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**FreeStore Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
January 30, 2023 @ 5:00 PM
St. Timothy's Episcopal Church Rm 131**

Members Present: Diane Munns, Marty Rathje, Larry Anderson, Jeanie Smith, Pat McDermott, Rachel McGrew, and Gloria Gray.

Others Present: Roger Munns

Various informational documents to be considered during this meeting were provided to the Board Members prior to the meeting with ample time for its study and deliberation. The contents of these documents, referenced throughout, will be preserved as a permanent record of the FreeStore and deemed to be incorporated by this reference in the meeting minutes to the extent the Board considered, discussed, or acted upon the matters in the informational documents.

1. **Call to Order** - Ms. Munns, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., confirmed a quorum was present, and chaired the meeting.
2. **Approval of Minutes** – Ms. McGrew asked if there were any amendments or corrections to the minutes from the meeting held on November 7, 2022. There being no changes, Ms. Smith moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. McDermott seconded and upon unanimous vote, the motion carried.
3. **Treasurer's Report** – Mr. Anderson presented the December 31, 2022, Financial Report highlighting financial activities from the past year. He noted general donations from individuals increased dramatically in 2022; \$66,051 was received compared to the \$15,000 budgeted. The Board believes one reason for the increase is because the FreeStore remains to be 100% volunteer based. The Board also emphasized the importance of sending personal thank you letters to donors. An idea was also presented to share stories of how donations are making a difference as part of the 2022 Annual Report.
4. **Grant Report** – Ms. Smith shared updates from the Grant Report dated January 25, 2023, commenting on the status of grant applications from the Cohen Foundation, Chrysalis Foundation, BWA Foundation, Polk County Betterment, Prairie Meadows Foundation, and Story County. Ms. Smith thanked the Board for providing timely information to help complete grant applications.
5. **Operation's Manager Report** – Mr. Rathje highlighted on non-budget items from the Operations Memo dated January 30, 2023, commenting on year-to-date activity, inventory volume, residential pick-ups, volunteer levels, warehouse conditions, the development of an interactive client form, and the status of the year-end report. He noted that 389 families were served in 2022 compared to 328 in 2021. Also, a total of 8,691 volunteer hours were reported in 2022. There has been an increase in donations creating a very full warehouse. Any unwanted/unneeded inventory is picked up by JOPPA weekly instead of delivering items to DAV. Mr. Rathje commented on the development of an interactive client form that will be available on the FreeStore website. This web-based form will guide advocates through required fields and when applicable, indicate payment due. Mr. Rathje also commented that he will be working on the year-end report until another volunteer is identified.

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6. Action Items:

- a. Meeting Dates for 2023 – Ms. Munns presented the following FreeStore Board of Director meeting dates for the remainder of 2023: April 24 (Annual Meeting), July 24, and October 23.
- b. 2023 Budget – Mr. Anderson presented the second draft of the 2023 budget, asking for input and proposed changes. Discussion ensued about the following proposed budget items.
 - i. **Bulk Inventory Purchases** – The Board discussed that it is sometimes necessary to purchase items when inventory volume is low. The Board agreed donated items will be used before purchased items. Additionally, purchased items will be stored in the lower warehouse, out of site from clients, whenever possible.
 1. Dressers – Line items for kids (\$10,000) and adult (\$2,500) dressers.
 2. Dining room tables – A line item for \$7,500.
 3. Mattress covers – A line item for \$4,625 to help protect from bed bugs.
 4. Vacuums – A line item for \$3,850.
 5. Small kitchen appliances – A line item for \$1,000.
 6. Pots and pans – A line item for \$1,600.
 7. Kitchen utensils – A line item for \$1,500.
 8. Cleaning supplies – A line item for \$4,500.
 9. Linens – A line item for \$300. This category includes bedding and towels.
 10. Dishware / silverware – Ms. Gray suggested a line be added to the budget to purchase dishes and silverware to complement mismatched sets. Ms. Munns asked Ms. Gray to write purchasing guidelines to clarify when the condition of donated dishes does not meet expectations and new dishes should be purchased. In the meantime, Mr. Anderson will add a temporary line item for \$1,000, until this is formally approved (E-mail or in-person vote).
 11. Mattresses and box springs – A line item for \$2,500. This includes boxed mattresses and bed frames with built in box springs.
 12. Bed frames – A line item for \$1,000.
 13. Miscellaneous inventory items – A line item for \$1,000.
 - ii. **Fence around the dock** – There has been concerns about the potential of someone falling off the side wall of the loading dock. Mr. Anderson's son is willing to construct a metal security railing with a hinged, lockable gate in front of the shed. He would only charge for materials, estimated to be around \$700. Construction is to begin at the end of March.
 - iii. **Security system** – Mr. Anderson presented a memo dated January 25, 2023, about a possible security system for the warehouse. The Board agreed to not move forward with the purchase of a security system. Instead, the Board would like to explore increasing exterior lighting, adding parking lot signage, and training drivers where to park trucks to deter from theft/vandalism.
 - iv. **Truck repairs** - Mr. Anderson noted a separate line item for truck repairs, as discussed at the November 2022 meeting, is not necessary to add.
 - v. **Desk workspace in warehouse** – Mr. Rathje shared a proposal to improve the West end of the warehouse that serves as the "office" to be more efficient and inviting. This workspace houses receipts, client forms, volunteer sign-in sheet, and other miscellaneous items. A rendering of the workspace layout, materials, and cost was shared. The proposal also requests electrical work along the West and South walls. Mr. Rathje is requesting \$2,000 for the project. Adding technology components (i.e., Wi-Fi, tablets, printer) to the workspace is not part of the planned improvements currently.

