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

April 24-26, 2015 • Denver, Colorado

KEY: Action items in red. Motions in blue.

**Members present:**

Ruth Bennett

Rodger Ericson

Rod Stout

Holly Shreve Gilbert

Marcy Klein

Jean Nation

Karen Smith

**Guests present Saturday:**

Jan Eccher, president of Denver FCA affiliate

**Agenda:**

**I. Approve agenda, approve minutes of Fall, 2014 meeting and spring teleconferences**

**II. Governance**

a. Appointments to board vacancies

b. Form nominating committee for 2016 Board of Trustees elections

c. Proposed amendment to bylaws requiring affiliates to have term limits for board service

**III. Executive Director’s Report**

**IV. Committee Reports**

a. Mission and Values

b. Publications and Web

c. Affiliate Relations (note: we have a need for a dedicated peer-coaching group for volunteers interested in starting FCAs where we have none)

d. Fundraising

**V. Finance and Fundraising**

a. Year to Date Income and Expense

b. Year to Date Assets and Balance Sheet

**VI. Ongoing Projects**

a. Consumer Federation of America/FCA price survey

b. Video production

c. Fall meeting (addition)

**VII. 2016 Biennial Conference**

a. Form program committee

b. Partner organizations

**VIII. Staffing and job descriptions**

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. MT

1. **Approve agenda, approve minutes of minutes of Fall 2014 meeting and spring teleconference**

Under staffing and job descriptions: Add executive director assessment tool

To this evening’s discussion: Add Consumer Federation/FCA price survey

Agenda is approved as amended. (Amendments will be added)

Approval of minutes of fall meeting. No objections, so approved.

Approval of spring teleconference minutes. No objections, so approved.

1. **Governance**
2. Appointment to board vacancy. John Lantz, retired lawyer affiliated with Memorial Society in Georgia has been invited to be a board member.

**MOTION** by Ruth to appoint John to the board.

**Second by Ron**. Unanimously approved

1. Form nominating committee for 2016 BOT election.

Karen agrees to serve. Ruth or Karen will ask Laurie Powsner and Rachel Zeldin to serve.

1. Proposed amendment to bylaws requiring affiliates to have term limits.

Ruth explains her proposed term-limit for officer amendment to the bylaws. Basically causes problems for affiliates when a board member hangs on too long. Term limits would create healthier organizations.

DISCUSSION: Pro and con … Karen and Jean express some concerns because of potential dwindling membership or of problem chapters. Josh suggests this be viewed as “a floor,” a model, so to speak and not a mandate that isn’t open for discussion. Should we make this a “recommended” policy.

Rod reminds that we don’t want chapters to get in situations where they loose institutional knowledge.

Will revisit under ongoing projects.

**ADDITION. Year to date income and expense** (moved from V) … information reviewed and Ok’d informally.

**ADDITION: Consumer federation/FCA price survey:** **DISCUSSION:** Josh explains a campaign to require funeral home and funeral providers for digital transparency FCA will work to ensure every funeral home’s GPL is online. We should create a public awareness campaign. To that end we need to solicit stories from affiliates that illustrate the need. We should consider creating a slogan or tag line for the campaign and provide guidelines for the FTC.

8:16 BREAK.

Resume at 8:26

Break into executive session at 8:34 to discuss EEOC complaint.

Dismissal: 8:47 recess until 9 a.m. Saturday.

**SATURDAY**

**Members present:**

Ruth Bennett

Rodger Ericson

Rod Stout

Holly Shreve Gilbert

Marcy Klein

Jean Nation

Karen Smith

Meeting called to order at 9:05 a.m.

Guest introduced: Jan Eccher, president of Colorado FCA affiliate

**III. Executive director’s report:**

Rod has questions about Grim Reader

Currently testing mailing this to affiliate members – with envelope.

Josh will conduct test-marketing of sending the Grim Reader to members of three different affiliates and measure the response.

**IV: Committee reports:**

a. Mission and values? Die, fly or fry?

Discussion about mission and tagline and decision to put this on hold. Suggestion that the word “funeral” should be eliminated.

b. Publications and web:   
Publications: Marcy shares informational piece on status of literature to date. She has done an amazing job of revision and consolidating materials.

Web design report: Holly. Discussion of progress with Wired Impact. Mandate to ask two questions for WI: Can they mock up a home page? How do they make the projections of increase in traffic and donations? Based on previous successes? Agreement to wait for analytics reports and answers to questions before moving forward with commitment for redesign. Holly will pursue answers and share asap.

c. Affiliate relations:

Discussion of problem affiliates: Kern County, California about to fold; Oregon chapter sending weird emails as though they didn’t realize FCA national had disaffiliated them for non-payment of dues and failure to follow sound practices. Affiliate in Milwaukee is dysfunctional and will not allow Karen to help out. She requests assistance. Josh agrees to help if possible.

