



**POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING**  
**United Way of Central Iowa**  
**Leadership Room**  
**March 25, 2026**

**Voting Members Present:** Alicia Chilton, Suzanne Cohrs, Sam Early, Matthew Klemme, Megan Schultheis, Eric Tubbs; Participating via Teams: Jessica Bruning, Christian Ramirez; Stephen White joined at 8:02 a.m., Josh Laraby joined at 8:04 a.m., Dave Arens joined at 8:25 a.m.

**Voting Members Absent:** Kevin Abler, Jake Al-Mazroa, Gabrielle Brooks, Tabitha Choquette

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Emily Westergaard

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:** Aaron Johnson, Brook Rosenberg

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

**Guests Present:** Tammy Engebretson, Director of Quality Initiatives, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC); via Teams Alyssa Barton, HFA Service Coordinator and Nick Wuertz, Director of Immigrant & Refugee Services both Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI)

**Welcome**

Board Chair Alicia Chilton welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest introductions were made.

**Approval December Minutes**

Minutes of board meeting February 25, 2026, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

*A motion to approve the February 2026 minutes was made by Sam Early and seconded by Suzanne Cohrs. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

Stephen White joined via Teams at 8:02 a.m.

**February FY26 Financial Report**

Shay Scholtes presented the February FY26 financial report. Expenditures are tracking as expected with no concerns. Young Women's Resource Center has submitted back invoices and is on track for expenditures.

Josh Laraby joined via Teams at 8:04 a.m.

IAEYC has begun invoicing for the Director Leadership and Professional Development contract.

*A motion to approve the February FY26 financials was made by Eric Tubbs and seconded by Matthew Klemme. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

### **Personnel Policies - revisions**

Chilton reported the recommended changes in Section 3: Office Operations are reflective of the newly created HHS Policy and Procedure manual. The policy changes included in today's materials focus on personnel and staffing.

Eric Tubbs reviewed the document and made suggested changes as indicated in the track changes file shared. Tubbs noted most of the changes were on the Employer of Record side due to United Way overseeing the actual policies. A procedural change will be that Bremner will report at first of the month to chair and vice chair time, vacation balance and any vacation scheduled for that month.

*A motion to approve the updated Personnel Policies Section 3: Office Operations was made by Eric Tubbs and seconded by Sam Early. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

### **Committees: Exec Director Eval & Compensation and Nominating (Governance)**

Chilton asked for 3-5 volunteers to serve on the Executive Director Evaluation and Compensation Committee. This committee will conduct Bremner's annual performance review and make a compensation recommendation to the board for FY27. Matthew Klemme and Suzanne Cohrs volunteered to serve on the committee.

Chilton asked for volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee. This committee recruits new board members, reviews applications and makes recommendations to the full board based on the board makeup matrix. Chilton stressed even with the uncertainty of ECI's future, we want to work to keep a strong Polk County ECI board.

Members were asked to reach out to Bremner if they would like to serve on either committee. All members were requested to begin thinking of potential nominees for the board.

### **Program review process**

Chilton reported members will meet in three committees to review program outcomes for existing contracts for consideration for the FY27 budget.

Bremner reviewed documents involved in the review process. Programs have submitted narratives answers, budgets, and outcome results. Bremner will upload review documents to Google Drive organized by committee. Members are encouraged to come to the committee meetings prepared to discuss and score the programs. Committee leads will return completed rubric forms and program questions to Bremner following committee meetings. Bremner will use results to draft a draft budget for discussion at the April meeting. Funding recommendations will be finalized at the May meeting with budget submission to the state by June 1.

Dave Arens joined via Teams at 8:25 a.m.

Members requested access to FY26 applications and program data on previous funding levels. Committee meetings will be held virtually; meetings can be scheduled with program staff if necessary.

Stephen White departed at 8:31 a.m.

### **Legislative updates HF2712/SF2462**

Bremner reviewed amended language in House File 2712. The amended language was produced by HHS who requested feedback from the Association and their lobbyists. As member of the board of directors of the Association Bremner will contribute to a response.

Discussions:

- Bill proposes a step-down approach to transferring Home Visiting Services to HHS to draw down federal funds through Families First Act. These contracts represent \$10-14M of the \$28M ECI budget. A likely consequence is ECI areas will merge.
- Discussions with Sen. Warme at the Association Breakfast March 24<sup>th</sup> indicated the Senate will not pick up the bill until the house passes something.
- No one has addressed the impact on services if this bill is passed.
- Currently there are six open citizen seats on the ECI State Board. Applications have been submitted; the Governor has not appointed any new citizen members. The State currently holds four board seats.
- Emily Westergaard, current ECI State Board chair has not had her term renewed by the Governor. She was filling a partial term which ends April 30.
- Sen. Weiner shared HHS Director Johnson is going through the confirmation process. Individuals were encouraged by her to reach out to legislators and share any questions and concerns they have regarding his leadership of HHS and how the ECI changes are being managed.

Josh Laraby departed at 8:48 a.m.

### **Administrative Report**

- Bremner has been communicating with programs regarding the FY27 application process.
- Bremner will attend the Association Board meeting Thursday, March 26. She will meet with the Association President and Board Chair to draft a response to HF2712's amended language.
- EveryStep's Baby Bloom Event will be held Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at Grand View College.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

None

### **Public Comment**

None

**Adjournment**

*Suzanne Cohrs made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Megan Schultheis seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

Chilton adjourned the meeting at 9:03 a.m.