



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING

Zoom Meeting Only

October 28, 2020

Meeting conducted electronically pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8. The current circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor's proclamation directing that no more than 10 individuals may meet in a public gathering, and CDC guidelines regarding social distancing dictate that conducting this meeting in person is impossible or impracticable.

Voting Members Present: Emily Westergaard, Dave Arens, Rob Barron, Deanna Bennigsdorf, Tabitha Choquette, Nick Dial, Bryan Huggins, Matt Knoll, Matthew Klemme, Jeanie McCarville Kerber, Adam Montufar, Eric Tubbs, Jana Shepherd, Mee Yang Lee; Sandy Carter joined at 11:46 a.m.; Marianka Pille joined at 11:50 a.m.; Jem Gong-Browne joined at 12:06 p.m.

Voting Members Absent: Ahmed Agyeman, Charles Mercer, Eva Morales

Ex-Officio Members Present: Barb Merrill

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aaron Johnson, Terry Harrmann, Brook Rosenberg

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Leann Andre, Child Care Consultant Supervisor, Child Care Resource & Referral; McKinley Bailey, Executive Director, Building Families; Matt Eide, Edie Walton Lobbying and Government Relations; Kate Walton, Edie Walton Lobbying and Government Relations; Cindy Winn, Healthy Start Director, EveryStep; Courtney Wolterman, Smile Squad Director, Dental Connections

Welcome

Board Chair Emily Westergaard called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 11:31 a.m. Quorum was met at this time.

Approval September Minutes

Minutes of the September 23, 2020 meeting were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the September 2020 minutes was made by Bryan Huggins and seconded by Mee Yang Lee. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Financial Statements September 2020

Barb Bremner presented the financial statements for September 2020. These statements are a cash presentation of financial transactions which took place through September of fiscal year 2020.

School Ready

- FY21 Polk County ECI School Ready funding is \$2,787,342
- Carry Forward funds total \$296,753.93
- Total School Ready funds in FY21 budget are \$3,084,095.93

- Interest accrued through September 2020 totals \$1,966.17
- Expended School Ready funds end of September 2020 total \$325,741.18
- Expenditures are 10.56% of FY21 School Ready budget. At end of September 2019 11.64% of FY20 budget had been expended

Early Childhood

- FY21 Polk County ECI Early Childhood funding is \$928,174
- Carry Forward funds total \$123,624.28
- Total Early Childhood funds in FY21 budget are \$1,051,798.28
- Interest accrued through September 2020 totals \$796.20
- Expended Early Childhood funds end of September 2020 total \$57,584.17
- Expenditures are 5.47% of FY21 Early Childhood budget. At end of September 2020 9.37% of FY20 budget had been expended

Dave Arens asked how COVID-19 is affecting T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$. Bremner reported monthly invoices have been received. She will ask the program staff for a report on programs.

A motion to approve the September 2020 financials was made by Deanna Bennigsdorf and seconded by Dave Arens. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Sandy Carter joined at 11:46 a.m.

Marianka Pille joined at 11:50 a.m.

Association of Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards & Advocates

Bremner introduced McKinley Bailey, Executive Director, Building Families (ECI local area for Hamilton, Humboldt, Wright counties). Bailey provided background of the Association which is in its second year. Last year 28 of 38 statewide ECI areas joined the Association; this year the association is on track for 32 areas to join. He reported the Association raised \$22,479.86 last fiscal year in dues and for lobbying fees. The Association spent \$14,559.06 for start-up costs and lobbying fees in FY20 leaving a surplus to be used to offset FY21 area ECI dues by approximately 25% this fiscal year.

Jem Gong-Browne joined at 12:06 p.m.

Matt Eide and Kate Walton, Eide Walton Lobbying and Government Relations, provided an update on the FY20 Legislative session:

- Eide Walton and Association were on track to make progress last January building upon previous relationships with legislators on committees important to ECI funding. Once the pandemic hit mid-March lobbyists were removed from legislative process. When the legislature re-adjourned in June everything was put into one budget bill.
- Started session with plan to get ECI funding increases in-line with school aged funding allowable growth increases.
- Session had a focus on child care:
 - Increase provider reimbursement rates
 - Changing the definition of infant and toddler

- Raise the child care eligibility cap to 250% FPL
- Establish a child care workforce fund
- Each of these efforts passed the House pre-COVID and were about to be discussed by Senate. Confident child care will be addressed again in 2021 session.

