



**August 3, 2021 (5:30 - 7:30 PM)**

**Microsoft Teams**

## **BOARD MINUTES**

### **Board Members:**

Brendan Clark, Carla Respects Nothing, Elissa Hardy, Eugene Wade, Jennifer Biess, Kelli Barker, Michael Malloy

### **MDHI Staff:**

Jamie Rife, Julie Winkowski, Layla Said, Matt Meyer

### **ADMINISTRATIVE**

Mike opened by saying this is a critical and exciting time for the MDHI Board. His journey with MDHI began when he was brought to a meeting by a past member and was really impressed by our work and our role in the community. He then joined the Board a few years ago. At that time, things were more turbulent as we rapidly expanding as an organization and people were looking for their place on the Board. Now that we have reduced the size of our Board, we have found ourselves in a place where we can work and communicate very well together. It seems much more tranquil. Mike feels it's an honor for him to be president on this board, especially a time when many important decisions are to be made. We know that Matt is moving on, and now we are in a position to find a new Executive Director. But we also need to look at resetting our relationship with the community and MDHI as a whole. We have a massive opportunity to restructure how we work with the community at large. We also have an opportunity to restructure our bylaws in November at our Policy Governance retreat. He wanted to be honest when saying he is overwhelmed by the support he has received and also by the amount of work that we have to do. It is going to be important that everyone bring all hands-on deck and bring 100% to every meeting. He concluded by saying 'the only way to eat an elephant is one bight at a time.'

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*Michael asked if we could have a motion to approve the consent agenda.*

**Vote - Jennifer motioned to approve the consent agenda, Eugene seconded the motion**

**All in favor except Elissa, who abstained because she was not in attendance at the last meeting.**

### **LAND AND CULTURAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (Carla)**

Carla said it was brought up at our last Executive Committee meeting that we should do a land and cultural acknowledgement before every Board and committee meeting. She already made a guide for Denver Public Library and the broader community about how to appropriately give a land acknowledgement at their meetings. The city council is also doing it now, along with various other organizations that Carla participates in. Carla said that Layla had brought up that they were doing the land acknowledgement at their Young Adult Leadership Committee meetings. We thought it would be a good idea to do a land acknowledgement at the beginning of MDHI Board meetings and other meetings to give respect and honor to the native people that were here before us.

Carla asked Layla if she had anything to add. Layla thanked Carla for asking. She said she brought this up because the Young Adult Leadership Committee has found the empathy coaching framework to be very effective in creating a safe

and inclusive space at our meetings, which is one she's like to see replicated throughout MDHI. Part of this framework includes beginning each meeting with a land and cultural acknowledgement. Layla believes that if we are to equitably end homelessness, it is important for us to ground ourselves in this work and the history that brought us here. Our country's history began by displacing people, enslaving them, and then denying them equal access to opportunities and rights such as housing.

Carla mentioned that we are still editing this acknowledgement, but read the following as a draft:

*We acknowledge that our country was built on the territories of indigenous people on Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho land, who are the original Stewards of this area. We also acknowledge all other Indigenous Tribes and Nations who call Colorado home, which include Apache, Shoshone, Ute, Pueblo, Pawnee, Comanche, Kiowa, Zuni, and Navajo/Dine. 48 Tribes have called this land home. It is also important to recognize that U.S. public policy has been used to displace Indigenous communities, erode Tribal Nation sovereignty, and forcibly assimilate Native individuals into U.S. society.*

*Not only was our country founded on stolen land, but also built by stolen people. We acknowledge the traumatic events of American Slavery and the harmful impact lasting stereotypes have had on Black American citizens, including racially charged violence, mass incarceration, and de facto segregation efforts.*

*We share these acknowledgements to encourage all of us here to consider how our work in this space and in our daily lives can address these historic and contemporary atrocities perpetuated against marginalized communities. We invite everyone in this space to recognize their ancestors and the forces of history that brought you here, as well as the work you are engaged in to support collective liberation and the liberation of future generations.*

Carla asked if anyone had anything to add. Several members of the group expressed gratitude to Carla and Layla for bringing this to the Board. Elissa praised the quality of the acknowledgement. She also added that she participates in a group that includes a recognition for bringing native people to the table in their acknowledgement. She thinks we should add a piece that calls for this action. Mike asked the group if they wanted to bring this to a vote to make sure that this is something we say at every meeting. The group agreed to a vote.

*Eugene motioned that the Land and Cultural acknowledgement be read before every Board and committee meeting.*

**Vote - Eugene motioned to approve, Elissa seconded, all in favor**

#### **Executive Session**

The staff left so the Board could break into executive session. Matt stayed for a portion of the session.