

Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative Board
Minutes of November 21, 2013 Board Meeting

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

Members Absent: Michelle Ouellette

Staff Present: Catherine S. Cooper, Executive Director
Jill Brilhante, Director of Business

Visitors Present: John Nunes, SMEC Treasurer
Jim Benoit, CPA, Benoit and McArdle, PCA*
Stephanie Wick, Strategic Planning Consultant*

Mr. Kuthan called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

1. **VOTED** To approve the Minutes of the Board's September 30, 2013 meeting as submitted. *Member O'Brien abstained.*

APPROVED

2. **DISCUSSION** Stephanie Wick, of Wick and Associates Professional Consulting, Inc., conducted a focus group session with the Board members to gain Board insight for the Strategic Planning process. Led by guiding questions submitted on Agenda Attachment 1, Ms. Wick assessed the Board's priorities and member perceptions for the SWOT analysis portion of the Strategic Plan as well as recommendations for the final report.

3. **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 3.

APPROVED

4. **VOTED** Jim Benoit, CPA, presented the Collaborative's FY13 Independent Financial Audit. A draft was presented at the meeting that was slightly revised from the one originally distributed with the meeting agendas. Mr. Benoit explained all relevant points as well as any areas that he had revised between drafts. Discussion ensued and questions were asked and answered. The Board voted to approve the FY13 Audit Report and accompanying documents as submitted at the meeting.

APPROVED

5. **VOTED** To declare the following SMEC vehicle as surplus property and dispose of same in accordance with SMEC policy:

2002 Ford Windstar, VIN # 2FMZA50482BA77653

APPROVED

6. **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 she had met for a second time with DESE representatives in October regarding certain issues the issues that are still in dispute, had sent a follow up letter after the meeting confirming her understanding of the DESE position on certain parts of the Collaborative still to be revised and requesting written confirmation from DESE that her interpretation of DESE requirements is correct before submitting a new draft. A response has not yet been received from DESE to the letter, nor to a follow up email sent to DESE representatives in early November. Therefore, the draft Articles of Agreement remain in pending status. 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 January 30, 2014.
7. **DISCUSSION** The Director updated the Board as to the status of the Collaborative's programs, including school age and adult programs and services.
8. **DISCUSSION** The Business Manager reviewed the estimated FY13 cost savings to the Collaborative as a result of switching our insurance carriers in July 2012. Agenda Attachment 4 shows the analysis of the cost benefit of having made the change with an estimated total annual savings of \$112,109.
9. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director updated the Board regarding the activities of the Southeast Collaborative Regional Organization (SCRO) and potential regional initiatives currently under discussion to address DDMs for low incidence students, Ch. 222 implementation and fingerprinting.
10. **SET** The date for the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Collaborative Board of Directors is Thursday, January 30, 2014 at 6:30 P.M at the Collaborative's administrative office.
11. **VOTED** To adjourn at 8:10 P.M.

APPROVED

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

**Left the meeting prior to adjournment:*

Ms. Wick left the meeting following the Strategic Planning focus group, Agenda Business Item 1.

Ms. McKenna left following the approval of staff actions, Agenda Business Item 3.

Mr. Benoit left following the Audit Presentation, Agenda Business Item 4.

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Approved: January 30, 2014

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