



**POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING**  
**Zoom Meeting Only**  
**May 26, 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, Rob Barron, Deanna Bennigsdorf, Sandy Carter, Tabitha Choquette, Matt Knoll, Matthew Klemme, Charles Mercer, Adam Montufar, Eva Morales, Jana Shepherd, Eric Tubbs, Mee Yang Lee; Marianka Pille arrived at 8:04 a.m.; Jem Gong-Browne joined at 9:02 a.m.

**Voting Members Absent:** Nick Dial, Bryan Huggins, Jeanie McCarville Kerber

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Aaron Johnson

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

**Staff Present:** Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

**Guests Present:** Heidi LaBounty, ECQIP Project Manager, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children; Lora Patton, Regional Director, Child Care Resource & Referral; Cindy Winn, Healthy Start Director, EveryStep

**Welcome**

Board Chair Emily Westergaard called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Quorum was met at this time.

**Approval April Minutes**

Minutes of the April 28, 2021 meeting were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

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

**Financial Statements April 2021**

Barb Bremner presented the financial statements for April 2021. These statements are a cash presentation of financial transactions which took place through April 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 April 2021 totals \$9,675.49
- Expended School Ready funds end of April 2021 total \$1,800,042.09

- Expenditures are 58% of FY21 School Ready budget. At end of April 2020 65% of FY20 budget had been expended

Marianka Pille arrived at 8:04 a.m.

### **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 April 2021 totals \$4,118.33
- Expended Early Childhood funds end of April 2021 total \$633,183.91
- Expenditures are 60% of FY21 Early Childhood budget. At end of April 2020 69% of FY20 budget had been expended

*A motion to approve the April 2021 financials was made by Marianka Pille and seconded by Tabitha Choquette. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

### **Governance Committee: Membership (Policy 2.4)**

Westergaard reported three members will end their term on June 30, 2021. Matt Knoll's second term ends. Jeanie McCarville Kerber and Mee Yang Lee have submitted resignations, both due to new employment. The result is openings for one man and two women to join in order to maintain gender balance and a full slate of 20 members. Westergaard thanked Jem Gong-Browne for actively recruiting Principal colleagues for membership. The nomination committee (Westergaard, Knoll, and Tubbs) reviewed a total of six applications (two male and four female). Westergaard presented the committee recommendations:

1<sup>st</sup> Term new member nominations:

- Kevin Abler
- Zakiya Jenkins
- Suzanne Cohrs

Board Chair:

- Ahmed Agyeman

Board Vice Chair:

- Deanna Bennigsdorf

*A motion to approve the committee recommendations for Board Officers and new Board Members was made by Eric Tubbs and seconded by Marianka Pille. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

Bremner will contact all applicants. There will be a new board member orientation before the August board meeting.

### **Executive Committee Compensation Committee**

The Executive Director Compensation Committee reviewed the results of the SurveyMonkey survey scoring Bremner's job performance. Bremner met or exceeded member's expectations again this year. She is an incredible advocate for our work, runs the largest ECI area across the state and represents Polk County very well. The committee looked at the role itself to make sure that the work meets the board's needs. They also looked at United Way's and other non-profits compensation package recommendations. The committee recommends a 3% performance increase for Bremner for FY22.

Separate from that, the committee would like to do a full compensation review to look at other non-profits in central Iowa and United Way to review compensation ranges. There are some state caps to be considered, i.e., 5% of the funds can be used for administrative funds which includes rent, salaries, and board supplies. Westergaard reported the board still has funds available, we are not going to meet the cap soon. The board needs to do some contingency planning to know what our options are and make sure we can still provide a competitive executive director compensation package. Members were pleased to hear the committee will be taking a look at other non-profit executive director compensation packages to keep Bremner on par with those packages.

Westergaard will report the committee's findings at the August meeting.

*A motion to approve the committee recommendation of a 3% Executive Director salary increase was made by Dave Arens and seconded by Marianka Pille. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

### **FY22 Budget Drafts**

Bremner shared legislative changes made in the Education Appropriation to School Ready funding. These changes reinforce the effectiveness of the Association, in its second year.

