



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING

Zoom Meeting Only

February 24, 2021

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, Rob Barron, Sandy Carter, Tabitha Choquette, Nick Dial, Bryan Huggins, Matt Knoll, Matthew Klemme, Marianka Pille, Eric Tubbs, Jana Shepherd; Mee Yang Lee joined at 11:34 a.m.; Deanna Bennigsdorf joined at 11:59 a.m.; Eva Morales joined at 12:12 p.m.

Voting Members Absent: Ahmed Agyeman, Dave Arens, Jem Gong-Browne, Jeanie McCarville Kerber, Charles Mercer, Adam Montufar

Ex-Officio Members Present: Aaron Johnson

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Terry Harrmann, Barb Merrill, Brook Rosenberg

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Leann Andre, Child Care Consultant Supervisor, Child Care Resource & Referral; Marian Reuter Godwin, Community Impact Services Director, United Way of Central Iowa; Heidi LaBounty, ECQuIP Project Manager, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children; Cindy Winn, Healthy Start Director, EveryStep

Welcome

Board Chair Emily Westergaard called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 11:32 a.m. Quorum was met at this time.

Approval January Minutes

Minutes of the January 27, 2021 meeting were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the January 2021 minutes was made by Marianka Pille and seconded by Bryan Huggins. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Financial Statements January 2021

Barb Bremner presented the financial statements for January 2021. These statements are a cash presentation of financial transactions which took place through January of fiscal year 2021.

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 January 2021 totals \$11,265.50

- Expended School Ready funds end of January 2021 total \$91,128,102.50
- Expenditures are 36.58 % of FY21 School Ready budget. At end of January 2020 38.62% 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 January 2021 totals \$2,838.36
- Expended Early Childhood funds end of January 2021 total \$295,700.74
- Expenditures are 28.11% of FY21 Early Childhood budget. At end of January 2020 46.93% of FY20 budget had been expended

A motion to approve the January 2021 financials was made by Mee Yang Lee and seconded by Tabitha Choquette. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Executive Director Compensation Committee

Bremner departed the meeting while the board discussed the Executive Director Compensation Committee's recommendations.

Westergaard reported when the Compensation Committee was convened in January 2021 to review United Way's payroll changes, they also discussed Bremner's salary. Last fiscal year the compensation committee recommended status quo funding of Bremner's salary for FY21 due to the uncertainty of COVID and potential funding cuts from the state. Board members agreed to not increasing Bremner's salary at that time but requested to review the topic again in six months once budget numbers were received from the state due to Bremner's exemplary performance.

With the budget in good standing, the committee made the recommendation of a 2.75% salary increase, retroactive to July 1, 2020 for Bremner. This aligns with United Way's decision to provide a 2.75% salary increase for their staff also retroactive to July 1, 2020. The salary increase would amount to a \$2,408.00 annual increase. The July 1 – January 2021 increase amount of \$1,404.00 would be issued Bremner's next scheduled payroll date; the remaining amount would be divided through remaining June 30, 2021 pay periods.

A motion to approve the Executive Director Compensation Committee's retroactive salary increase of 2.75% was made by Mee Yang Lee and seconded by Marianka Pille. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Child Care Stay Bonus Update

The board created the Stay Bonus pilot three years ago to address staff turnover in funded child care centers enrolling high numbers of subsidized children from low-income families. This has been a model for other ECI areas. Building Families (Hamilton, Humboldt, Wright Counties) has implemented a pilot modeled after the board's pilot. The Early Childhood Committee developed the pilot program to positively impact consistency of care in the centers. Incorporating feedback from center directors, stipends for FY21 have been linked to attendance and unexcused absences.

Marian Rueter Godwin, Community Impact Services Director, United Way of Central Iowa walked members through retention and turnover data from FY18 through the second quarter of FY21.

Member discussions:

- Grandview is the highest need center; they have the least resources and support due to being a stand-alone center which is not housed within a larger agency.
 - Heidi LaBounty shared the pandemic has played a role in their turnover. COVID concerns and pandemic fear factor in, along with this center's low wages. The ECQuIP team keeps in close communication with the center. The director is eager to take guidance and suggestions.
- National child care workforce turnover is 30 – 40%.
- Westergaard asked how common unexcused absences are among center staff? Did we see a decrease in payments? How will this affect expenditures going forward?
 - Bremner will research and report back to members.

Deanna Bennigsdorf joined at 11:59 a.m.

- FY21 is only showing one quick hire/fire.

Mee Yang Lee departed at 12:05 p.m.

- The data indicates turnover rates are drastically reduced when Oak Academy and quick hire/fires are removed. Oak Academy is removed from the Year-to-Year Summary charts because staff there do not receive stipends, funds are used for operational expenses. Oak Academy funding amounts are calculated based on staff retention rates.

Eva Morales joined at 12:12 p.m.

- Turnover rates for the first six months of FY21 are at an all-time low even with centers continuing to deal with COVID.
- Huggins shared the data is showing positive strides in the program with it being very new and not having a “normal” year to collect data. The program seems to be working well especially throughout the pandemic. The program is starting to help with the issues we set out to impact. Did centers receive federal help to keep positions in place?
 - Bremner shared the assistance centers received from DHS through the initial CARES federal funding.
 - The state is expected to receive an additional \$95 million in federal CRRSA funding. DHS is working to have a distribution plan in place by 2022 with the funds required to be expended by 2023. DHS has met with stakeholders, including the Association of ECI Area Boards and Advocates, to get input on how to distribute the funds.

Today's pilot summary documents have been added to the Board Business folder on Google Drive. The Early Childhood Committee will use these documents when building next year's budget.

Administrative Report

Bremner's Administrative Report was included with meeting materials.

- United Way staff, state ECI TA staff and many of our funded program staff continue to work remotely. Some area ECI's are starting to do in-person nurse consultant visits. Bremner will follow United Way's return to office timeline.
- Bremner will send funded partner program review information the week of March 8th. Meetings with program staff will be scheduled the week of April 5th. Please let Bremner know of any scheduling conflicts you may have for that week.
- UnityPoint Health Occupational Medicine has scheduled vaccination clinics for child care center staff at the United Way Conference Center. Polk County ECI supported centers have been invited to the clinic. Child Care Resource and Referral invited in-home providers in the urban core to attend the clinic as well. First vaccinations will be held February 22, 23 and 25; second vaccinations will be scheduled March 22, 23 and 25.
- Bremner thanked members for their donations towards the membership and lobbying fees for the Association of Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards and Advocates. Lobbying fees totaled \$401.38; \$1,763.22 in total donations were raised.
- Bremner provided updates on current child care bills in the legislature.
- Gift cards (\$50 Hy Vee) for center staff were distributed the first week of February to 132 child care coalition center staff. Heidi LaBounty shared the gift cards were much appreciated by center staff.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Comment

None

Adjourn

Bryan Huggins made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Tabitha Choquette seconded. Westergaard adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m.