**Funeral Consumer Alliance semi-annual board of trustees meeting**

September, 2014 • San Antonio, Texas

KEY: Action items in red. Motions in blue.

**Members present:**

Ruth Bennett

Rodger Ericson

Rod Stout

Holly Shreve Gilbert

Marcy Klein

Jean Nation

Jim Null

Karen Smith

**Members absent:**

John Abraham

**Guests present Saturday:**

Nancy Walker and Jesse South from Austin Affiliate

Eric Neuhaus from Austin

San Antonio guests

**AGENDA**

I. Approve agenda, approve minutes of June, 2014 meeting

II. Policy

a. Conflict of Interest Form (sign)

b. Discuss whistleblower policy

c. Discuss records retention policy

d. Discuss information tech policy

e. Discuss revising policies and procedures manual

III. Executive Director’s Report

IV. Committee Reports

a. Mission and Values

b. Publications and Web

c. Personnel (including job descriptions)

d. Affiliate Relations (no document)

V. Finance and Fundraising

a. Year to Date Income and Expense

b. Year to Date Assets and Balance Sheet

c. Proposed 2015 Budget

d. Board giving (no document)

e. Cultivating large donors (no document)

f. Direct mail (no document)

VI. Ongoing Projects (no documents)

a. Consumer Federation of America/FCA price survey

b. Video production

c. Chapter versus federation system

VII 2016 Biennial Conference (no documents)

a. Possible locations

b. Partner organizations

Saturday, June 6

Meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by President Ruth Bennett.

**1. AGENDA/MINUTES**

Marcy proposes that a discussion about the spring meeting be added to the agenda

Ruth proposed that an executive breakout session regarding personnel be added to the agenda.

Action: Approve additions to agenda. Unanimous approval.

Action: Approve spring minutes. Unanimous approval.

**2. POLICIES**

**Policy conflict of interest form.**

Discussion: Jean has concerns about the date and suggests the policy be reviewed since it is dated 2002. She suggests the policy also be applicable to vendors, volunteers and others who have affiliations with FCA and affiliates.

Jean and Ruth agreed to work up language to add during lunch. The policy will be revisited later in the session.

**Whistle blower policy**

Discussion: Needs minor alteration to add language including “consultants” and “employees” and change “San Antonio” to FCA. Again, this will be reviewed by Ruth and Jean.

**Record Retention policy**

Discussion: Agreement to adhere to recommendations in the policy and maintain digital versions of required records, with a backup on an external hard drive and/or cloud. Some hard copies should be kept, such as contracts.

**Information tech policy**

Suggest an article to affiliates regarding keeping information. Decision to postpone decisions on this until language is cleaned up. Ruth, Jean and Josh will revisit and present Sunday morning.

**Policies and procedures manual**

Agreement that committee will revise entire policy manual for additions, deletions, revisions.

**3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Discussion: Nancy Walker and Josh share concern about ensuring that the potential conflicts of interest that arise with volunteers or consultants are identified and appropriately addressed.

Discussion: Jean has concerns about the job descriptions and thinks there should be more detail. Decision to take revisit when we discuss personnel.

Discussion on status of FCA Greater Philadelphia …

Jean suggests that the new chapter use a different name to clearly distinguish themselves from the defrocked chapter.

BREAK

Introduction of guests

Nancy Walker and Jesse South from Austin Affiliate, with two members.

Eric Neuhaus from Austin Affiliate

**4. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Mission and values:**

Karen presents proposed mission, vision and values (see packet).

Discussion: Members appreciate of scope of mission and vision and agreed it is well done and captures the essence of FCA.

Recommendation to tighten the mission statement and revisit on Saturday. Trustees asked to send suggestions for one sentence statement that encompasses the mission.

**Publications committee:**

Suggestion by Karen to add brochure about value of medical devices and implants removed from the dead. There’s a market for those that contain precious metals.

Suggestion to poll affiliates for their opinions on publication and web with the affiliate relations committee.

Discussion on options for sharing templates and page space with affiliates.

Josh will explore possibilities with Brian Shaughnessy.

IDEA : Austin affiliate shares their refrigerator magnets and suggests them as swag as they are “cheap and fun.”

**Personnel:**

Discussion: Jean feels the job descriptions need to be more specific with more detail. Personnel committee will work with Josh to develop a description for jobs that covers more specifics and protects Josh from being micro-managed.

