

Humanities Montana
Board Executive Committee Meeting
July 9, 2025

Present: Esther Beth Sullivan (chair), Jeanette Fregulia (vice chair and Grants), Lynda Grande (Finance), Mary Hernandez (Governance), Jill Baker (ED)

Meeting Convened at 10:05am

Executive Director Updates

- NEH Grant updates:
 - HM received word in June that its termination as a grantee has been rescinded (although there is much confusion about what that means); it appears the organization is reinstated as a program in good standing;
 - HM has been notified that it can receive up to 50% of the remaining, previously authorized FY2025 budget; Jill has submitted and received drawdowns for the that amount, which (including drawdowns from January going forward) will cover some of expenditures for April to the present; this reinstated amount is not enough to cover lost staff positions and is not guaranteed for future years;
 - Given the uncertainty of the NEH funding, Jill will be developing 2 budget scenarios for FY26: one will include the possibility of 50% (of previous grant amount) funding from NEH; the other will include zero NEH funding.
- Budget/Fundraising updates:
 - With NEH reimbursements, our bank account stands at approximately 500K
 - All current bills have been paid, including audit, UM expenses, FSHC dues, etc.
 - Private fundraising since April: 128K
 - Grants since April: 200K FSHC/Mellon; 30K Lewellyn (for Dem Project)
 - 50K FSHC/Mellon match (Apr. 29 – Dec 31): we are up to 6.3K
 - MT Cultural Trust: 13K over 2 years for MT Poet Laureate
- Communication updates:
 - Ray Ekness will be volunteering to help with outreach through MT public broadcasting networks;
 - FSHC is offering some consulting for communications and outreach;
 - Jill is working with a consultant for outreach regarding the Great Reads program in the fall;
 - Jill will be featured on upcoming podcast and Public News Service pieces;
 - Jill (in consultation with Exec Committee) will develop a Communication Plan or Communication Calendar taking us through the end of 2026; consideration of how to better use our e-newsletter will be addressed.

Finance and Audit Committee:

Lynda explained that the 990 IRS form (our tax report) was completed after the audit and our last full board meeting. It must be approved and submitted by September 15. Given

our bylaws, she and Jill recommended the following process for review, approval, and submission:

- Send the form to the whole board prior to next Finance and Audit Committee meeting asking for any questions;
- The Finance Committee will review the form and address any board questions at their August 27 meeting; assuming there are no substantial concerns, the committee will approve the 990 on behalf of the board;
- The 990 will then be submitted by the Executive Director.

Governance Committee

Mary will be convening the Governance Committee in July or early August as well as on the scheduled August 25 (noon) meeting, to address:

- Leadership roles and nominations for 2026;
- Consideration of board members who might rotate off (or not);
- Consideration of whether new board members might be brought on, in relation to organizational priorities (as expressed in the May board meeting);
- Nominations and board rosters will be finalized before the Executive Committee meeting on September 10.

Executive Director Annual Review

- A simplified survey, with mostly narrative questions, to go to all board members for input;
- The Executive Committee will review that input no later than the September 10 meeting;
- The findings and any recommendations will be reported to the full board at the September 26-27 meeting.

September 26-27 meeting and full board meetings for 2026:

- The September meeting will be held in Missoula on the 26-27th; hotel rooms will be arranged as well as dinner on Friday night; sessions will be held Friday afternoon and Saturday morning; agenda will be discussed at the Executive Committee meeting on August 6.
- For 2026:
 - The Executive Committee will determine the 2026 line-up of full board meetings at the August 6 meeting.
 - Beth recommends holding the Winter meeting (usually the weekend after President's holiday in February) via Zoom due to travel and weather constraints.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00am