



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING

Zoom Meeting Only

April 28, 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, Ahmed Agyeman, Dave Arens, Deanna Bennigsdorf, Sandy Carter, Tabitha Choquette, Jem Gong-Browne, Bryan Huggins, Matt Knoll, Matthew Klemme, Jeanie McCarville Kerber, Charles Mercer, Adam Montufar, Eva Morales, Marianka Pille, Jana Shepherd, Eric Tubbs, Mee Yang Lee; Nick Dial joined at 11:58 a.m.

Voting Members Absent: Rob Barron

Ex-Officio Members Present: Aaron Johnson

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

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Erin Casey, Child Care Consultant, Child Care Resource & Referral; Lora Patton, Regional Director, Child Care Resource & Referral; Leslie Taft, Stork's Nest Coordinator, 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 March Minutes

Minutes of the March 24, 2021 meeting were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the March 2021 minutes was made by Dave Arens and seconded by Mee Yang Lee. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Financial Statements March 2021

Barb Bremner presented the financial statements for March 2021. These statements are a cash presentation of financial transactions which took place through March 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 March 2021 totals \$8,855.47
- Expended School Ready funds end of March 2021 total \$1,485,826.33

- Expenditures are 48% of FY21 School Ready budget. At end of March 2020 51% 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 March 2021 totals \$3,670.48
- Expended Early Childhood funds end of March 2021 total \$461,850.57
- Expenditures are 44% of FY21 Early Childhood budget. At end of March 2020 60% of FY20 budget had been expended

A motion to approve the March 2021 financials was made by Marianka Pille and seconded by Jeanie McCarville Kerber. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Program Review and Contracts for FY22

Bremner reviewed contract funding history detailing contracts from FY13 forward. Westergaard commented on the benefits of long term funding for some contracts. The funding history review also shows programs which have been defunded by the board due to lack of alignment with board priorities

Bremner walked members through FY22 School Ready draft budget and FY22 Early Childhood draft budget. The draft budgets do not include Carry Forward funds which Bremner is monitoring closely to make sure those funds stay below the 20% state requirement.

School Ready budget discussions:

- Des Moines Public Library asked for a \$15,000 increase specifically for updating materials and PSA commercials in additional languages. Bremner shared their request asks for \$10,000 to update photos and marketing materials, \$20,000 for a media campaign in additional languages and to air existing English and Spanish commercials.
 - Arens shared the committee discussed the library's original funding request which was intended for development of the original campaign. At that time the board considered the investment a finite timeframe.
 - Bennigsdorf shared the new director is bringing new direction to the program. The program has been responsive to board comments and expectations and has extended outreach into the community. Since the board has additional funding available this year she would be in favor of meeting the requested funding.

Nick Dial joined at 11:58 a.m.

- Pille reaffirmed the additional funding would provide a broader reach into the community.
- Klemme addressed the setback COVID-19 has caused younger children this year. Is \$15,000 a fair amount to be budgeted for advertising?

- Westergaard liked the idea that the program has the potential to reach any child in Polk County. The board would have to be clear this is a one-time funding increase. Since the board began funding the program in 2017, approximately \$110,000 has been allocated to the program.
- Members discussed what outcomes the board would like to see out of the program?
- Jem Gong-Browne suggested finding out how United Way evaluates impact for the 5-2-1-0 program.
- Bremner will send members a link to the DMPL's application for review. Members were asked to send Bremner or Westergaard additional questions or comments.
- Dental Connections funding returns to previous year levels because the agency anticipates being able to visit all centers twice next fiscal year.

Early Childhood budget discussions:

- Bremner walked members through the Early Childhood draft budget. Most of programs have requested status quo funding.
- Bremner presented the possibility of providing an RFP in the fall for some one-time funding opportunities. This would be an opportunity to be involved with new partners.
- Members expressed support of an RFP process, especially with the work agencies have continued to provide throughout the pandemic. Members highlighted the need to maintain funding for WAGE\$ in two years when the federal grant ends.
- Arens shared state ECI TA team member Shanell Wagler recently reported 40% of area ECI's have a high balance of unexpended FY21 funds. Bremner reported she is working closely with agencies to make sure Polk County ECI's carry forward will be below the allowable 20%.
 - Lora Patton, Child Care Resource & Referral, reported they have been working with eight ECI areas in the past few months to provide some emergency grants to providers to make sure they expend their funds.

Executive Director Annual Review

Members reviewed Polk County ECI Executive Director's job description and Executive Director Survey. Westergaard reported members will receive an email from her with the survey link. Members were asked to complete the survey rating Bremner's job performance. The Compensation Committee will convene in May to review the survey data and make a salary recommendation to the full board at the May meeting. The committee's salary recommendation will be confirmed at the June meeting.

Westergaard reported the Nominations Committee is still accepting applications for open board positions through May 7th. The committee will review the applications and make recommendations at the May meeting. Nominations will be confirmed at the June meeting.

Administrative Report

Bremner's Administrative Report was provided in today's materials:

- Bremner continues to follow United Way's remote work schedule. Beginning May 21st, they will begin a phased in return to office approach. All staff will return to the office full time the

week of June 21st. At this time the building will remain closed to the public. Bremner is hoping to return to in-person board meetings in August.

- Bremner updated members on the Federal COVID funds DHS has been distributing to child care providers. DHS will continue to provide the stimulus grants to centers through June 30, 2021. It is likely these funding streams will continue beyond this date.
- Bremner is working with Heidi LaBounty with IAIEYC to get the word out to child care centers regarding the Investing in Iowa's Child Care funding and assisting them in applying for the grants. These grants will be administered by Child Care Resource & Referral.

Old Business

None

New Business

Dave Arens has been reappointed to the State ECI Board. He will remain a member of the Polk County ECI board as well.

Jeanie McCarville Kerber has been appointed Dean of Business, Information and Technology at DMACC.

Lora Patton thanked the board for their continued support of Child Care Resource & Referral and their programming. Polk County ECI funds are used to cover needs federal funds do not cover. The funding is vital to support programs focused on quality of care.

Public Comment

None

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:48 p.m.