Humanities Montana
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

August 12, 2026, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Committee Members Present: Ray Ekness, Karen Reiff, Beth Sullivan
Excused: Slaven Lee
Absent: Glory Blue Earth
Staff Present: John Knight, Executive Director
Guest: Simon Windell, Humanities Montana Fractional CFO

Board Chair Ray Ekness called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Committee Updates

- Karen Reiff and John Knight provided an update from the Governance Committee. The committee discussed planning for 2027 board leadership, committee assignments, and anticipated board vacancies. Karen noted that she was awaiting a response from Glory Blue Earth regarding her interest in a leadership position for 2027. Knight noted that the Governance Committee had identified additional board members to consider for leadership roles.
- Beth Sullivan and John provided an update on the Finance Committee. John reported that budget-to-actual reporting, the proposed FY27 operating budget, and a key financial metrics summary are being prepared for review at the next Finance Committee meeting.
- John also previewed the upcoming Programs & Outreach Committee agenda and noted his recommendation to pause the fundraising event tentatively scheduled for September 17.

Finance Support Discussion

- John introduced Simon Windell of Unwdind Consulting, who began providing fractional CFO support to Humanities Montana in July. Simonprovided an overview of his background, role, and current work supporting the organization's financial management and planning.
- Discussion included the complexity of managing the return of NEH funding and financial preparation for the upcoming NEH Site Review and October Board Meeting. .
- As part of FY27 budget planning, John noted that staff compensation would be reviewed and that compensation survey information from the Montana Nonprofit Association and Federation of State Humanities Councils would help inform that work.

NEH Site Review

- John provided an update on the upcoming five-year NEH Site Review, including the meeting schedule, participants, submission materials, and next steps. He reported that the Site Review materials were on track for submission by the deadline and thanked committee members for their support in reviewing the materials.

Billings Board Meeting Update

- Knight provided an update on planning for the October 2–3 Board of Directors meeting in Billings. He reported that he would finalize lodging arrangements with the Northern Hotel following completion of the board lodging survey.
- The committee discussed the meeting schedule and related activities, including the October 1 outreach event in Roscoe, and a possible October 2 visit to the Western Heritage Center. The committee recommended not including a Mission Moment during the Saturday business meeting.

Humanities Montana and NEH Updates

- John provided updates on recent NEH developments, including Michael McDonald’s nomination to serve as Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- He also reported that NEH drawdowns for the bridge funding period and May and June 2026 had been approved and the funds received.
- Additional organizational updates included completion of the Form 990 and ongoing grants and fundraising work, including planning for the year-end appeal.

Executive Director Evaluation Discussion

- At 10:43 a.m., Knight was excused from the meeting and Simon departed. The Executive Committee continued with discussion of the Executive Director evaluation and timeline.

The meeting adjourned at: 10:50 a.m.