



January 14, 2020 (5:30 - 7:30 PM)

Microsoft Teams

## BOARD MINUTES

### Board Members:

Ben Ryan, Brendan Clark, Brian Arnold, Carla Respects Nothing, Elissa Hardy, Jennifer Beiss, John Feeney-Coyle, Kelli Barker, Michael Malloy

### MDHI Staff:

Jamie Rife, Julie Winkowski, Matt Meyer, Rebecca Mayer, Sierra Trujillo, Layla Said

### ADMINISTRATIVE

Brian wanted to thank everyone for joining us at our new, later time. He welcomed Sierra Trujillo as the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to the meeting and asked her to introduce herself. Sierra said she was born and raised in Colorado. She worked at the Delores Project for 6.5 years as the Community Engagement Director. She led operations, managed volunteers, and co-led their racial equity initiative. After leading TDP through a lot of transition, she decided she wanted to do more equity, diversity, and inclusion work. Sierra left TDP and took a break to raise her two-year-old daughter in October 2019. She said this role at MDHI felt meant to be. Through the interview process, the Director position felt like a great fit and a hybrid of what she was looking for. She enjoys community building, relationship building, collaboration, and equity work. She looks forward to her future with MDHI.

Brian asked Sierra what she's most excited about with this work. She replied that she is excited about the community outreach piece, as well as recruiting for the committee work. She mentioned a recent meeting she had about the Youth Action Committee today and added that she is especially excited to work with this group.

Matt wanted to answer Brian's question about Sierra. He feels that it has been nice the past few weeks to have Sierra ask probing and insightful questions as she inquires about the work. She is bringing up points MDHI has not previously considered. Matt appreciates the wisdom and life experience she is bringing to the work. He looks forward to Sierra's contributions.

Brian led the Board in a scavenger hunt.

### CONSENT AGENDA

*Brian covered the consent agenda.*

**Vote – Ben Ryan motioned to approve the consent agenda, Mike Malloy seconded, none opposed, none abstained**

Matt pointed out that Julie identified our ESG-CV1 would start later than anticipated. This is because MDHI received the contracts months after they were expected. As a result, we pushed those expenses back a few months so we wouldn't be short on revenue by a few hundred thousand.

## TOPICS

### NOFA/PG Update (Matt)

Matt said that the 2020 NOFA has been officially suspended by an act of congress. All our current grantees will renew. This will also include a fair market rent adjustment, as well as our HMIS grant and HMIS planning grant. We will be notifying our grantees shortly once we have more specifics. A little over 200 million was also added in the announcement for the CoC and ESG program. Included in that is the Domestic Violence bonus, as well as another round of YHDP. Matt thinks that more money might be attached in the future. He asked for questions or comments.

Brian asked if all the grantees will get the same award as last year. Matt said yes, plus a fair market adjustment. There will not be any reallocations unless we ask HUD specifically. We are still going through with scoring to continue monitoring the grantees. We will continue to do the equity work with the grantees as well.

Ben asked if this changes our timeline for implementing our equity work as part of the NOFA process. Matt doesn't think so since we weren't going to score it in this round anyways. This gives us the time to orient the grantees and relay our expectations on self-assessment.

Matt has talked with Bill Charney about doing the retreat sometime around September. Bill is going to come to the March meeting to do a 1-hour overview of policy governance for the Board.

### Governance (John & Ben)

Ben wanted to point out that he and John are the only two members on Governance Committee. They will be reaching out to specific members to join that committee. Ben emphasized that everyone on the Board is qualified to be on a Board committee, and that no special finance or legal background is required. All perspectives are valuable, so please reach out to Ben or John if you are interested in the Governance Committee. This Committee will be working closely with defining the Board's priorities within the new Policy Governance framework.

Ben reviewed the changes to the Bylaws. The edits were mainly in Section 4.2 regarding the size of the Board. He feels that our previous amount of 22 members was too high for everyone to fully engage. He also noted that the Policy Governance consultants also thought our Board was a little large. He thinks it is a good time to restructure now that our Board is smaller. The Committee feels 9-13 members would provide a range of flexibility around recruiting. A sentence was also added about reaching racial diversity proportional to our area, which aligns with our racial equity work. Updates were also made to Section 4.15 about meeting in a virtual, online environment. Other changes include corrected typos at the end of Section 9.1.

John asked if there were requirements about Board Committee participation added to the Bylaws. Ben said they were not added yet, but that the problem requires a more complex solution than just added text to the Bylaws. Ben thinks breaking stereotypes and targeted recruitment are necessary.

Jennifer wanted to raise the need for Board participation in Councils. She thinks there is a sense of a disconnect when Board members are not present in a meeting. She thinks it might be helpful to include language around Councils/Committees in the Bylaws. Matt replied that Alix is going to investigate this exact issue.

Ben noted that a risk of reducing the size of the Board is less people to staff the Council/Committees. He said we would need to get creative, maybe decreasing attendance to once a quarter.

Carla added that she often attends meetings as a representative of Denver Public Library and forgets to mention she is with MDHI.

Kelli asked if we are keeping the same recruitment cycle, or if we are changing it to a rotating recruitment cycle. She referenced section 4.4. Ben said the reason the recruitment process is twice a year is because of the time it takes the Governance Committee to vet recruits. He agrees that a rigid cycle might disqualify good applicants. He thinks the

cadence of twice a year is a good default for the Governance Committee to do active recruiting, but he feels there is wiggle room to recruit throughout the year.

Kelli asked about the semi-annual meeting of members in 4.9. Matt said it has not been in effect since COVID, but it was in effect before this. Brian added we could figure out a way to do the meeting virtually.

