

Colorado Humanities Board of Directors Meeting
March 8, 2025
Online

Meeting overview and materials

Board business (page 1).....	Agenda, Minutes, 2025 Board Meeting Dates
Chair's report (page 1).....	Executive Orders 14151, 14168, 14190 NEH Implementation of Recent Executive Orders Letter to the Editor by Kalish - GJ Daily Sentinel
Executive Director's Report (page 2).....	HOH 2025 NFSHC Position, Talking Points
Finance Committee (page 2).....	CH Financial Statement 01 31 25
Nominating Committee (page 3)	Nick Saenz Letter of Interest, Resume FY2025 Board Nominations Priorities
Development Committee (page 3).....	FY2025 Fundraising Goals and Status Prospect Tracking SAMPLE, Fundraising One Pager, 2025 Fundraising Strategies
Program Committee (page 4).....	Program Status Report, Major Objectives Why we do these programs
Program Evaluation presentation (page 5).....	Program Evaluation, NEH A&O FY2024

Actions taken

- Approval of the agenda (page 1)
- Approval of the December 7, 2024 Board meeting minutes (page 1)
- Approval of the use of, & authorization of Executive Director to withdraw, investment funds (page 3)

Assignments/Directives

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Coval regarding interest in Humanities on the Hill (page 2) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share board member prospect ideas Fajardo or Coval (page 3) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in Board giving; complete pledge and contacts forms (page 3) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Jones, Jr. or Olivier with donor prospects or to facilitate connections (page 4) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback on one-page promo flyer to Coval or Olivier (page 4) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce CH to personal networks (page 5) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consider hosting a fundraising event (page 5) | Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate connection with Gill Foundation (page 5) | Letschert |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Represent CH at a regional America 250/Colorado 150 planning meeting (page 6) | Board |

Next meeting

June 7, 2025
TBD, Pueblo

Colorado Humanities Board of Directors Meeting
March 8, 2025
Online

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

Absent: Cordova, Fajardo

Staff: Coval, Olivier, Albright

1. Optional icebreaker (Kalish)

2. Welcome (Kalish)

3. Approval of agenda (Kalish)

Motion by Davis Witherow to approve the agenda.

Seconded by Trujillo

Vote: Unanimously approved

4. Approval of minutes of the December 7, 2024 Board meeting (Kalish)

Motion by Letschert to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2024 Board meeting.

Seconded by Carpenter

Vote: Unanimously approved

5. Chair's report (Kalish)

a. Board members' recent activities

Kalish thanked individual members for their recent activities.

b. Board meeting locations for June and September

The Board discussed potential locations for upcoming board meetings. Trujillo volunteered to host the June meeting in Pueblo. Davis Witherow will host the September meeting in Colorado Springs.

c. NEH implementation of Executive Orders

The President has enacted recent executive orders restricting the promotion of gender ideologies, and DEI policies. At this time, neither NEH staff, nor the Federation of State Humanities Councils (FSHC) have recommended any particular response, or offered any guidelines to councils.

As part of compliance for receiving federal funding, CH is already prevented from promoting ideologies. The Major Objectives have been discussed, and it has been decided that no revision is necessary. There are no CH programs that present concern.

6. **Executive Director's report (Coval)**

Coval thanked Kalish for her recent activities.

a. NEH funding update

A FY2025 federal budget has yet to be approved. A cut to NEH funding is possible. A second Continuing Resolution is in effect until March 14. It is uncertain how Congress will respond. The FY2026 appropriations process is already delayed. A new Continuing Resolution to cover the rest of the year is possible, as is a de facto funding bill.

b. Humanities on the Hill

Due to time and costs, staff will not be traveling to Washington DC for the annual Federation of State Humanities Councils' outreach to Congressional representatives. Zoom meetings will be utilized to make connections. Staff have already met with aids from a few offices.

c. Other

Kalish shared a letter that she had submitted to the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel. It thanked Grand Junction Black History Live tour partners, and provided information regarding the History Alive! Colorado West Chautauqua events coming in September.

7. **Finance and Infrastructure Committee (Keith)**

a. Financial report

The January financial statement recounts the first quarter of fiscal year 2025. Of note:

- CH is functioning as a fiscal agent only for Rocky Mountain Reader, so income/expenses related to RMR have been removed from the financial statement, and have been listed elsewhere, so as not to skew CH information. CH's agreement with RMR is through August, and RMR staff have expressed a desire to extend the arrangement. Further discussion is needed.
- Approximately \$160,000 of FY2024 NEH funds will be available for FY2025.
- \$237,000 of NEH funds were awarded from the first Continuing Resolution, and \$250,000 from the second.

b. Investment report

CH investments held with Schwab are currently valued at \$712,000. The endowment fund with Colorado Gives is \$59,000.

c. Recommendation to maintain cash flow

Coval is making efforts to defray expenses, due to concerns over cash-flow, and the uncertainty of federal funding. Even if new federal funding is approved, NEH may not make distributions as quickly as needed. Program activities have been paused for 30 days.

