

## FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF CALIFORNIA

Annual Conference Meeting Minutes

Saturday, September 12, 2020

### Call to Order

The Annual Conference of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of California was held on Saturday, September 12, 2020 via conference call. It began at 1:33p.m. and was presided over by Cheryl Moore, President of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of California. The topic of the Annual Conference was Rejuvenating Funeral Consumers Alliances.

### Board Members Present

John Jones	Katherine Ortiz	Cheryl Moore	Randy Siefkin
Hannah Dunton	Nancy Ortiz	Sylvia Forsyth	

### Guest Speaker:

Josh Sloclum

### Agenda Items:

#### 1. Zoom Instructions

- a. Prior to the start of the meeting, Kathy Ortiz gave a quick introduction on where to find material for the meeting, as well as a quick introduction to Zoom, including muting and how to use the chat feature.

#### 2. Welcome

- a. Cheryl introduced the Board and Advisory Board to the attendees on the call.

#### 3. Secretarial Report

- a. After a review on personal computers, a motion was made (Sylvia) and seconded (Hannah) to approve the meeting minutes from last year's Annual Conference on November 9, 2019.

#### 4. Treasurer's Report

- |                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| a. Account Balance as of 9/8/2020   | \$11,639.48 |
| i. California Balance               | \$7,060.99  |
| ii. Kern Balance                    | \$1,983.55  |
| iii. Central Valley (Fresno County) | \$1,423.53  |
| iv. Los Angeles                     | \$1,313.25  |
| b. September Expenses (California)  |             |
| i. Track Phone                      | \$14.88     |
| c. September Expenses (Los Angeles) |             |
| i. Paypal Fee                       | \$1.75      |
| d. September Income (California)    |             |
| i. Donation from Loreta Bisquera    | \$50        |
| ii. Donation from Gerald Mehlman    | \$100       |

- e. Kathy presented the budget and led a discussion of the annual financial report, and stated that it is now listed on the website.
- f. The budget is accepted by acclamation.

#### **5. Nominations for Board Members**

- a. Cheryl reviewed the 2021 Board Members and called for nominations from the floor. No nominations. The motion was passed unanimously for the board to remain.

#### **6. Affiliate Updates**

- a. Tri County
  - i. John Goodwin reported: The tri-County almost died in 2019. Last fall, members received a mailing that indicated that they needed to decide if they needed to let the organization die, merge or revive. They chose to revive it. They have made a few modifications to bylaws and have been meeting about once per month. Two of the 7 board members have resigned. During their revival, they have focused on the following topics:
    - 1. How does a FCA affiliate operate?
    - 2. What is the funeral industry and how is it changing?
    - 3. What sort of organization do they want to be? They choose to change to a 501c3 in order to focus on advocacy and education with some member services.
    - 4. How will they modernize the website?
      - a. Andrea Barnes may take on their websites. They are moving the domain registration and may move hosting.
    - 5. Challenges
      - a. Website
      - b. Zoom
      - c. Funeral info
      - d. Member Database
      - e. Finding an accountant
- b. Stainlaus/ Merced
  - i. Randy reported: Challenges have been meeting online and doing outreach. They have updated their materials and went to the national website to order materials (including Spanish language). The board is exploring merging with other FCA affiliates, but this has been put on hold until further notice. They also are exploring partnering with a funeral home with whom they have a longstanding relationship. They are holding their annual conference in October and have engaged their local community college.
- c. Central Coast
  - i. Sylvia reported: About 30 people showed up for their annual meeting, and like all other affiliates, they need volunteers. They have a part time office worker.
- d. San Joaquin/Motherload:

- i. Kathy Schick reported: Their annual meeting is in October. Many members don't have email. They had explored merging with Stainlaus, but it became complicated. They are working on getting everyone's Zoom ready for the meeting. They have a good Facebook presence.
- e. San Diego Memorial
  - i. Sylvia and John Jones reported: They are very healthy and prefer to work independently. Andrea Barnes is active and able to help people, and she has been a lot of help to three other organizations. She is a staff person, and after the storytelling conference and One Page Marketing Plan, she is modifying her marketing approach.
- f. Northern California
  - i. John Jones reported: This past year has been spent reorganizing. They have completed perfunctory items (phone, email, etc.), and in June they started sponsoring Zoom meetings with PMA with their executive marketing directors.
- g. Monterey Bay
  - i. Sylvia reported: Their website has been tweaked and have started listing all of the mortuaries for the areas. They have two mortuaries who are honoring discounted prices. They have a small board, but they have been getting work done.
- h. Los Angeles:
  - i. Jean reported: They are struggling for board members. They had one person resign and now have no board. They have about 6,500 members as of 2017. A person in Stanislaus FCA has helped to develop a new website, and they have been running money through CA because their bank account is closed. They have nonprofit status, PO Box, and business phone number. They have new members and are moving forward. They are in the process of collecting emails.
- i. Humboldt:
  - i. Kathy reported: Seven board members had their annual meeting in the summer via Zoom which is late for them because of Covid-19. They are gearing up for the new year. They still mail out a physical copy of the newsletter.
- j. Bay Area:
  - i. Marjorie reported: They are changing the bylaws per national's advice to allow Zoom annual meetings and not be specific on timing of the annual conference. They are not sure they want to adopt Zoom for the annual conference. Kathy volunteered to help if they want to go that direction. A consultant is analyzing what they need and where they are going. They may decide to change their website. They had issues keeping the office managers, so they have increased their pay and annual dues to \$100 and experienced a slight decrease. They are down to 4 board members, but they should have 7. They would like to have someone young and technologically advanced.

## **7. Josh Slocum's presentation**

- a. Sylvia provided a biography and introduced Joch Slocum.

- b. Josh Slocum reported: Jean and John have done a lot of on the ground work to drum up board members and volunteers. Board members and volunteers are the most successful way to give personal attention, but it's hard work. There is no magic bullet. A common question that comes up is how to get young people to come on board and take up leadership roles. Volunteerism is down. There are a few younger people who may be interested. Josh came from a journalism background at 28. Learned about state regulatory boards and the funeral industry. That's how he got interested in educating people and righting the wrongs. Twenty and thirty year old people have different priorities than older generations. You may not be getting the best use of your time trying to attract young people. You may get more use of your time with a middle-age group, who are dealing with aging parents. Younger people are interested in more interesting topics like "green burials". Supporting middle-aged or newly retired people might be more effective because it's more "real" than with a 30 year old. A concrete tool to revitalizing an affiliate is fundraising. Does your FCA send a stand alone money solicitation? You should be doing this, it will work for you, and it is not as difficult as you think. Josh shared a one page fundraising plan, which has worked for himself. Physical mail works better than electronic mail. You are not going to fund your budget on email.

- i. Ask - Make a pitch

- 1. The art of a good fundraising letter is not a natural way of writing. Tell a story in plain terms. Show a real world problem that they can solve with a gift. You are doing work because someone somewhere paid money. Make the reader the hero of the story. Quantify how much and where each donation will go. (Website, office, paid staff?) A good letter ends in a cliffhanger. Don't tie things up in a bow. Create urgency. Don't be afraid to talk about the financial and emotional burden. Double the pitches in which you ask for money (If you ask once, ask twice). Don't worry that people don't like being asked for money. Keep a notebook next to the phone, and take notes on conversations you have with consumers. Ask if you can retell the story if it is so illustrative.

- ii. Mechanics - Envelops and Reply slips

- 1. Send a reply device or remittance slip that is stand alone (not a cutout) Setup online giving. Do not do first class postage.

- iii. Send a "Thank you".

- iv. Calendar

## **8. Agreements with FCA**

- a. Member discounts are getting outbid by market demand. Doing cost comparison surveys are important.

## **9. Website**

- a. There is a link on the FCA California website for the affiliates to update their officer information.

## **10. Q&A**

- a. Q&A: Has Promession made any progress?

- i. It may not be financially viable.
- b. Is there any information on natural, organic reduction?
  - i. The law passed in Washington but may be costly for the state to come up with regulations. "Compost" has legal requirements around it, so Recompose was instructed to use "natural, organic reduction".
- c. Is FCA National going to give webinars?
  - i. Yes. They have had some for the affiliates. They are updating the calendar on the website.

#### **11. Board Members**

- a. Jim Winn introduced himself. He is a retired prosthetician and was on the Tricounty board. He helped develop their website and kept in touch with John Jones and Jean Okuye. He has noticed that FCA California has fallen behind on their tax information and would like to help.
- b. A motion was made by Sylvia, and seconded by Kathy, to elect Jim Winn to the Board of Funeral Consumers Alliance of California.

#### **12. Paypal request**

- a. A PayPal Request was made for attendees.

Adjourn at 3:03

Minutes respectfully submitted by Hannah Dunton, Secretary.