*Approve proposed changes to the Bylaws*

**Vote – John Feeney-Coyle motioned to approve the adoption of a Policy Governance framework, Mike Malloy seconded, all in favor**

#### **Point in Time Update (Jamie)**

MDHI oversees the annual PIT count that happens in January. She said this year is challenging due to the pandemic, and we did not receive guidance from HUD until December 2020. There are two parts to the count: the Sheltered count and the Unsheltered count. The Sheltered count is still required, but we can continue to pull data from HMIS. The Unsheltered count is not required. We have contracted with ASR, and they have been able to tell us what other large cities are doing at this time. HUD is giving waivers to waive the unsheltered count or modify the methodology. The last waiver we applied for was a hotspot headcount from cars. Since only 4 volunteers signed up, we are looking to apply for a full waiver to skip the Unsheltered count. We are looking to conduct a count in the summer to help inform regional planning. Matt added that HUD has laid out the different options and has acknowledged that they have been liberal in granting waivers. We have learned that most cities in California, Portland, and Seattle have opted out of the unsheltered count. There certainly won't be any funding repercussions from HUD. He said nothing precludes us from using our budgeted funding to conduct a summer count when the environment is safe.

Jamie also mentioned that Unsheltered count is only required every other year. Elissa asked if there were any concerns about future funding. Jamie replied she did not have concerns.

Carla asked if we have had any encounters inside of Native reservations. Matt said he did not know how they interacted with HUD as a federal agency, but that he would reach out to some of his contacts.

Mike asked about how it's going with BitFocus. Rebecca said she thinks we are doing very well with the new vendor. She thinks the four CoC's as a collaborative with the same vendor carry a lot of weight. She thinks our data quality is also improving.

Jamie pointed out that the count was moved to the end of February, but that we are going to do a test pull in January to work out data quality issues with shelters before the night of the count.

#### **Mayor Coffman's "Homeless Mike" Article (Jamie & Matt)**

Brian wanted to provide a space for the group to discuss the Mike Coffman situation and how it affects the work we are doing to end homelessness in our communities. Matt said this was a misguided stunt from Mayor Coffman. The reality of what he heard was very unhelpful and stereotypical. He thinks the reaction from the community was strong and swift, and called the stunt for what it was. He claims that this came about from a desire to create solutions to end homelessness. Behind the scenes of the three Mayors, Brita called a convening of Community Solutions, MDHI, and the Mayors. Matt thinks the Mayor Coffman situation has helped by creating energy for people to do something positive.

Jamie added that the silver lining to this is that each city wants to be a part of the regional strategy to end homelessness. Jamie said we want to rally the region around the Built for Zero framework. How can we create a parallel workflow for elected and people that can remove barriers, which includes the business community? Jamie said she has seen an outpouring this week like she has never seen before. We have an opportunity to create a regional strategy, but we have to do it now. Matt also mentioned that we have been meeting with DRCOG, which is a convening of regional governments and city managers. Matt agrees that this is a moment for regional strategic planning around the BFZ framework.

Ben wanted to point out that as upsetting as this narrative is, it is still a widespread narrative. He sees this as an opportunity to challenge this narrative in a public forum with data. Matt wanted to commend Jamie's myth-busting campaign. He said that we have to address the part of the population that agrees with Mike Coffman and figuring out how to change their perspective on everything. He thinks fact-based messaging will not be sophisticated enough on its own.

Elissa said that anyone of privilege who puts themselves in a situation of poverty for a night is problematic. Elissa says that while there is good momentum on the issues of homelessness, it might be a good time to make headway on the moving of encampments. There is new data coming out on Safe Outdoor Spaces and the benefits compared to retraumatizing people. She thinks the other Mayors should make a statement on Coffman's perspectives.

Kelli was excited that a Mayor would want to learn more about people experiencing homelessness. She doesn't trust the media's portrayal and thinks the most thoughtful reflections could have been edited out. She mentioned Mayor Paul invited her to a call next week to talk with other legislators about homelessness, so she is excited about the attention that is being brought to the issue. Kelli would like to coordinate her message with Jamie and Matt.

Jennifer added that there was a lot of energy after the initiative 300 campaign a few years ago. She is glad that we have BFZ in place. She thinks we can redefine the narrative about what success means in this work. For some, success might mean ending visible homelessness. Jamie feels this is a Yes/And situation – Yes we can use BFZ, AND we can have short-term solutions at the local level. Matt added that Mayor Coffman's point about the lack of treatment resources was accurate. He thinks we need to break down the segmented approach to mental health. That is a place we can use this energy to really affect positive change, as it is an area where we don't see an appropriate level of attention in the behavioral health system.

Eugene said that a lot of people see what is on the surface – drug use, defecation in the streets. He believes that it is important to acknowledge that this is not a choice. What is shown on the surface is a direct result of the trauma people have experienced and probably why they are homeless right now. Working on the Denver Street Outreach Collaborative, he worked to connect people with services. Eugene supports any messaging that shows that what we see on the surface is a symptom of a bigger problem.

John wanted to say he has had several reactions similar to Kelli. He thought it was a potentially hopeful approach that Mayor Coffman was taking. He is glad that we as MDHI have a serious and nuanced approach to this.

Brian added adversity allows us to find out what we are capable of. He is hoping that someone can write an Op-Ed for the Board about what is happening, what is going on, and what our solutions are. Matt responded that him and Jamie would draft an Op-Ed for the Board. He noted that some Board members may not be able to sign-off on the Op-Ed due to work conflicts.

#### **Concluding Remarks (Brian)**

Brian thanked everyone for their time and noted his excitement about the work to come this year.