**Humanities Montana**

Special meeting of the board

March 23, 2022

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

**Absent:** Debbie Garland; Susan Hughes; Ashby Kinch

**Staff:** Randi Tanglen (executive director)

The special meeting of the Humanities Montana board was called to order on Zoom at 5:03 pm. Carla Homstad welcomed the board and David Dietrich offered the land acknowledgement. Carla asked for public comment. Randi Tanglen responded that the meeting had been publicized on Humanities Montana’s website, and no members of the public requested the Zoom link.

Carla stated that the purpose of the special meeting was to approve a facilitator for the racial equity audit review committee. The rationale for securing a facilitator is to provide structure to committee discussions and to ensure that Jeanette Fregulia and April Charlo, as committee co-chairs, could fully participate in the conversations.

Three facilitator options were discussed at the committee meeting on March 21. (Meeting minutes and facilitator options were shared with the full board.) One option offered services beyond the scope of what the committee needed and was much more expensive than the other options. That left the choice between Judge Gregory Todd in Billings and EmpowerMT in Missoula. The committee had voted 4-3 to recommend Judge Todd. Carla explained that the committee was not entirely comfortable moving forward with a split vote.

Jessica Flint said she accepts the committee’s vote and that the committee should be allowed to make the decision on their own. Eric Sanders asked for a summary from the committee members who voted for or against the recommendation of Judge Todd.

David Dietrich provided an overview of Judge Todd’s experience and qualifications as a facilitator. April Charlo said she appreciated EmpowerMT’s experience with conversations around the topic of race. She spoke with Judge Todd on the phone after the committee meeting. April said she would accept the vote of the committee. Jeanette said she is not comfortable placing April in that position. Other committee members agreed.

The discussion continued along several lines of deliberation:

* It was clarified that the role of the facilitator is to help the committee come to consensus regarding how to use the recommendations of the racial equity audit, not to produce a written report or board presentation.
* The full board will review the recommendations of the committee.
* Randi confirmed that funds are available in the FY22 budget passed by the board to secure the services of the facilitator. Funds of up to $3,000 are available in what was budgeted for strategic planning.
* Francine Spang-Willis said that discussion on racial equity should be facilitated by experts in that area to ensure historically marginalized folks or minorities on the board are safe in these difficult discussions. David said that the expert perspective was provided by Widerstand in the audit.
* In terms of process, the special meeting of the board was scheduled before the committee’s split vote. The full board meeting was called for the sake of transparency.

**Carol Bradley moved that the racial equity audit committee co-chairs select the external facilitator for the committee meetings. Caroline Bitz seconded.** In the discussion, it was clarified that if the motion passes, the co-chairs could make a decision that overrides the committee’s initial vote. Jessica asked if committee members who originally voted to recommend Judge Todd feel safe with the selection of a different facilitator. Jennifer Corning responded that she feels comfortable with the co-chairs making the decision. **The motion was approved with 12 in favor, 1 opposed, and 4 abstentions.**

Jeanette and April will follow up with Randi concerning next steps in contacting a facilitator.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 pm.