- For the first time since 2007 ECI has received increased funding. A total of \$546,000 was added to the ECI statewide system School Ready grant, a 2.4% increase from this year's funding.
- A language revision increases allowable Administrative expenses from 3% to 5% of the total school ready budget. This revision keeps Administrative expenses parallel with the Early Childhood grant. Administrative costs required for board support continue to be allowed from the quality improvement category of funds.
- Another language change provides a more useful approach to the Community Plan Fiscal Assessment.
- The last language change implements ECI State board approval for the annual plan for professional funding received by the ECI State Office.

Bremner presented FY22 Draft School Ready and Early Childhood budgets. The budgets include estimated Carry Forward funds and draft allocation numbers. Final budget numbers for school ready expect to be received this week from ECI Department of Management. The School Ready draft reflects the change to 5% administrative. This allowed for movement of the administrative salary/benefits budget from quality funds to the Administrative funding area. With this change, Dental Connections Smile Squad has been moved to the Quality Improvement funding from General. Early Childhood Capacity Building Pilot Bonus funding amounts for coalition center

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workforce have been adjusted to reflect the amounts expended this fiscal year. Utilizing Carry Forward funds and the school ready increase, Bremner has created a draft budget which meets the requested amounts of all funded contracts.

Members discussed the Des Moines Public Library's increased funding ask of \$30,000. The agency has asked for an additional \$15,000 to update materials and PSA commercials in more languages, which parallels the expressed priorities of the Board. Members repeated concerns on continued funding of this program since initial funding was for development of the materials: print, web, videos, radio, and marketing. It is a challenge to document outcomes for this type of outreach and awareness project. Members would like to continue to revisit this program to be sure we are not limiting funding for direct impact work. Members appreciate the fact that the program has the potential to touch every child in the county, not just children enrolled in a contracted program. Members also liked the fact that other funding partners utilize the library services and Simple Steps. The Library has developed collaborations with early child care providers, EMBARC, and EveryStep, among others. Member consensus was achieved to meet the request for \$30,000. The Board will continue to watch the program efforts and outcomes.

School Ready includes \$200,000 for new proposals to address preparing children for success in school. Early Childhood includes \$100,000 for new proposals to increase quality of care and to increase access to quality child care. Both of these funding amounts would be distributed through an RFP targeting new partners and programs. Bremner discussed this process with Shanell Wagler, Early Childhood Iowa, who stated this was an acceptable use of the funds. An amended budget will be submitted once specific programs are approved by the Board for receipt of funds.

A final budget will be presented and voted on at Annual June meeting.

### **Administrative Report**

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

- This week United Way staff began returning to the office in two cohorts. All staff will return to office full time June 21<sup>st</sup>. Currently building closed to the public.
- Healthy Start & Empowerment has resumed in-person visits.
- EverySteps Literacy Specialist is planning a collaborative event with Des Moines Public Library and also developing a Black Prenatal Class.
- Bremner and Heidi LaBounty, IAAYC, met with the Evelyn K. Davis Center to explore potential for summer youth program participants to "intern" at the coalition centers.
- LaBounty thanked the board members for operational grants distributed to centers. All centers greatly appreciate the grants and had a great time brainstorming ideas to support staff. Most of the centers chose to increase wages or provide staff bonuses. Some centers used a portion of funds for staff appreciation events.
- Bremner reviewed the legislative session outcomes.

Rob Barron departed the meeting at 8:54 a.m.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

None

### **Public Comment**

Cindy Winn, EveryStep thanked the board for their work and continued support. Caseworkers are having good responses getting back into the homes of the clients they serve. In-home visits are being scheduled for newly enrolled clients whenever possible.

Lora Patton, Child Care Resource & Referral thanked the board for their hard work and organization. She works with multiple ECI area across 22 counties and is grateful for the dedication and professionalism of the Polk County ECI Board. CCR&R Region 4 has an estimated \$4 million to distribute through Investing in Iowa's Child Care grant program (federal CRRSA funds distributed to DHS). To date CCR&R Region 4 has received 114 applications totaling \$7.5 million in requests.

Heidi LaBounty, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children thanked the board for their continued support. She thanked Patton for involving the ECQuIP team on applications that are coming from the coalition centers. LaBounty shared a link with Bremner to an interview Kay Strahorn with Bidwell CDC did with WOI Channel 5 supporting child care work. She reported a couple of child care center directors will be speaking at the Governors June 1 Town Hall meeting.

### **Adjourn**

Westergaard adjourned the meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m.