

Humanities Montana
Board Executive Committee Meeting, via Zoom
April 9, 2025

Present: Jeannette Fregulia (vice chair and Grants), Lynda Grande (Finance), Mary Hernandez (Governance), Jill Baker (ED)

Excused: Esther Beth Sullivan (chair)

Vice Chair Jeanette Fregulia called the meeting to order at 10 am. A quorum was present.

NEH Updates: Jill provided the following updates:

- **Financial Position:** HM has \$170,136 Cash on Hand as of April 7, 2025. Monthly payroll is currently \$56,870. Other liabilities include \$22,524 in Vacation and Sick payable as of 4/1/25. Other expenses owed ~ \$35,000, including \$21,000 owed to HM's auditors.
- **Communications:** A press release regarding the funding cut was sent out on April 3rd. Jill has been providing interviews, and stories were run over the weekend and continue to run this week. Bailey is tracking coverage across the state. An Op-Ed was drafted over the weekend and is being sent out today to major and rural newspapers across that state outlining the impact of the NEH cuts to Humanities Montana.
- **Legal Strategies:** Jill has been in conversation with Tom Stonecipher, a retired attorney from Bozeman. He volunteered to help draft a letter of appeal to the NEH at no cost and has recommended that HM seek pro-bono legal counsel for the appeal. Jill will reach out to HM's current legal counsel for recommendations and asked the EC for their referrals as well. The Federation of State Humanities Councils is also exploring legal strategies on behalf of councils.
- **Fundraising:** An emergency fundraising appeal letter will go out as soon as possible. Deb Gill, CEO of Alliance Philanthropy in Bozeman, has offered limited services on a pro-bono basis during our funding crisis. Staff have been assisting with researching private foundations that align with HM's mission and programming. HM will need to update its development/fundraising plan to be more comprehensive and include activities to grow and retain its list of donors.

Spring Board Meeting and Committee Preparations:

- **Meeting Location:** Due to the current financial position, HM will need to keep meeting costs to a minimum. A virtual option was discussed, but it was decided that it was best to meet in person at a central location so that board members could drive over and back the same day. Martinsdale and Helena were presented as options. Jill will follow up with contacts at the Bonanza Creek Ranch/Grande Ranch to see if they can accommodate our group on a pro-bono basis. Jeanette also offered to reach out to Carroll College to reserve a room at no cost to HM.
- **Grants Committee:** Cancelled due to NEH funding cut.
- **Governance Committee:** Review By-laws, Board Matrix/Nominations
- **Finance Committee:** Consider 3 budgets: Hiatus Budget, Downsized Programs, Program Development/Growth.

Meeting was adjourned at 11 am. JB