Personnel committee will talk during lunch.

**Affiliate relations:**

Jean suggests affiliates are a melting pot … four different types and we need to make sure we are an effective umbrella organization.

Discussion: Consider creating a monthly newsletter or devising a check-in system so that affiliates hear from FCA.

Discussion: Numbers of affiliates are decreasing but it’s because of merging, not dissolution. It might be more effective for smaller, less functional affiliates to merge, than to continue alone.

Marcy volunteers to update the affiliate directory form with web addresses and without mailing addresses.

BREAK FOR LUNCH AT NOON

**Review of policies:**

**Record retention policy:**

Make edits to indicate it’s updated, for FCA. As of this date, we are adopting this policy and will revisit at next meeting if appropriate. No objections from the board.

Conflict of interest will take more review. Jean, Josh and Ruth will work on that via telephone conference toward end of October and will share it for review.

Action: Agreement to adopt Whistle Blower Policy with minor revisions.

Action: Agreement to adopt the electronic policy.

**5. FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING**

Josh reminds board of the process of reimbursement for board expenses and donation to FCA for tax deduction purposes.

Motion by Marcy: Add $5,000 for a new website. Second by Karen.

Jean moves to amend it to $10,000. Marcy seconds.

Motion postponed to first item of business on the agenda Sunday morning.

**Board giving:**

Various discussions:

Josh points out that simply paying expenses is not giving. Ruth encourages members to make a monthly pledge.

Cultivating large donors. To that end Josh is going on a fundraising tour of New England in the fall.

**6. ONGOING PROJECTS**

Discussion regarding distinguishing FCA from affiliates in the consumer’s mind.

Short report of FCA/CFA funeral price survey with 10 affiliates.

Josh will be connecting with Caitlyn Doughty to talk about producing videos for FCA.

Chapter vs. Federation system. Some problems with some affiliates. We have no power to stop them from doing certain things. The chapter model could eliminate rogue behavior. There are pros and cons but one thing certain – it will cost a lot of money.

Ruth poses question – is there a way to get control without going to chapter system?

**Guest speaker, Eric Neuhaus**

Explains that online space for death tech is undefined, but changing. When it does change, where does FCA want to be? We must target our audience. Is it middle-aged women? We have to market to our demographic. Eric suggests that FCA embrace home funeral movements.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30.

**SUNDAY, September 7**

Ruth: Call to order at 9:06 a.m.

Josh excused for executive session.

Motion by Rod: At the Spring 2015 meeting the board will adopt new job descriptions with recommended salary and benefit packages. These will be developed by the personnel committee.

The positions will be posted.

The positions will be assumed January 2016.

Until further notice, salaries are frozen.

Jean seconds.

Discussion: Explanation of thought process for revising the job descriptions.

Motion passes without objection.

Jean MOVES TO remove the two percent increase in salaries for office staff and

to add $10,000 to the telecommunications line.

Marcy seconds.

Motion passes without objection.

Jean moves to approve budget as amended.

Jim seconded.

Motion passes without objection.

**7. 2016 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE**

Discussion: Atlanta affiliate has extended invitation to host conference there.

Benefits: Opportunities for media coverage via Clark Howard. Airport is a hub. We should try to get the general public to our meetings.

Discussion about expanding scope of presentations. Karen could do a “surrogate” session, for example.

Jean moves that we work with Memorial Society of Georgia to plan 2016 conference in Atlanta.

Holly seconds.

Motion passes without objection.

**Partner organizations:**

We need to figure out how to be better friends with Hospice and palliative care programs.

Move to have Jane Creech (consultant) come to the spring meeting to help us develop specific goals and deadlines for a strategic plan for 3, 5, 10 years.

Holly seconds.

Motion passes without objection.

Discussion: Spring meeting in Denver will try for April 25,26. Karen will check with Jane Creech to see if she is available.

Discussion regarding conflict of interest: Ruth reminds us that we need to remember that our affiliation with FCA supersedes our affiliations with our affiliates when we are making decisions at the FCA meetings and operating in FCA capacities.

Ruth and Jean revised the conflict of interest policy to reflect suggested changes and also added a conflict of interest clause.

Meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.

Following the meeting, Jim Null announced his resignation due to health concerns.