idea of "justifying existence"
- Some take aways- changes will not happen alone, love the space being created,
- Angela highlighted an original problem with staff of color being able to attend the caucus and said that we must follow through with our power in leadership and demand to make space so people can attend the Caucus of Color meetings and heal.

This portion ended at 5:30 PM.

Went over White Middle Class Dominant Culture and invited participants to create brave space

Breakout groups

Questions Asked During Breakout

- What is the current societal narrative as it relates to our equity goals? Does that current narrative work in our favor or against us?
- Do we have a network of organizations and individuals strong enough to assist us in our advancement of our equity goals?
- What are some specific ways the wdc shows up in our meetings, interactions and decision-making process?
- How does it impact or affect the poc participating in the meetings?
- How does your privilege serve you in our work and how are you using it to create more equity?

- How do we address acts of racial harm that may occur while meeting together? Are you willing to receive real time feedback in the event something you say or do causes racial harm? What should that look and sound like?
- Do we believe that our organization and its individuals are strong enough to advance our equity goals? What will this look like?
- What ideas or feelings do you need to be fostering in yourself to receive feedback openly without defensiveness?

Break out 1: Systemic barriers & Impact

- Appreciative of staff
- Practice is important when doing this work
- Good frame of where we are/ there is more work to do
- We are the agents of change
- More light being shined on the equity goals
- Frustration oversteps backwards
- Clarity with language and core mission
- Noticing people work around/ talk around/ performative anti-racism work (in the community)
- Biggest thing to prove- Angela as Co-Executive Director

Break out 2: Accountability

- Accountability and being open to receiving it- don't react in the moment/defensive
- My group has my back/ brave space
- Lean into I don't know
- Ground rules to deal with harm done to people during our work? Is this another part of WMCDC?
- Endurance > fragility
- IDI helpful, white people police self
- It was nice to hear from staff- refreshing to experience the shift in openness and commitment to the issues

Adjournment at 7:05 PM