

**Colorado Humanities Board of Directors Meeting
September 20, 2025
FaithBridge, Denver**

Meeting overview and materials

Board business (page 1) Agenda, Minutes
Chair's report (page 1)
Executive Director's Report (page 1)
Finance Committee (page 2) Financial Statement 06 30 25, Cash Flow and Projections,
Shutdown/Hiatus Expenses, FY2026 Budget
Development Committee (page 3) Fundraising Status Report
Program Committee (page 3) FY2026 Program Plan Options
Nominating Committee (page 4) FY2026 Board Nominations Priorities, Board Slate

Actions taken

- Approval of the agenda (page 1)
- Approval of the March 8, 2025 and June 7, 2025 Board meeting minutes (page 1)
- Authorization of withdrawal from reserves (page 3)
- Approval of the FY2019 Board Nominations Priorities (page 4)
- Election of Candice Bannister (page 5)

Assignments/Directives

- Complete FY2025 giving (page 3) Board
- Create a Colorado Gives fundraising profile for the peer-to-peer campaign (page 3) Board
- Contact Governor's office with suggestion for board appointees (page 4) Olivier
- Reach out to board members with expiring terms re: further service (page 4) Fajardo
- Schedule further discussion of FY2026 options (page 5) Board, Olivier
- Draft new FY2026 budget, program plan, fundraising goals (page 5) Olivier, Committees

Next meeting

December 6, 2025

Online

**Colorado Humanities Board of Directors Meeting
September 20, 2025
FaithBridge, Denver**

Present: Kalish; Carpenter; Cook; Fajardo; Goletti; Hoeven; Jones, Jr; Letschert; Saenz; Voss

Absent: Davis Witherow, Etter, Magaña

Staff: Olivier, Albright

Guests: Candice Bannister, Margaret Coval

1. Optional icebreaker (Kalish)

2. Approval of agenda (Kalish)

Motion by Jones, Jr. to approve the agenda.

Seconded by Voss

Vote: Unanimously approved

3. Approval of minutes of the March 8, 2025 and June 7, 2025 Board meeting minutes (Kalish)

Motion by Hoeven to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2025 and June 7, 2025 Board meetings.

Seconded by Carpenter

Vote: Unanimously approved

4. Chair's report (Kalish)

a. Board members' recent activities

Kalish thanked individual members for their recent activities.

b. Plan for December board meeting

It was decided that the December 7, 2025 board meeting will be conducted virtually.

5. Executive Director's report (Olivier)

Olivier thanked Kalish for her recent activities.

a. NEH funding update

NEH has re-staffed the Federal/State Partnership division with two employees. Director Jason Harshman is meeting with the executive director of each state council. He and Olivier have not yet met.

Congress still has not approved either a budget, or a Continuing Resolution (CR). It may not be possible for councils to receive funding during a CR, due to the pending lawsuit.

b. Federation updates/lawsuit

The injunction is meant to stop NEH from spending funds that were allocated to councils. NEH has until October 6 to decide if they will appeal, which is expected. Councils have been advised not to plan for NEH funding when budgeting. Incubator sessions are offered to councils that are developing new business plans.

Major fundraising efforts are underway, although no additional funding has been secured as yet. Capacity-building funds from Mellon will be used. The Federation's annual meeting is in November. Funding to attend will be provided for all Executive Directors, plus one program staff member who will coordinate the 250 celebration efforts.

- c. Staffing update
CH's Program Director, and Center for the Book Coordinator both resigned over the summer. With Coval's retirement at the end of August, staff is down by almost half. Olivier listed current staff.

6. Finance and Infrastructure Committee (Letschert)

- a. Financial status report
The Board reviewed the June Financial Statement. They were reminded of an expected \$235,000 budgetary shortfall in FY2026, which had been delayed in prior years by the receipt of COVID funds. The reduction in salaries will help.

The fiscal year ends October 21.

- b. Investment and endowment funds report
Across all accounts, including Vectra Bank, CH has about \$635,000 available.
- c. Projections
Current expenditures are about \$65,000 monthly. Revenues are modest. It will be necessary to draw from reserves at the end of September or for the first pay-period in October.

The search for a new, more affordable, accountant is a priority. CH's real-estate broker helped negotiate a 50% reduction in rent for six months. The full monthly amount of \$8,626 will be due again in December. The amended documentation detailing the discount has not yet been received. The lease does have an escape clause contingent on a significant loss of funding. Board members agreed that employees should be prioritized over office space.

- d. FY2026 Budget through February
Discussion of the draft budget was postponed until the executive session.
- e. Authorization to draw from reserves
The Executive Director had previously been authorized to withdraw from reserve funds as needed, up to an annual total of \$300,000 without further Board approval. The need to clarify the time period, extend that authorization, and reaffirm it now that Olivier is the Executive Director, was discussed.

