

**Colorado Humanities Board of Directors Meeting
December 7, 2024
Online**

Meeting overview and materials

Board business (page 1)..... Agenda, Minutes
Chair's report (page 1)
Executive Director's Report (page 1)
Program Committee (page 2)..... FY2024 Marketing Report
Nominating Committee (page 3)
Development Committee (page 3)..... FY2024 & FY2025 Fundraising Goals and Status
Finance Committee (page 3)..... CH Financial Statement 09 30 24
BoardSource Survey highlights and discussion (page 4)..... BoardSource Survey results,
BoardSource Survey Summary, BoardSource Survey Report Discussion Questions
Team and Board Development Session (page 5)..... Fundraising Workbook presentation,
sample one-page development flyer
How to Read a Financial Statement (page 6)..... Financial Statements 101 presentation

Actions taken

- Approval of the agenda (page 1)
- Approval of the October 19, 2024 Board meeting minutes (page 1)

Assignments/Directives

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Discuss draft site visit report with site visitors (page 1) | Coval |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Write and submit a proposal for continued United We Stand funding (page 2) | Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Use social media & networks to advertise events, increase brand awareness (page 3) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Provide marketing graphics and copy for social media (page 3) | Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Increase familiarity with CH work; attend at least one program event (page 3) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Look for potential Board prospects (page 3) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Complete FY2024 giving (page 3) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Draft a meeting attendance policy; discuss creating a board leadership succession policy (page 3) | Nominating Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Implement new fundraising processes (page 5) | Staff, Development Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Meet with each board member to discuss fundraising participation (page 6) | Jones, Jr. |

Next meeting

March 8, 2025
Online

**Colorado Humanities Board of Directors Meeting
December 7, 2024
Online**

Present: Kalish; Carpenter; Davis Witherow; Etter; Fajardo; Jones, Jr.; Keith; Letschert; Trujillo; Voss

Absent: Cordova, Goletti, Hoeven, Magaña

Staff: Coval, Olivier, Albright

Guest: Mike Gemm, JRMG Coaching LLC

1. Optional icebreaker (Kalish)

2. Welcome (Kalish)

3. Approval of agenda (Kalish)

Motion by Letschert to approve the agenda.

Seconded by Voss

Vote: Unanimously approved

4. Approval of minutes of the October 19, 2025 Board meeting (Kalish)

Motion by Etter to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2025 Board meeting.

Seconded by Fajardo

Vote: Unanimously approved

5. Chair's report (Kalish)

a. Board members' recent activities

Kalish thanked individual members for their recent activities.

b. NEH Site Review Report Draft

Staff have received a first draft of the site visit report. Coval will discuss the findings with the site visitors before the report is finalized. The final report is expected in April.

6. Executive Director's report (Coval)

Coval thanked Kalish for her recent activities.

a. NEH funding update

The current Continuing Resolution (CR) ends December 20th. Further NEH funding is contingent upon congressional approval of a second CR, which would probably extend through March. Deliberations on the federal budget are unlikely to be completed before the end of the calendar year, and there will be another CR.

Committee-approved versions of the 2025 Interior Appropriations budget include a funding increase for the state humanities councils.

- b. National Humanities Conference - reports invited
Voss and Olivier reported on their attendance at the National Humanities Conference. Program coordinator LaNaya Butler attended and, in collaboration with other humanities council staff, gave a presentation on conversation programs.

Voss said the conference is a good learning opportunity for board members. Board member responsibilities were explained well in the new member session. Attending presented bonding opportunities with representatives from other councils, and CH Board and staff. He said it's good to hear about other councils' solutions to challenges similar to those faced by CH. Fundraising challenges are typical, nationwide; increased Board involvement in fundraising is key. The Langston Hughes community poetry reading, was powerful and inspiring.

Olivier attended sessions focused on advocacy and infrastructure. Fundraising and diversifying fundraising streams is a universally high priority. She found learning about other councils' programming helpful. She described a statewide study conducted by Pennsylvania Humanities to determine the scope of humanities practices at local levels to see how the humanities are used to build community, and noted the point made that defining the humanities is less important than showing their effect.

