1. Welcome

a. Welcome and Introductions

b. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 11:05am

c. Attendance

Attendance

Members

Present: Marqueia Watson, Stephanie Cooper, Mallory Rusch, Anatolij Gelimson, Jennifer Shotwell, Tiffany Patton, Pamela Neal, Amy Blansit, David Webber, Jason Stoff, Katheryne Staeger-Wilson

Absent: Izzy Litwack, Raquel Cooper, Shonte Byrd, Randall Wollenberg

d. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Tiffany, seconded by Jennifer. No further discussion, motion carries.

2. Board Member Surveys

Take the DEIB Assessment here.

Take the Board Self-Assessment here.

3. Legislative Session Updates & ED Report Questions

Please note: I will expound on items highlighted in yellow during the meeting.

Hearings occurred last week for Clean Slate initiatives. Had 40 people provide testimony for potential criminal justice bill. This week, House voted Clean Slate bills out of house unanimously. Running out of time to pass this session, but will raise awareness and prep for next session. There are six weeks left in session this season, no legislation has passed yet. It may still be possible on the housing side to possibly pass land banks authorization bill and circuit breaker tax credit. Doesn't appear that we can block the bill banning eviction moratoriums. New bill regarding landlords discriminating based on income (housing vouchers), preemptive bill that will allow for discrimination of renters from the landlords. Another priority was the ban being removed from SNAP and was passed out of the house, awaiting a hearing from the Senate. This will allow for past criminal charges to not impede access to SNAP. Last bill being addressed is placing St. Louis Police Department under state control. St. Louis crime rate has dropped but the bill is still being moved forward. It looks fairly promising to have Summer EBT bill passed this session. Looks as if there will be a low number of bills passed this session.

Empower Missouri received a $100,000 grant from MOVE this year to do work with tenants. Currently hiring a few people to canvas areas and talk to tenants about their experiences and also recruitment for tenants to get more involved. Week of Action was really good, had about 135 people attend in person. Have filled operations director position out of Kansas City. Would like to hire a Chief of Staff for the organization instead of a policy director. Did receive a $1 million grant from USDA for healthy food initiatives using CDFI's to do loan/grant programs for communities to do their own food solutions.

4. Board Committee Reports

a. Governance Committee

- Update + discussion on board recruitment
- Discussion around executive committee transitions + leadership opps for 2024-2025
- Review + finalize process for annual evaluation of the ED

Will be sending out social media posts to board members for LinkedIn for recruitment. Put a tentative deadline for April 26 for board applications. Currently only have 3 slots available for board members. A few applications came though that board members will follow up with to see if they are still interested in the board (Anatoliji and Marqueia). Also want to continue to find board members that have financial experience. Mallory will add a question about assuming leadership roles on the board application. Leadership roles are changing and Tiffany will be going into the president's role this spring. Will need to look for board members to fill the VP role, along with committee chair roles. Pam is interested in working with Sara and learning the fundraising committee role. Tiffany has some research articles for evaluations for non-profit ED's that she will put on Boardable. Have discussed forming a committee for the ED evaluation, with 360 degree feedback, 2-3 month process, inclusive of all board members, includes strategic plan, work plan, job description, outside feedback, etc. Have prioritized the following: forming a evaluation committee with chair and rep from each committee, including external partners, creating an organizational policy with timelines and modify the evaluation tool to align with the strategic plan.

Action Item: staff to send board members social media for board recruitment

b. Finance Committee

Review and approval of December, January and February financials

Finance committee did not meet this week and is tabled until May.

Action Item: Add December-February financials to May board agenda

5. Endowment Policy & Investment Policy

Presentation from Kevin Callaway and discussion of attached documents

Kevin Callaway-Central Investment Advisors, attended the meeting and discussed draft endowment/investment policies. These policies will be voted on in the May board meeting. There used to be an endowment committee in the early 2000's, but have not had one since then. The endowment committee was absorbed into the finance committee. Mallory doesn't feel as if there is a need for two separate committees for the board. The current policy states that we will have an endowment fund manager and used to have one. However, it was held by a volunteer for the past 15 years. The volunteer has stepped away from this role and we have a need to update the procedure and oversight. Kevin gave an overview of what the endowment has, what the costs to trade were and what the organization could do since the fund manager has stepped away. If the board were to move to having him oversee the endowment with CIA, it would be viewed as a fiduciary agent arrangement. David ask what the function of the finance committee would be with the endowment and Kevin indicated that he would go to the committee at least once a year to discuss the portfolio. There is no contractual obligation if the board chooses to go to a fiduciary arrangement. Jason ask about how we would know that our investments wouldn't be counter productive to our mission. Kevin indicated that he would need to know what those areas would be and he would do a work around with the funds.

6. Lunch & Board Networking

7. Resource Development

Updates on Give STL Day + Advocacy Awards Brunch

Give StL is a peer to peer fundraiser that anyone can participate in. The flier that is included in the board packet has walk-thru directions for the fundraiser, including content for social media. Board members are encouraged to set up their own pages with your personal story will make a larger impact. Give StL is on May 9th this year. Advocacy Awards Brunch-fliers were provided to St. Louis board members but if others want to attend, the information will be sent out by email. Table captains should bring 9 people, sponsor a table, etc. and plan to participate assisting the organization for the day. This year the awards brunch will be held in St. Louis and the list of winners was shared with the board. If you know of someone that should be invited, please let staff know who to contact. If you are the table captain, please email your list of people to Sara. The ticket deadline is June 5th, please respond if you will attend prior to this date. If you can't be a table captain or not attending, please send connections for the invitation list.
Action item: board members to connect with staff if you want to be a table captain for the advocacy brunch or have connections that should be invited to the event.

8. Strategic Planning Process Updates

- Presentation on key takeaways from surveys and focus groups
- Process updates
- Board Self-Evaluation Response Review
- Collaborative work on Board section of the plan

Review of equity evaluation-there are three spaces that Empower could grow in with the survey takeaways-governance, communications and staff cultural competence. Link to presentation from Sarah. Mallory took the group through the process so far-- committee formation, surveys, focus groups and the first committee meeting. Links to results are were all included in the meeting packet on Boardable if members wish to do a deep dive on results. While the group was at lunch, Mallory compiled the results of the board self-evaluation here. Board reviewed and discussed highlights and potential areas for growth. Feedback will be incorporated into board section of strategic plan. SP Committee will review and put together high-level goals, and then Governance Committee will build out additional specifics, including timeline.

9. Closing

a. Action Items