Need peer-coaching group for starting affiliates. Josh suggests we they just need a contact who can do follow-through and make sure things are going OK. Reminder that the affiliate guidebook is very thorough and straight-forward. Agreement that affiliate follow-up/check-in should be reinstated.

Rodger and Ruth offer to help Josh do coaching for new groups.

Ruth will assign board members affiliate “check-ins.”

Affiliate survey: Jean wants to find out if affiliates understand what kind of support they receive from FCA. We will ask questions of the affiliates that we call and send answers.

Josh will send contact info for affiliates so we can contact them. Each Board member will contact 10 affiliates

Discussion of affiliate vs. chapters. No conclusion.

d. Fundraising:

Discussion of what has potential long-term. Consider having Mindy Moore return and do some training. Rodger makes ASSET presentation. Bottom line: Goal is to build a cadre of people who will tell the story.

Lunch break 12:40-1:15

**VI: Ongoing projects:**

a. Consumer Federation price survey (discussion completed Friday)

b. Video production: Josh would like to do a Kickstarter for money to buy a camera and some video equipment for creation of videos.

FROM FRIDAY: Bylaws change for affiliates

Moved by Holly to add this language to Article 4, new section 9:   
In order to maintain the vibrancy of our affiliate organizations it is strongly suggested that the bylaws for each affiliate shall provide for term limits of no more than two consecutive terms for officers. Terms are strongly suggested to be no longer than three or four years.

Seconded by Rod.

Motion passes 7-0

**Fall meeting (addition):**  
Decided that fall meeting will be in Detroit October 9-11.

Meeting recessed at 2:35 p.m.

**SUNDAY:**

**Members present:**

Ruth Bennett

Rodger Ericson

Rod Stout

Holly Shreve Gilbert

Marcy Klein

Jean Nation

Karen Smith

Meeting called to order at 9:05 a.m.

Ruth moves to accept Jean Nation’s resignation. Rod seconds. Unanimous approval.

Holly MOVES TO adopt Rod’s proposed protocols for decorum at meetings:

Rod Proposal on Board Conduct

1. We will not tolerate any personal insults or attacks on anyone, of any kind.
2. We will always speak respectfully to and with each other, with the full understanding that individuals opinions may differ.
3. All discussion shall be specifically directed to the topic at hand, as defined by and agreed upon agenda, or at the discretion of the presiding officer.
4. That we agree that we are all here to further and improve upon the mission and values of FCA. Therefore, all statements and discussions should be positive and/or constructive with the aim of moving our organization forward.

Rodger seconds

Unanimously approved

**VII: Biennial Conference: June 22-26 2016**

Karen and Marcy volunteer for biennial committee

Ideas for panels:

* + Ruth – track on fundraising,
  + Holly – obituary writing
  + John – Funeral FUN Fair.
  + Rodger – ASSET, tell the story
  + Karen – Advance directives   
    [Common typo: there is no “D” at the end of the word “Advance” when used as “Advance Directives”]
  + Pros and cons of affiliate mergers, how do you get started.
  + Alkaline hydrolosis
  + Shroud wrapping
  + Writing and using bylaws

Ideas for tracks for professionals:

* How to talk to families about dying loved ones
* FCA helping clergy

Potential speakers:

* Urban death project, Katrina Spade
* Paul Koudounaris.
* Clark Howard.

Pursue FCA WANTS YOU idea for conference. Holly will design poster and sign up sheet for ASSET members. “Bring your team to Georgia”

**DISCUSSION** of emerging technologies and services in death care industry. Lines blurring among funeral and disposition providers. How do we handle this. Reminder by Josh that “conflict of interest” does not mean one entity is evil.

**VIII: Job descriptions:**

Josh presents revised descriptions for executive director (FT), office manager (FT) and development director (PT)

Requested revisions:

* Move the QUICK BOOKS responsibility to the office manager
* Add “and other responsibilities as needed” to all the descriptions
* Add “assist with input of website content as needed” to the office manager description
* Get business cards and stationery …
* Add pursue major donors to the development description

Consider: $30K-$31K for office manager with benefits

Consider: $20 an hour for development with no benefits for development

Josh will have ideas for salaries for two additional positions within TWO weeks.

Job descriptions will be modified based on feedback. Will try to have this shared within two weeks.

Executive director assessment tool (added to agenda):

Decision to consider reframing this into mission, vision and values goals.   
Karen will share the evaluation from her own job. This will be discussed at next meeting.

**To discuss at June 3 teleconference:**

* Get answers to the Wired Impact questions and maybe splash page mock-up
* Set up a time for ED evaluation at fall meeting
* Continue discussion of mission and tag line statements
* Get report from Jan Eccher

**To discuss at fall meeting:**

* Continue conversation regarding affiliates vs. chapters
* Devise concrete objectives for the coming year.
* Formulate plan for public awareness campaign regarding price lists and advocating for FTC to make this a requirement/law
* Biennial conference

**Ruthisms:**   
  
  
The mind can no longer absorb what the ass can no longer bear

I’d rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy

You can tune a piano but you can’t tunafish.