Motion by Letschert to authorize the Executive Director, from the period of March 8, 2025 through February 28, 2026, to withdraw from reserve funds as needed, up to \$300,000 without further Board approval.

Seconded by Carpenter

Vote: Unanimously approved

7. Development and External Affairs Committee (Voss)

a. Board giving update

Seven of fourteen board members have participated in board giving this fiscal year, which is 54%. \$2,088 was received in individual board cash contributions. \$14,903 was generated in soft credit, which is contributions from others that were facilitated by board members. \$400 in CBA tickets were purchased by board members for CH outreach. In-kind contributions will be calculated at the end of the fiscal year. The Board were reminded of the importance of demonstrating 100% participation to funders.

b. FY2025 Fundraising status report

The Colorado Book Awards generated \$62,219 in revenue. The cost, including staff salaries was \$73,859.

Fundraising since April 1 totals \$178,377. The goal was \$500,000, with a minimum of \$250,000 needed to buy the organization more time to develop the billable services business model.

c. Other

A more concerted effort on the peer-to-peer social media fundraising campaign will take place from October 15 through December 15. Colorado Gives Day is December 9. Board members were encouraged to create a fundraising profile on the CH's Colorado Gives webpage as soon as possible. Staff will be generating a lot of shareable content for board members to forward to their networks.

8. Program Policy and Evaluation Committee (Etter)

a. Program status report

Colorado Book Awards (CBA): A grant from Denver Arts & Venues covered the venue cost. The fundraising components were successful, and did not seem to detract from celebration of the authors. Auction purchases exceeded AmFund's minimum goal required for profit-sharing. The VIP lounge was well-received.

High Plains Chautauqua (HPC): Over 190 students participated in the Young Chautauqua showcase in Greeley, and 30 were selected to perform at HPC. Over 2,700 people attended HPC over 5 days. The theme was America in the 20th Century.

National Book Festival (NBF): The Library of Congress hosted NBF in Washington, D.C. the first week of September. Staff received a grant for travel. The CH booth was

visited by over 5,000 attendees. CBA-winning authors were selected to represent Colorado in the annual Great Reads from Great Places exhibit.

History Live Durango: 160 were in attendance on September 3 and over 200 on the 4th to see Brian "Fox" Ellis presenting as Billy Herndon/Austin Gollaher, and to see Becky Stone presenting as Harriet Tubman. Stone gave additional presentations in Ignacio.

History Alive! Colorado West Chautauqua: Grand Junctions' Chautauqua event took place last week, featuring scholars portraying Nicola Tesla, Hedy Lamar, and Marie Curie. Additionally, seven Young Chautauquans participated. The committee will coordinate with the America 250 - Colorado 150 Commission for it FY2026 event.

Billable Services: Conversations Program Coordinator LaNaya Butler facilitated a guided discussion for CU Denver. History Program Coordinator Jennifer Macias will be presenting a program for BPX Energy.

9. Governance and Nominating Committee (Fajardo)

a. Board nominations priorities

The Governance and Nominating Committee recommended maintaining priorities approved last year, and added priorities specific to funding needs.

Motion by Fajardo on behalf of the Nominating Committee to approve the FY2026 Board Nominations Priorities.

Vote: Unanimously approved

b. Review board positions to fill in FY2026

Fajardo and Kalish will complete their second terms in FY2026. Those ending their first terms, and eligible for a second term will be Davis-Witherow, Goletti, and Governor-appointed members Etter and Voss. Fajardo is also a Governor's appointee. Her departure will create a third Governor-appointed opening. Olivier will reach out to the Governor's office as early as March to make recommendations.

If all eligible for a second term choose to continue to serve, there will be eight open seats in FY2026. Fajardo will follow up individually with members whose terms are expiring.

10. FY2026 options (inc. budget, fundraising goals, & program plan) Executive Session

This portion of the meeting was not recorded.

11. Approval of FY2026 Program Plan

This vote was tabled, pending further discussion in an upcoming executive session, time and date to be determined.

12. Approval of FY2026 Budget (Nov. - Feb.)

This vote was tabled, pending further discussion in an upcoming executive session, time and date to be determined, and subsequent budget revision.

13. Election of board member

Motion by Fajardo on behalf of the Nominating Committee elect Candice Bannister to a four-year term to begin immediately.


Vote: Unanimously approved

14. Other business

There was no other business.

Adjourned.

The Board of Directors Minutes have been approved by the Board, and signed on this 15th day of December, 2025.

by:  _____
Sarah Olivier
Executive Director, Corporate Secretary
Colorado Humanities