

KALAMAZOO FOUNDATION FOR EXCELLENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES

Meeting of February 16, 2021

A meeting of the Kalamazoo Foundation of Excellence (KFFE) Board on February 16, 2021 held by videoconference in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act was called to order by President Graham-Williams at 2:02 pm.

Board members present: Graham-Williams, Ritsema, Hamilton-Miller, Anderson, Hess, Urban, Calderone-Huezo, Carrel, Dannison, Hoffman, Lonberg, A. Taylor, C. Taylor, Washington, and Hopewell.

Board members absent: McFarlin.

Also present were Legal Counsel/Recording Secretary Clyde J. Robinson, FFE Manager Steve Brown, Deputy City Manager Laura Lam, City Chief Financial Officer Steve Vicenzi, and Diversity, Inclusion & Equity Director Dorla Bonner.

The minutes of the Board Meeting held October 12, 2020 as corrected were moved for approval by Director C. Taylor. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

FFE Manager Brown announced the resignation from the Board by Director Adam McFarlin. His resignation was largely due to the success of his business. Motion by Director C. Taylor to accept the resignation was approved by voice vote. Director Washington expressed words of appreciation for the foundational financial work that Director McFarlin provided to the organization as its Treasurer.

Due to the resignation of Director McFarlin, the position of Treasurer was vacant. Director Washington moved to nominate Director Carrel to fill the unexpired term of Treasurer. Director Carrel expressed a willingness to accept the nomination but would not commit to the position after the Annual Meeting in April. By unanimous voice vote the motion to elect Director Carrel as interim Treasurer was approved.

Michael Evans, Executive Director of the Kalamazoo Literacy Coalition and Nicole Blum, Early Learning Program Director of the Kalamazoo YMCA presented on the program in the Edison Neighborhood aimed at early learning, child care career development and supporting families in an efforts to ensure equitable access to child care, academic success, multi-generational opportunities, and entrepreneurial/ economic growth.

Dorla Bonner, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for the City of Kalamazoo presented on the efforts undertaken by her office in the past year and programs that will be presented in 2021. The goal of her office is to use a equity lens to review City policies and ordinances and creates a culture that celebrates diversity.

Steve Brown, FFE Manager provided an overview of the programs that assisted local businesses in response to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. He reported that \$1,274,500 was provided through the Small Business Loan Fund as bridge funds to provide short term relief. To date, there has been only one default and two businesses have paid back the loan. Mr. Brown indicated that the program focused on minority and women-owned business, which have been historically disadvantaged. Additionally, partnering with Consumers Energy FFE money was used to provide 100 micro-enterprise grants in the amount of \$5000 to 100 businesses.

Mr. Brown also reported on the success of the Digital Access for All program in partnership with Kalamazoo Public Schools, Kalamazoo Public Library, Kalamazoo Community Foundation and The Promise to provide 1000 laptop units with fee-free high speed Wi-Fi access, with plans to provide an additional 250 units.

Mr. Brown also reported on the success of the Learning Hub program provided by the Kalamazoo Youth Development Network. The initial plan was to provide services to 200 students most in need of assistance at 4 sites. However, given the need the program is currently providing service to more than 350 students at 16 sites. Students in the program are those facing nutrition, language, and family stability challenges.

Finally, Eleanor Cook of CCS Fundraising provided an overview, using the Pixar Studios model of storytelling, to explain the impact of programs funded by the FFE to improve the lives of individuals and families in Kalamazoo. Director Lonberg used the device to provide an excellent example of FFE efforts and why such matter and have an impact.

President Graham-Williams inquired as to whether any Public Comments had been received; one comment by Richard Stewart was received addressing disability as a protected classification.

President Graham-Williams asked if there were any Board Member Comments.

Director Dannison indicated that he and his family will be moving to Kent County in the near future and that he will be resigning from the Board at a later date. Director C. Taylor, commenting on the presentation by Director Bonner spoke of the necessity of white allies to speak up in the struggle for equality and equity for all.

Upon the motion by Director C.Taylor, seconded by Director Carrel the meeting was adjourned by President Graham-Williams at 4:34 pm.

Minutes Drafted: February 18, 2021

Minutes Approved: April 26, 2021

Clyde J. Robinson
Clyde J. Robinson, Recording Secretary