CH has accessed funds from its line of credit with Vectra Bank. The Board decided that advance authorization to use investment funds will provide additional flexibility and security, and will prevent the need for an emergency meeting.

Motion by Keith, on behalf of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee, to allow use of up to \$200,000 of investment funds to guarantee payroll within the next 180 days; and to authorize the Executive Director, during that period of time, to use her own discretion to determine need, and to sell investment products in order to access the appropriate funds.

Vote: Unanimously approved

d. Audit schedule

A letter of engagement is expected from Watson, Coon, Ryan LLC by mid-March. Coval anticipates a list of samples to gather during the week of March 17; with auditors in the CH offices the week of March 24.

8. Governance and Nominating Committee (Fajardo)

a. Candidates for June slate

The Board reviewed a letter of interest and resume from Nick Saenz, a history professor and administrator at Adams State University in Alamosa, who was on the Five States of Colorado film advisory council. Saenz will be formally presented for election in June.

Two board members will be ending their service this June, and there are currently six open seats. The Committee's prospect search is ongoing.

b. Other

The discussion on how to identify good Board prospects has been postponed until June. The Board was encouraged to think about who they know who might be a possibility, and share ideas with Fajardo or Coval.

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

a. Fundraising status report

To date, 16% (\$9,095) of the annual goal for unrestricted funds has been raised and 63% (\$77,226) of the programs goal has been raised, which is 48% of the total goal.

b. Board giving

Six board members have participated in board giving thus far in FY2025. Board members were asked to complete their FY2025 Pledge Form and Contacts Form and return them by next week. Board giving lends strength to grant applications, as it demonstrates investment in the organization. Everyone is asked to give a meaningful amount.

c. Board tools: prospect tracking, one-page overview

The Board reviewed a spreadsheet used for tracking prospective donors, including individuals, businesses, and foundations. Suggestions for additions to the list should be forwarded to Jones, Jr. or Olivier. Board members who have connections with, and can facilitate an introduction to anyone on the list should notify Jones, Jr. and Olivier as well.

The Board reviewed a one-page promotional document that was developed following Mike Gemm's fundraising presentation in December. The points on the map showing

reach include grant recipients. The flyer is to be used as an outreach tool that clearly illustrates what CH does and why. Feedback should be provided to Coval or Olivier.

Jones, Jr. encouraged cross-promotion of events with associated organizations. He suggested Board members can request a press kit from Olivier to help their CH promotion efforts.

d. Strategies for raising unrestricted funds

The need to diversify funding streams, so that CH is less dependent on federal funds, is a significant concern.

Next steps/potential strategies include:

- finalizing the one-page flyer (staff)
- developing uniform messaging (staff)
- introducing CH to personal networks (Board and staff)
- host a fundraising dinner event; volunteers: Letschert, Goletti, Davis Witherow, Kalish, and Jones, Jr.
- Gill Foundation has an initiative for organizations at risk of losing federal funding. Letschert will facilitate a connection.

10. Program Policy and Evaluation Committee (Etter)

a. Program status report

Etter provided an overview of recent program activities. Of note:

- 2,200 individuals attended a Black History Live event, which is approaching pre-Covid attendance numbers. About 1/3 of the audience was K-12 students. Meta ads helped with outreach.
- The Museum on Main Street tour was completed with the exhibit in Gunnison. There were about 10,000 attendees over ten locations. The Smithsonian Institution is allowing Burlington Old Town Museum to keep the exhibit permanently.
- The Colorado Book Awards celebration will be Saturday, July 26 in the Studio Loft at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House.
- Greeley, Durango, and Grand Junction Chautauqua events are in planning.

b. Programs aligned with Major Objectives and how programs came about

While completing evaluations, staff will assess how well each program meets the new Major Objectives. Etter encouraged board members to read the “Why We Do These Programs” document. That information will provide board members with CH history and talking points useful for CH outreach.

c. Other

Kalish encouraged the Board to attend their regional America 250/Colorado 150 planning meetings to represent CH, and introduce the organization to other attendees.

Olivier and staff member Jennifer Macias will be attending the Indigenous Communities Summit at the Golden History Museum, with the hope of making connections and

learning what type of programming on which they might collaborate. Funds are budgeted in the R&D part of the budget.

11. Introduction to Program Evaluation (Olivier and Program Committee)

Olivier gave a presentation of a new program evaluation model intended to help articulate what CH does, and its impact on Colorado communities. Black History Live was used to show an example of the new evaluation methods, including program mapping, key questions, goals components, and vision.

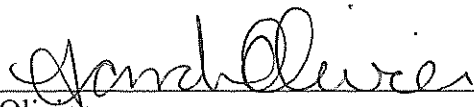
In addition to internal reviews, staff will conduct interviews and convene focus groups. Critique will be included, but the focus of the evaluations will lean more toward learning rather than accountability. Reporting to the Board will inform strategic planning, and results will be integrated with marketing and fundraising.

12. Other business

There was no other business.

Adjourned.

The Board of Directors Minutes have been approved by the Board, and signed on this 24 day of Sept., 2025.

by: 
Sarah Olivier
Executive Director, Corporate Secretary
Colorado Humanities