

Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative Board  
**Minutes of January 30, 2014 Board Meeting**

**Members Present:** Donna McKenna, James Muse, James O'Brien, Christopher Oliver, Michelle Ouellette, Marlene Pollock, Timothy Scholz

**Members Absent:** Frank Kuthan

**Staff Present:** Jill Brilhante, Collaborative Business Manager\*  
Catherine S. Cooper, Executive Director

**Visitors Present:** Paulajo Gaines, DESE\*  
John Nunes, SMEC Treasurer

**Mr. O'Brien called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.**

1. **VOTED** To approve the Minutes of the Board's November 21, 2013 meeting as submitted. *Member Ouellette abstained. Members Oliver and Pollock arrived after this agenda item.*

**APPROVED**

2. **VOTED** To receive, place on file and accept as submitted the LEA, SAIL and ADH funded staff appointments, transfers, promotions, resignations, terminations, and reductions listed on Agenda Attachment 1.

**APPROVED**

3. **VOTED** To approve the proposed revisions to the policies currently included in the SMEC Employee Handbook as submitted on Agenda Attachment 2 and as amended through Board discussion, including an increase the non-slip shoe reimbursement up to a maximum of \$35/year and an increase to SMEC's mileage reimbursement rate to \$.45/mile. Also, to approve a new Whistleblower policy to be included in the Employee Handbook and to include two previously approved Board policies, Longevity and Retiree Benefits, in the Employee Handbook.

**APPROVED**

4. **VOTED** To approve an increase and revision to the SMEC adult service salary scale as submitted on Agenda Attachment 3, to reflect six (6) single-year steps with increased hourly rates, as well as increases to the team leader, supervisor, coordinator, case manager, and facilitator hourly rates as submitted. Step increases will take effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, with the exception that direct care employees hired after December 31<sup>st</sup> in any given year will stay on Step One until the second July 1<sup>st</sup> after hire.

**APPROVED**

5. **VOTED** To increase the staff referral stipend to \$100 per eligible referral and to increase the snow removal stipend for certain SMEC parking locations to \$100 per location/incident.

**APPROVED**

6. **VOTED** To approve the proposed amendment to the Collaborative Operating Budget as submitted on Agenda Attachment 4 and to acknowledge that all Collaborative Department Budgets will now be included in one Collaborative-wide Operating Budget per DESE regulation and MA legislation.

**APPROVED**

7. **VOTED** To pursue the development of a high school program for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders to open in September 2014 pursuant to a need identified during the Strategic Planning process and during Steering Committee meetings. To reach out to member school districts to identify available, appropriate space and to recruit qualified staff for the program. Also, to begin to identify possible space for an elementary program for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities for the 2015-2016 school year.

**APPROVED**

8. **VOTED** To authorize the Executive Director to take steps necessary to create an OPEB trust fund and to seek member district approval to create a Capital Reserve account for the Collaborative.

**APPROVED**

9. **DISCUSSION** The Director informed that Board that the Collaborative's Articles of Agreement, which are in the process of being revised per the Collaborative Legislation passed last year, are still pending DESE approval and clarification regarding SMEC's budget process and surplus retention language. The Executive Director explained that just before calling the meeting to order, Ms. Gaines, the DESE representative present at the meeting, had delivered a written response from DESE regarding issues the Executive Director had submitted last fall for clarification and the Executive Director would review and respond as appropriate. As such, the draft revision to SMEC's Articles of Agreement remain in pending status and a new draft will need to be submitted. The Executive Director expressed that she is hopeful that a DESE approved draft of the revised Articles of Agreement will be ready to present for the SMEC Board's approval at the next SMEC Board meeting scheduled for March 31, 2014.

10. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director reported that SMEC's FY13 Annual Report and FY13 UFR have been submitted to the appropriate state agencies as required.

11. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director provided a brief update on the SMEC Strategic Planning process and the planned timeline for completion.

12. **DISCUSSION** The Director updated the Board as to the status of the Collaborative's programs, including school age and adult programs and services, and voiced an open invitation to all Board members to schedule a tour or visit any of our programs at any time.
13. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director made the Board members aware of correspondence received from a law firm regarding potential civil action related to a motor vehicle accident involving one of the Collaborative's vans and that our insurance agency is responding and handling the claim.
14. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director updated the Board regarding both the Professional Development activities being developed by SMEC as well as those of the Southeast Collaborative Regional Organization (SCRO) such as potential training initiatives to address DDMs for low incidence students and Ch. 222 implementation.
15. **SET** The date for the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Collaborative Board of Directors is Monday, March 31, 2014 at 6:30 P.M at the Collaborative's administrative office.
16. **VOTED** To enter into Executive Session at 7:50 P.M.
17. **VOTED** To return to Regular Session at 8:29 P.M.
18. **VOTED** To adjourn at 8:30 P.M.

**APPROVED**

**Respectfully submitted,  
Catherine S. Cooper  
Secretary to the Board**

*\*Left the meeting prior to adjournment:*

Ms. Brilhante and Ms. Gaines left the meeting prior to the Executive Session.