**Funeral Consumers Alliance**

**Fall 2017 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

November 10-11, 2017

Oakland University, Rochester Michigan

Present: Alison Rector, Karen Smith, Phil Olsen, Rod Stout, Nancy Peterson and Holly Gilbert

Absent: John Lantz, John Abramson, Marcy Klein

KEY: **Action items bold**. *Motions in italic.*

Saturday, November 10

Meeting called to order at 9:07 a.m.

**I. Approval of Minutes and call to order**

a. Approve draft minutes of Sept. 5, 2017, Board Teleconference

*Alison moves to approve*

*Rod second*

*Unanimous*

**II. Finances and Fundraising—**

a. YTD 2017 Income v Expense Budget v Actual

b. YTD 2017 Balance Sheet

Josh notes that ‘other’ office expense is higher than expected because QuickBooks went down and had to be rebooted.

c. Report on thank you calls to large donors—whole board

Thank you calls still in progress. Some have gone very well.

Discussion about fundraising. We need to tell our story.

**Action item (all): Figure out how and when we will view the video from the story-telling conference that Josh had to miss.**

d. Fundraising goals and projects (longer discussion)—Josh, whole board  
 Delayed until Sunday

e. Proposed Budget for 2018—Josh Slocum

*Phil moves to adjust 2018 budget to account for two percent raise for Josh and decrease in retirement fund from 7 percent to 6 percent for 2018 and from 6 percent to 5 percent for 2019.*

*Second?*

*Unanimous*

f. 2017 Financial Review update—Marcy Klein report

Phone discussion with Marcy regarding financial review we will complete our annual financial review on the odd year.

**III. Executive Director’s Report—**Josh Slocum

**Action item: Adjust 2018 budget to reflect Josh’s salary increase of 2 percent.**

**IV. Biennial Conference**

a. Keynote speakers

b. Workshops

c. Recruit volunteer committee (up to four ppl) from FCA Rochester for on-the-ground support

[Marcy Klein will create Rochester brochure for hotels, sight-seeing]

d. Recruiting sponsors (ideas from NHFA)—Josh Slocum

e. Assign person to do post-conference online wrap-up for funerals.org

f. Advertising

Melissa Unfred confirmed as speaker

**Summary of IV Biennial Conference topics discussion which included Marcy Klein on speaker phone:**

**Action item: Alison volunteers to be the collector of the conference wrap up**Ideas for conference:   
  
Get underwriters to help defray expenses

Can people in Rochester think about this in terms of local businesses?  
Karen suggests someone go to local Chamber of Commerce to get swag to give away in registration bags.

**Action item: Alison will email an example “ask” to sponsors**

**Action item: Marcy will create and share a press release about the conference**

**Action item: Plan a field trip to the Victorian cemetery, ask Rick to do a private tour and talk about his restoration work.**

**Summary of impromptu discussion about what FCA needs to do to establish itself as a key player in the death movement:**

We try to change the current people doing funeral business

They are building a different industry:  
“They’re not trying to change a Cadillac, they’re building a Volt.” – Nancy  
We add something to their mix – the legislative arm – and history and extensive expertise. We effectively are the institutional memory.

Entrenched legal system of licensure is a problem. We want to change that. Get rid of regulatory boards that are nothing but trade associations that have a government name on them.

Can we frame death care as a social justice issue (we are giving voice to the voiceless)?

Consider tagline: “FCA is changing the death culture,” “changing the death paradigm,” “toward a new death care paradigm,” “toward a new end-of-life paradigm.”

**Action item: Plan a death care summit. Sit down with all the other boards and see what they are doing, what we can accomplish together. Play up the legislative work.**

**V. Affiliate Relations**

a. Report on Affiliate phone calls and results from all board member

b. Mergers—Josh Slocum

c. The look and shape of affiliates in the future (important, but not enough time in this meeting

to address it fully. This should discussed further in our upcoming near-term meetings.)

