Humanities Montana

Board of Directors

Special meeting of the board

July 14, 2022

Zoom

**Present:** Caroline Bitz; Carol Bradley; April Charlo; Jennifer Corning; David Dietrich (vice chair); Jamie Doggett; Jeanette Fregulia; Debbie Garland; Lynda Grande; Carla Homstad (chair); Susan Hughes; Ashby Kinch; Lathie Poole; Laura Mitchell Ross; Eric Sanders; Esther Beth Sullivan **Absent:** Glory Blue Earth; Jessica Flint; Ramey Growing Thunder; Francine Spang-Willis

**Staff:** Randi Tanglen (executive director); Jodi Todd (accountant)

Board Chair Carla Homstad called the meeting to order on Zoom at 5:02 p.m. Vice Chair David Dietrich offered the land acknowledgement. Carla asked for public comment. Randi Tanglen reported that public notice of the meeting had been posted on the Humanities Montana website, and that no members of the public had requested the Zoom link. Carla reminded the board that according to the Humanities Montana by-laws, “[e]xcept for considerations regarding personal issues, personnel or litigation, the board’s meetings are open to the public” (VII.4), and that if these matters were to be discussed, the board would need to go into executive session.

Carla stated that the purpose of the meeting was to affirm the purpose of the ad hoc personnel policy review committee that came out of executive session at the May board meeting in Bozeman. Since that meeting, there has been disagreement among those on the committee regarding the purpose of the committee. The purpose of the ad hoc committee is to review current personnel policies and make recommendations to the board for updates to the policies and to determine if a permanent personnel committee should be part of the board governance structure. Carla then asked for comments from the board.

Eric Sanders commented that the ad hoc committee should be forward-looking, not retrospective. He said he voted on the formation of the ad hoc committee based on the understanding that it was a governance mechanism that would involve the executive director. Esther Beth Sullivan concurred, stating that the purpose of the committee was to review current personnel policies and to determine if a permanent committee would be needed as part of the organization. Caroline Bitz also agreed that the purpose of the committee was to review policies and see if anything further needed to be recommended to the board. Caroline explained that this is what she, David, and Francine Spang-Willis communicated to Randi after the board meeting in May.

Carol Bradley expressed concerns as to why the board had gotten to this point and requested respectful communications in the future. Debbie Garland stated that she had concerns about decisions made regarding returning to the office during the pandemic and concerns that staff feedback wasn’t incorporated into the executive director’s evaluation during the pandemic.

Lynda Grande and Jamie Doggett both stated the view that the staff reports to the executive director and the executive director reports to the board. David Dietrich said that he has read the personnel policies and that overall, they are strong. Laura Mitchell Ross disagreed, expressing concern about the accumulated leave policy and that the policies do not appropriately address wage and hour issues. Laura also expressed frustration that she has been requesting personnel policy review for over two years. David asked Laura to submit her concerns about the personnel policies in writing for the committee to address.

David made a motion for the ad hoc personnel policy review committee to meet in person with five days advance notice for committee members to review the polices and submitted comments.

Debbie asked for an amendment to the motion that the meeting not be held in person.

David made an amended motion that the ad hoc committee meet with five days advance notice for committee members to review policies and submitted comments.

Jamie seconded. The motion passed with 13 in favor and three abstentions—April Charlo, Laura Mitchell Ross, and Ashby Kinch.

David left the meeting.

Ashby said that he was not at the Bozeman board meeting, but he noted philosophical differences among the board regarding the role of the executive director and the role of the board in managing the staff. He expressed the need to put the past behind and focus on the three new staff members.

Beth stated the need for board training to discuss “who we are as a board” and what boards do.

Carla said that such training is being pursued for the September board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.