- c. Other
The Federation of State Humanities Councils is working on advocacy and communication with the newly-seated Congress. Coval anticipates a request for robust participation in Humanities on the Hill.

NEH is offering councils \$40,000 in additional funding for United We Stand. Staff will be submitting a proposal, which is due January 8th.

7. Program Policy and Evaluation Committee (Etter)

Etter and Coval reported on recent and upcoming program activities:

Black History Live The annual tour begins in February, featuring Becky Stone as Harriet Tubman and Marvin Jefferson as Louis Armstrong. The schedule includes 20 presentations, six of which are in schools, in 12 cities across the state.

Museum on Main Street The exhibit opens in Gunnison in January. It is the last stop on the tour.

Colorado Book Awards (CBA) Submissions close January 3rd. Several new judges and selectors have been recruited this year.

Author Talks 12 speaking events featuring CBA finalists and winners took place in 2024.

United We Stand The final film screening and conversation took place at the Sie Film Center, with 70 in attendance.

Motheread/Fatheread Colorado Staff and the Program Committee recommended, and the Executive Committee agreed, to terminate the program due to challenges with and within the parent organization, Helping Education. Current commitments will be fulfilled within the next few months. Program Coordinator Karen Murphy will conduct an assessment of family reading needs and resources in Colorado to determine CH's place in that arena.

Etter asked for Board participation to expand their familiarity with CH work, and to help with event promotion, increasing brand awareness, and continued advancement of the organization. Board members were asked to make plans to attend at least one CH program event each year, and provide feedback. Staff will provide marketing graphics and copy so board members can help promote CH and its programs within their social media.

Olivier discussed plans for a marketing report that will be generated quarterly. Current marketing efforts include improving the e-newsletter, better social media integration, email campaigns, and regular website maintenance. Visibility/advertising on Facebook and Instagram have a high return on investment so increased efforts, including potential video, are being considered. Staff are looking at successful strategies from other councils.

8. Governance and Nominating Committee (Fajardo)

Fajardo reported that the Governance and Nominating Committee is discussing three prospective board candidates.

Additionally, the Committee has been working on the session they will host at the March board meeting. The focus will be on Board participation in recruitment. The Board was asked to be on the lookout for board prospects.

9. Development and External Affairs Committee (Jones, Jr.)

Jones, Jr. provided a brief overview of FY2024 and FY2025 fundraising. CH's 2024 fiscal year ended October 31st.

Thus far, 78% of the Board have participated in FY2024 Board giving. Jones, Jr. encouraged board members to complete their FY2024 giving by the end of the calendar year. The Board Giving Policy stipulates that members who do not participate in Board giving are not eligible for a second term. It is helpful when board members give as early in the fiscal year as possible.

Colorado Gives Day is December 10th.

10. Finance and Infrastructure Committee (Keith)

Keith provided the Finance Committee report. Reserve funds invested at Schwab total \$715,000, and have increased 15% year-to-date. There is \$59,000 in the endowment fund at Colorado Gives Foundation, which experienced a 10.5% increase by the end of the third quarter.

Keith noted that the largest expense in the September financial report is for accounting. There are plans to seek a new accounting firm to reduce that expense.

Staff will soon be preparing for the FY2024 audit. It will be the third year of CH's contract with the current auditor.

The Finance Committee will coordinate with the Development Committee on cost-saving and fundraising efforts.

11. Board Source Survey highlights and discussion (Kalish)

Kalish reviewed the findings of the BoardSource survey completed by board members. There was 100% participation. Board members scored the organization, the Executive Director, and itself higher than most surveyed organizations, on average. Fundraising, effectiveness, visibility, and board participation are areas that need attention. Discussion followed.

Questions:

- How can we best help new board members be successful?
- What should the Board be doing, or doing more consistently?
- What should the Board not be doing?

New Member Orientation

The Board agreed to reinstate a mentoring system to help with relationship-building, and to orient new board members. Seasoned members will coach their new-member partner on board responsibilities and processes.

Attendance

The Board discussed Committee meeting and board meeting absences.

Salient points/suggestions:

- absentee members are not providing CH the support to which they committed
- should the policy address all absences, or only those without notice?
- three unexcused absences tenders resignation
- a pattern of missed meetings demonstrates a lack of priority
- review policies from other councils for ideas

The Governance and Nominating Committee will continue the discussion and draft a policy to recommend for Board approval.