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- vi. **Strategic plan facilitation** – Ms. Smith shared her thoughts from a meeting with Mr. Rathje, Ms. Munns and Mr. Joe Benesh. Mr. Benesh is from Ingenuity Company, a strategic planning, organizational development, and design thinking firm based in Des Moines, Iowa. The meeting discussed moving forward with a strategic planning session with the FreeStore Board to determine if the FreeStore is serving the right clients, how many clients can be successfully served, and how to sustain the organization from volunteers, inventory, and space. Ms. Smith requested \$10,000 be budgeted for this strategic planning.

Ms. Gray moved to approve the 2023 budget with the discussed additions (i – vi) noted above, Ms. Smith seconded and upon unanimous vote, the motion carried.

c. Cohen Foundation Grant Recommendations

- i. **Trucks** – Mr. Rathje presented a memo dated January 13, 2023, from the Truck Search Committee (Mr. Rathje, Mr. Mike Smith, and Mr. Bill Brentano). The Committee is recommending replacing the 2004 and 2006 trucks with, if feasible, gently used boxed trucks with low mileage or if the price difference is insignificant, brand-new trucks. Other expenses include title, vehicle use tax, decals, cages for catalytic converters, one lift platform, and backup cameras for all three trucks. Ms. Smith motioned to grant the Truck Search Committee authority to purchase two box trucks, not to exceed \$100,000, without further notice to the Board. If the purchase amount will exceed \$100,000, approval from the Board will be obtained through an E-mail vote. Ms. Gray seconded and upon unanimous vote, the motion carried. The \$100,000 expense will come from funds received from the Cohen Foundation Grant and general FreeStore donated funds.

7. Discussion Items:

- a. Warehouse address: Mr. Rathje expressed interest in changing the warehouse address from 10th street to 11th street to reduce confusion with clients. The request needs to be filed with the Postal Service and would require purchasing a mailbox. The Board agreed for him to pursue.
- b. Social media – Mr. McDermott shared the FreeStore has been permitted as a Facebook fundraiser. A donate button has been placed on the FreeStore website. Facebook pays out funds two times a month with a \$100 minimum. Mr. McDermott suggested sharing this new fundraiser service with volunteers and including in the Spring newsletter.
- c. Target Circle: This was the first time participating on this platform and raised \$1,431.99.
- d. Amazon Smiles: This fundraising platform is sunseting and the link on the FreeStore's website will be removed.
- e. Google drive documents: Mr. McDermott stated some documents will be moving to Google Drive to supplement full Microsoft One licenses. Access rights will be assigned to appropriate individuals to ensure confidentiality.

There being no further discussion items, Ms. Munns adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting will be the Annual meeting on April 24, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel A. McGrew

Rachel McGrew, Secretary