Westergaard asked if there are legislators that are advocates for the issues. Walton reported Rep. Ann Meyer led the way on aggregating issues. Rep. Cecil Dolecheck sits on the Education Appropriations Committee.

Enrollment is down significantly for districts across the state which will have a massive impact on budgets. There have been discussions on allowing districts to use 2019 enrollment numbers when calculating funding. Districts received some CAREs Act funding. More information is needed on the status of this funding, permitted uses, and remaining funds.

Bailey presented the proposed FY21 Legislative Agenda items which will be discussed at the Association's Annual meeting Thursday, October 29th. Bremner will attend the meeting along with one Polk County ECI delegate.

The Association's primary legislative agenda items for the next session:

- Support a comprehensive and integrated early care, health, and education system for the youngest Iowans through funding for Early Childhood Iowa
- Develop Systemic Solutions to the Childcare Crisis
- Develop a statewide Children's Behavioral Health System that includes Early Childhood Iowa as part of a multi-tiered system of prevention, early identification, early intervention, crisis management, and behavioral health services

Eide shared as other early childhood issues emerge the Association is positioned to be included in the discussions. There will be issues that pop-up during session they can bring back to the Association for their input. Bailey reported they have been meeting with key legislators on the Democratic side of the House to prepare for the possibility of a shift in the majority.

Bailey, Eide, and Walton have a meeting scheduled with Director Garcia November 20th to talk about child care and stimulus funding. He asked members to forward any thoughts or issues they would like addressed at that meeting to Bremner.

Association: membership, delegate to annual meeting, ranking of legislative priorities

Members reviewed the FY20 and FY21 Association fee structure. Last year Polk County ECI received donations paid through our fiscal agent United Way to cover the \$557.47 lobbying portion of our association fees. The \$3,982.00 membership fee was paid out of Early Childhood and School Ready grant dollars. With the 25% reduction in membership fee's this year, Polk County ECI's membership cost would be \$3,268.42 for FY21.

A motion to renew Polk County ECI's membership to the Association of Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards and Advocates was made by Jeanie McCarville Kerber and seconded by Deanna Bennigsdorf. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Westergaard shared the need to find a way to pay at least the lobbying fees without using state funds. The board members would be asked to make voluntary donations.

McCarville Kerber asked if guidance would be given to members on how to make donations. Bremner will email members with details on how to make contributions after today's meeting.

Bennigsdorf asked members to consider a way to fundraise for these fees rather than using ECI funds. Huggins shared he would like to use private funding as much as possible to pay the fees but did not object to using ECI funds for some of the fees if necessary.

A motion to use braided funding to pay Polk County ECI's Association of Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards & Advocates fees was made by Deanna Bennigsdorf and seconded by Jeanie McCarville Kerber. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Bremner invited Westergaard to be Polk County ECI's delegate at the October 29th Annual Meeting for the Association of Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards & Advocates.

A motion to approve Emily Westergaard as Polk County ECI's delegate at the Association of Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards & Advocates Annual Meeting was made by Jeanie McCarville Kerber and seconded by Bryan Huggins. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

There were no further comments or questions on the Legislative Agenda Priorities of the Association.

Dave Arens departed at 12:36 p.m.

A motion to approve the three Legislative Agenda Priorities was made by Marianka Pille and seconded by Bryan Huggins. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Members were encouraged to forward any further comments or possible agenda items to Bremner or Westergaard to bring forward to the Association.

Administrative Report

- Bremer reported family support programs have been receiving guidance since March on how to provide remote supports for families, which includes EveryStep's Healthy Start and Empowerment program. The ECI State office has provided guidance documents and these are shared EveryStep. Guidance discourages in-person visits or meetings with families. ECI state office is requiring all local areas to report if in-person visits are being conducted. Currently Healthy Start & Empowerment are not conducting any in-person visits or meetings.
- The City of Des Moines released a grant through the Community Development Block Grant for mental health and child care. Bremner forwarded grant information to coalition child care centers. There will be \$500,000 awarded to child care providers.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Westergaard shared area school districts have data dashboards on district websites reporting COVID-19 cases.

Public Comment

Leanne Andre, Child Care Consultant Supervisor, Child Care Resource & Referral, reported consultants are starting in-person consultation if a center needs help with behavioral issues or grant application help. If they feel the situation is safe, consultants have permission to do on-site visits. The agency is continuing with virtual trainings.

Adjourn

Westergaard adjourned the meeting at 12:52 p.m.