Succession Planning

The Board discussed the need to maintain continuity in board and committee leadership in case of absences or resignations. Ideas included:

- committee vice-chairs, who would eventually move into the chair position
- lay-person service on committees, to demonstrate commitment prior to being elected to actual board service

The Governance and Nominating Committee will continue to discuss this topic.

Visibility

Both Board and staff are responsible for promoting CH visibility. Ideas:

- share information with networks, and on social media
- host in-home fundraisers
- introduce CH at community gatherings, e.g. chamber of commerce, service club
- arrange an opportunity to introduce CH to higher education/humanities departments
- facilitate collaborations that will lend CH visibility and credibility
- increase staff work on social media promotion

Fundraising

The Board discussed whether the elimination of a giving minimum helped or hindered Board giving. Participation will continue to be monitored, and the policy may be reevaluated.

Program effectiveness

Staff are entering a time of extensive program evaluation. Questions to be answered include:

- What makes a program effective?
- How is effectiveness defined differently from program to program? e.g. attendance, demographic reach
- How can programs best meet CH Major Objectives?

12. Team and Board Development Session presented by Mike Gemm, JRMG Coaching LLC

Mike Gemm of JRMG Coaching, LLC discussed fundraising philosophies and strategies to reach more donors and find better prospects.

a. Fundraising Approaches

Gemm shared a presentation highlighting fundraising approaches based on Tom Suddes' established methods.

The story

The message to donors should be that the income they provide produces the organization's impact. Donors will want to know why the organization/program exists, what it does, and how it is effective and impactful. All Board and staff should deliver consistent messages. Advocacy from leadership tends to be most fruitful.

The prospects

Board and/or staff should spend time developing relationships with better prospects and faithful donors. Giving is more relational than transactional, and listening is key. Ask donors about their priorities and goals. A commitment to conduct four to eight face-to-face conversations with individual donors/prospects each month is an essential strategy. Organizations of any size can do this well.

The request

80% of charitable giving comes from individuals and their estates; only 6% comes from corporations. After hearing the story, donors may ask, "How can I help?" Be specific about needs and their costs. Tell donors where the money goes, and how their partnership as a financial supporter contributes to compelling outcomes.

b. Colorado Humanities Fundraising Process

Organizations do one or more of only three things: save, change, or impact lives. CH messaging should focus on the change or impact it affects. Take CH's story to donors, and ask them to be a part. Next steps:

- compile a list of best possible CH prospects; identify the top 3-5 champions
- schedule face-to-face meetings; share the story/need
- ask, "Can you help?" Ask for three referrals for other potential donors.
- develop a 1-page handout to use as a map during meetings

c. Roles of Board Members

Board members shared about their varying levels of fundraising experience.

The Board as a group were asked to be visionary. Kalish and Jones, Jr. will meet with all board members individually to learn how each is able to participate in fundraising.

13. How to Read a Financial Statement (Carpenter)

Carpenter, who is CFO at Metro State University, gave a PowerPoint presentation on how to read a financial statement. An organization's financial statement helps reviewers determine the organization's health and sustainability. Items should be stable from month to month, rather than broadly fluctuating. Explanations of specific line items are provided in the annual statement, not in monthly statements.

When reviewing current assets, note how much is liquid. Take note of the current liabilities. Divide assets by liabilities to show the organization's ability to meet financial requirements.

The income statement, or statement of revenue and expenditures, shows what has happened over the previous period, and reflects ongoing sustainability. Carpenter recommended looking at areas with disproportionate spending versus income. CH is essentially at break-even, with cash in reserves equal to approximately 9 months of salaries and benefits, which is good. It's also good to look for potential areas to reduce expenses if needed. A summary of changes may be best provided by the Executive Director.

If CH maintains its budget and fundraising goals, it will not be necessary to withdraw reserve funds.

14. Other business

There was no other business.

Adjourned.

The Board of Directors Minutes have been approved by the Board, and signed on this 14th day of March, 2025.

by: 
Margaret A. Coval
Executive Director, Corporate Secretary
Colorado Humanities