

FreeStore Board
Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2024 @ 5:00 PM
St. Timothy's Episcopal Church Rm 131

Members Present: Diane Munns, Marty Rathje, Larry Anderson, Rachel McGrew, Mike Smith, Gloria Gray, Pat McDermott, Dave Busiek (via teleconference) and Peg Smith (via teleconference)

Others Present: Roger Munns and Joe Benesh

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 5:02 p.m., confirmed a quorum was present, and chaired the meeting. Ms. Munns then presented the remaining 2024 meeting dates: April 29 (Annual Meeting), July 29, and October 29. Members confirmed acknowledgment of these dates.
2. **Approval of Minutes** – Ms. Munns asked if there were any amendments or corrections to the minutes from the meeting held on November 1, 2023. There being no changes requested, Ms. Jeanie Smith moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Anderson seconded and upon unanimous vote, the motion carried.
3. **Financial Report** – Mr. Anderson presented the December 31, 2023 Financial Report, highlighting financial activities from the quarter. The fall newsletter generated nearly 200 donations, with many being over \$1,000, resulting in \$14,000 of revenue greater than budget. The increase in donations may have been due to featuring a first-person story on how the FreeStore is “helping families start over”. Mr. Anderson also noted a CD with a 5.1% APY with Bankers Trust was purchased.
4. **Operations Report** – Mr. Rathje shared the Operations Report dated January 29, 2024. He indicated he is working on finalizing year-end numbers. He then highlighted the recent donations received from Staybridge hotel in West Des Moines (mattresses, box springs, dressers, end tables, lamps) and the associated pick-up/storage expenses. Staybridge contacted Mr. Rathje about collecting additional furniture. Mr. Rathje requested funds to hire external movers to assist with the furniture donation. Ms. Jeanie Smith moved to approve Mr. Rathje’s request. Ms. Gray seconded and upon unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Rathje shared updates on volunteer onboarding and the cleaning of the warehouse. He shared that Mr. Busiek and Ms. Gray are working on improving the FreeStore’s rating on the Charity Navigator website by providing general financial and governance statistics. Mr. Rathje then started a discussion over the storage and usage of donor e-mail addresses. The group decided to continue to collect and store e-mail addresses from the various platforms (donor receipts, website inquires, newsletter donation slips), create a database of active e-mail addresses, and use the addresses to send thank-you notes, general communications, and solicit specific warehouse needs.

5. **Grant Report** – Ms. Jeanie Smith presented her Grant Report as of January 24, 2024, highlighting updates from the Chrysalis Foundation, BWA Foundation, Cohen Foundation, Polk County Betterment, and Prairie Meadows grant processes. She informed the Board this is grant application and requested an order of priority needs. The group discussed needs of grantable items, in particular small microwaves, dining room tables and chairs, and youth dressers.

6. **Technology Report** – Mr. McDermott gave an update on the FreeStore website. Ms. Julie Feirer rebuilt the FreeStore’s website theme and continues to maintain the site. Additionally, a group of FreeStore volunteers has been examining the website and putting together a wish list of changes to update the site’s appearance. Included in this list, is the need for good quality, impactful photos.
7. **Branding Update** – Mr. Munns stated two trucks have been wrapped with the new logo and the third is planned to be wrapped in the coming weeks. He shared letterhead with the new logo has been created, clothing needs to be ordered and he will be updating the warehouse building sign.
8. **Discussion Items**
- a. **Strategic Planning Update:** Mr. Joe Benesh from The Ingenuity Company presented his Strategic Planning Executive Summary for the FreeStore. He reviewed his proposed mission and vision statement for this strategic plan. He then walked through the characteristics of the organization, value propositions, and the areas of focus for 2024-2026 based on the previous tactical sessions with Board members and heavily involved volunteers. Mr. Benesh requested feedback from the Board, particularly the preferred option for a mission and vision statement. Ms. Munns asked for Board members to respond to Mr. Benesh via e-mail. Upon feedback, Mr. Benesh will finalize the strategic plan and develop an implementation schedule for the three strategy groups. As next steps, Ms. Munns proposed holding a special meeting with Mr. Benesh to go over the plan for implementation.
 - b. **Cohen Foundation Update:** Ms. Munns and Ms. Jeanie Smith talked with the Cohen Foundation about continuing their relationship with the FreeStore. There is great interest, therefore, discussion ensued amongst the group about what capital expenditures the FreeStore should request. With the warehouse contract expiring in 2030, a three-phased expenditure approach was proposed. The first phase would focus on capital expenditures that could be purchased for the current infrastructure and transferred to a new location. The second phase would be securing income for a new location and the third phase includes the purchasing and moving to a new location. Following the discussion about the future of the FreeStore warehouse, Ms. Munns assembled a discovery team to research relocation timelines with non-profits who recently relocated facilities.
 - c. **2024 Budget Overview:** Mr. Anderson shared a draft of the 2024 budget, directing attention to capital expenditures. Mr. Rathje requested an additional \$1,000 for household supplies for the warehouse. Mr. McDermott asked for an additional \$1,250 for further website development. Mr. Rathje motioned for approval of the budget with requested adjustments. Ms. Jeanie Smith seconded and upon unanimous vote, the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting is April 29, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel A. McGrew

Rachel McGrew, Secretary