**Action item: Before February board meeting, members need to call affiliates.**

Survey questions revised.**Action item: Josh will revise the new survey and send it out to us. We should solicit responses from our affiliates before the next phone conference.**

**Action item: Nancy will facilitate discussion of Pennsylvania affiliate merger.**

**VI. Governance and Personnel**

1. Approve bylaws amendment addressing donations from industry—Karen Smith

*Alison motions to approve bylaws amendment.  
Nancy seconds.   
Unanimous*

b. Appoint Committee for 2018 FCA Board elections. Discuss candidates and timeline.

c. Executive Director performance review—Karen Smith

**Action item: Phil will chair committee for 2018 FCA elections. We will all give him names.** *Will discuss Sunday.*

*Considering an advisory board.*

**VII. Ongoing and upcoming projects**

a. FTC Funeral Rule amendment update—Josh Slocum

b. Survey of state capital funeral homes—Josh Slocum

Nothing new to report

Meeting adjourned Saturday at 4: 20 p.m.

Sunday, November 11

Meeting called to order at 9:15 a.m.

Present: Alison Rector, Karen Smith, Phil Olsen, Rod Stout, Nancy Peterson and Holly Gilbert

Absent: John Lantz, John Abramson, Marcy Klein

**VIII. Web, Publications, Outreach**

a. Update on literature/pamphlets—Marcy Klein

b. Outreach to death-positive friends (Order of the Good Death, NHFA, etc.). Set goals—Josh Slocum and Karen Smith

**Action item: Nancy will work on the Spanish brochure translation**

**IX. Ongoing and Upcoming Projects**.

# a. Update on FTC Funeral Rule reform—Josh Slocum b. Date and time of next teleconference

Google Meet-Up experiment 7 p.m. Thursday, February 15, 2018

**Action item: Holly figure out Meet-Up logistics and send instructions to everyone in January.**

**Summary of discussion of conference ideas during Sunday’s meeting:**

Possible speakers:

* Caleb Wild
* Melissa Unfred
* Amy Cunningham

Possible workshops:

* Get professionals from the state for a panel discussion
* Lynn Barnett on home funerals
* Mary Ellen Markat death café
* Holly obit writing
* Holly social media
* Nancy on building affiliates
* Nastassia do lunch table price surveys
* Ruth Bennett on storytelling

Possible silent auction for fundraising:

1. **Action item: Each board member come up with an item**
2. Holly will offer design service
3. Alison will be the coordinator, Marcy will help

Consider a major donor thank you, a special cemetery tour

In lieu of two board meetings at conference, have a board training session

**Action item: Josh will put working conference workshop idea doc up on Google drive**

**Discussion about Death Care Coalition:**

Death care summit in Boston

Four hour meeting

Invite Caitlin Doughty, Tanya , Katrina Spade, Caleb Wild etc …

Josh will start reaching out soon.

Discuss the idea at February meeting

What do we want out of this meeting?

* Trying to change the industry
* More formal support for individual support
* Transparency
* Formal, open lines of communication
* United front to the press
* Messaging consistent
* Put the consumer back in control of end of life decision-making

Meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

**Action items:**

**Action item (all): Figure out how and when we will view the video from the story-telling conference that Josh had to miss.**

**Action item: Adjust 2018 budget to reflect Josh’s salary increase of 2 percent.**

**Action item: Alison volunteers to be the collector of the conference wrap up.**

**Action item: Alison will email an example “ask” to sponsors**

**Action item: Marcy will create and share a press release about the conference**

**Action item: Plan a field trip to the Victorian cemetery, ask Rick to do a private tour and talk about his restoration work.**

**Action item: Plan a death care summit. Sit down with all the other boards and see what they are doing, what we can accomplish together. Play up the legislative work.**

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**Action item: Josh will revise the new survey and send it out to us. We should solicit responses from our affiliates before the next phone conference.**

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**Action item: Phil will chair committee for 2018 FCA elections. We will all give him names.**

**Action item: Nancy will work on the Spanish brochure translation**

**Action item: Holly figure out Meet-Up logistics and send instructions to everyone in January (for Feb. meeting)**