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

October 9-11, 2015 • Detroit, Michigan

KEY: Action items in red. Motions in blue.

**Members present:**

Ruth Bennett

Rod Stout

Holly Shreve Gilbert

Marcy Klein

Karen Smith

John Lantz (arrived at 8:35 p.m.)

**AGENDA**

I. Approve agenda, approve minutes of Spring, 2015 meeting and teleconferences—*p. 1*

II. Governance

a. Slate of candidates for 2016 FCA Board elections—Karen Smith—*no document*

III. Old and Continued Business

a. Affiliate relations (note: we have a need for a dedicated peer-coaching group for volunteers interested in starting FCAs where we have none)—*no document*

b. Videos for FCA (on hold until new website)—*no document*

IV. Committee Reports

a. Web and Publications—*p. 26*

b. Fundraising—*no document*

c. Affiliate Relations (all board present results of check-in calls)—*p. 27*

V. Executive Director’s Report—*p. 9*

VI. Ongoing and Imminent Projects

1. Consumer Federation of America/FCA online funeral price disclosures survey to be released October 19, 2015—*p. 15*
2. Reforming the Funeral Rule (related to the survey referenced above)—*no document*

c. FCA help with suit against state of Alabama for barring home funerals—*no document*

VII. Staffing (Information only)—*no documents for this session*

a. Advertising Office Manager and Development Director positions

b. Transition period with new staff

VIII. 2016 Biennial Conference

1. Programming and Keynotes—*no document*
2. Continuing education track—John Lantz—*p. 38*

IX. 2016 Proposed Budget—*p. 33*

X. Finance and Fundraising

1. Year to Date Income and Expense—*p. 35*
2. Year to Date Assets and Balance Sheet—*p. 37*
3. Board fundraising telethon *(pledge forms, names, and pitches supplied at meeting)*
4. Loan to Peoples Memorial Association for structured fundraising—*p. 13*

**Friday, October 9 2015**

Meeting called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Announcement: Rodger Ericson has resigned but has agreed to take over peer-coaching and new-affiliate building.

**I. Agenda and minutes**

Agenda approved

Minutes amended to remove Jean’s name from Sunday, April 26 meeting

April minutes accepted as amended

**II. Governance**

**Slate of candidates**

Karen will pursue this fall

Executive session

**III. Old and continued business**

Affiliate relations: There is a need to form a dedicated peer coaching group for volunteers. We get requests for people who want to set up their own. Rodger agreed to lead the group.

Videos: Videos for FCA now on hold until new website is ready.

**IV. Committee reports**

Web and publication: Marcy has eliminated under-utilized publications The website completion is imminent. Wireframes and site maps shared with members. Design phase begins next.

Affiliate relations: Discussion regarding compiling results of our outreach/survey calls to affiliates. Important for them to know that others are struggling.

Discussion: Consider the idea of creating a public service campaign to increase awareness about funeral costs. We can test this on our new website and then hand over to affiliates to conduct as well.

Fundraising:

Put planning of public awareness campaign on agenda for biennial conference meeting. Meanwhile, Holly will pursue possibilities of integrating into public relations class.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

**Saturday, October 10**

Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m.

**V. Executive director’s report:**

Discussion of People’s Memorial Assocation in Oregon. Financially challenged due to a myriad of issues. Ruth suggests a phone call to assess the situation to tell them we’re happy to help write a letter, reach out to membership and potential donors. It’s important for us to put some effort there for many reasons.

New consumer’s alliance of Philadelphia is going well. Small but robust and they continue to receive complaints from consumers about the old, disaffiliated group.

**VI: Ongoing and imminent projects**

Consumer Federation of America/FCA online funeral price disclosures survey to be released October 19, 2015:

Teleconference will be held with CFA and whatever media want to participate. Agreement that consumers will be surprised when they hear that funeral homes don’t provide prices online and we have to ask the government to make them do this. We have to ASK THE GOVERNMENT to make them do this. Josh will send a copy of the press release to us (and affiliates) so we can alert our local media and our media contacts.

Reforming the funeral rule: Need to work on non-declinable fee disclosure. Average is about $2200. John suggests consider giving FTC a template of what we want to see. Ruth suggests working on legislators for support and putting together some talking points should you get a call

State of Alabama rule barring home funerals: Josh will advocate for change in legislation that requires presence of funeral director at all memorial services in Alabama.

VII: Staffing

We need to target a person with non-profit experience to fill two positions.

Suggestion to post job on: idealist.com and run a rigorous recruiting campaign

**VIII: Biennial Conference:**

Crowne Plaza Airport, Atlanta

June 23-26

Discussion regarding what classes to offer and the need to determine whether the course is plenary or continuing education. Suggestion to offering continuing education on Friday and those sessions can also be plenary.

Suggested classes:

* Advanced directives
* Brief history of dying – Karen
* Breakout on how to use new website – Josh
* Obituary writing – Holly
* Katrina Spade is first choice for keynote
* Consider field trip to monastery that offers green burial
* Local cemetery historical and architectural features
* Death café proprietor is willing to run one
* Fund raising
* Price surveys
* Direct mail
* Publicity and marketing
* Mission values and goals to move forward
* Consider a discussion about merging affiliates

Other possible ideas:

* A presentation on the future of FCA by Josh and Ruth is suggested as possible dinner keynote
* Ideas for skits performed by board members include, father trying to talk to daughter about funeral, parent calling to try to talk, then child calling, post burial reaction to death (casket)
* Funeral fun fair. Exploring this idea.
* Discussion of whether we can have discussion about contracting because it’s not working anymore.
* Have table topics for lunch … have people turn in suggestions for topics.
* Combine the continuing ed and plenary sessions at the conference
* Ask someone to donate a casket for a photo booth
* Need ideas for gift bags for speakers

**IX. 2016 Proposed budget**

Executive session called to discuss personnel issue.

Motion by Rod to give Josh a three percent raise.

Second by Marcy

Unanimously approved

Board agreement that the PEP evaluation form will be tweaked and used as a tool for future reviews.

Ruth entertains a motion to adopt the 2016 budget as amended (with Josh’s three percent raise)

Second by Rod

Unanimously approved

**Sunday, October 11, 2015**

Meeting called to order at 10:06 a.m.

John suggests creating a standard GPL form to distribute to affiliates and keep a list of those who are 100 percent compliant.

John agrees to work on designing the template and the topic will be placed on the agenda for June.

General discussion regarding conference:

Planned giving: Rod will look into this and explore what we need to do on our end.

Ruth will connect Rod with development person from PBS in Seattle, Rod will check out PBS plan for planned giving.

Affiliate discussion. Josh asks us to sanction his request to comply with practices or be disaffiliated. The Mid-Florida affiliate is violating conflict of interest policies, and ethics in general by having a funeral director on the board from the sole funeral home affiliate contractor.

Marcy moves to send the Mid-Florida affiliate a letter asking that they comply with our bylaws or be disaffiliated.

John seconds

Unanimously approved

Phone conference is scheduled for 6 p.m. EST Wednesday, Dec. 16

Agenda for conference:

* Conference update
* Website update
* Board fundraising
* Staffing update
* Affiliate relations
* PMA update

Agreement to complete fundraising calls on our own in the very near future.

Meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.