

Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative Board
Minutes of November 29, 2012 Board Meeting

Members Present: Gerald Johnson, Frank Kuthan, Donna McKenna, James O'Brien, Michelle Ouellette, Marlene Pollock, Timothy Sholtz, Jonathan Schwartz*.

Staff Present: Catherine S. Cooper, Executive Director

Visitors Present: John Nunes, SMEC Treasurer*
Jim Benoit, CPA*
Charles Motta, Mattapoisett School Committee

Mr. Kuthan called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M. The Board welcomed new Fairhaven representative, Donna McKenna.

1. **VOTED** To approve the Minutes of the Board's September 20, 2012 meeting as submitted. *Member McKenna abstained.*

APPROVED

2. **VOTED** Jim Benoit, CPA, presented the Collaborative's FY12 Independent Financial Audit. Following discussion, a question was raised by SMEC Treasurer, Mr. Nunes regarding the DDS LUSA corrective action plan which was received by the Collaborative on Wednesday, November 21, 2012 (see Agenda Attachment 5) and whether the future reimbursement liability should be mentioned or included in the FY12 financial report. Mr. Benoit responded that he would need to investigate whether the liability should be shown as a deduction for FY12 given that the Collaborative did not have a formal notice of the Corrective Action Plan until after the FY12 audit was completed and that FY12 revenue/expenses are not affected. The Board voted to approve the audit as submitted, however if Mr. Benoit determines that a revision needs to be made, the Board will reconvene before December 15, 2012 to approve an amendment.**

APPROVED

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 1 and the additional appointment of Michelle Humphrey as a Registered Nurse at a starting salary of \$38/hour with an increase to \$41.33 per hour upon completion and receipt of appropriate DESE licensure.

APPROVED

4. **VOTED** The Director informed the Board that John Nunes, appointed as SMEC Treasurer at the September 2012 meeting, has recently changed his primary employment from Treasurer of a member town (Fairhaven) to Treasurer of a non-member municipality (Fall River) and asked the Board to

confirm his appointment. The Board voted to confirm Mr. Nunes' appointment.

APPROVED

5. **VOTED** To approve as submitted the SAIL Program FY13 revised Operating Budget listed as Agenda Attachment 3.

APPROVED

6. **VOTED** To approve the maternity leave request submitted as Agenda Attachment 4.

APPROVED

7. **VOTED** To declare that any SMEC property, equipment or furnishings with a value or purchase price of \$250 or more be listed on the SMEC general inventory list.

APPROVED

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

2000 GMC Safari, VIN#1GKDM19W3YB536982
1998 Ford Windstar, VIN#2FMZA5149WBC34899
2000 Ford Windstar, VIN#2FMZA5140YBD01778
1998 Plymouth Voyager, VIN#2P4FP25B3WR512096

APPROVED

9. **DISCUSSION** The Director shared the DDS Audit Compliance Agreement received by SMEC on Wednesday, November 21, 2012 and shown on Agenda Attachment 5. The Director explained that due to finding #4 on the State Auditor's report, the Collaborative would be providing certain services under contract during FY13 and FY14 that would be offset on SMEC's monthly DDS invoicing by 1/24th of the amount of reimbursement due to DDS for each involved contract each month for a 24 month period. An amount equal to 5/24th reimbursement will be deducted by DDS from the November 2012 billing to bring the FY13 reimbursement schedule to date back to July 2012. Final payment offset will occur on the billing submitted for June 2014.

10. **DISCUSSION** The Director explained to the Board members that the draft DESE regulations that had been shared with the Board at the September meeting and scheduled for final approval by the BESE on November 27, 2012 have been delayed pending "substantive" revisions based on comments made to the DESE during the public comment period, according to a DESE representative.

The Director explained that the DESE has not been forthcoming with information regarding what revisions will be made to the original draft regulations. It is anticipated that a revised version will be put out for public comment soon and will be finalized at the BESE meeting scheduled for either

December 2012 or January 2013. In the meantime, the Director informed the Board that the DESE has not yet developed a specific training for Collaborative Board members as directed by earlier legislation, nor have they appointed members to Collaborative Boards as of this date.

The Director reminded the Board that all municipal employees, including school committee and Collaborative Board members must take the Ethics Test online upon appointment and again every two years. All members indicated that they have done so and were asked to forward their completion certificates to the Director at their earliest convenience. The Director shared that a new test geared toward municipal, rather than state employees has been recently placed on the state website, however if an employee/Board member has already taken the earlier version this year, they will not have to retake the test until 2014. Copies of the Ethics Regulations were distributed to all Board members.

The Director also updated the Board as to the activities and discussions of the special Commission on Collaboratives and notified that Board that the Commission will be accepting public testimony on December 19, 2012 from 10:00-12:00 at the State House regarding the six issues being considered. Finally, the Director informed the Board that she will be submitting an annual report, as required by Chapter 40 Section 4E to the DESE, the State Auditor and all member districts by January 1, 2013 that will include the Collaborative's FY12 audit, a summary of the Collaborative's programs and services, the number of students and consumers served and an analysis of potential savings that districts realize by using the Collaborative versus private special education placements.

11. **DISCUSSION** The Director updated the Board as to the status of the Collaborative's programs, including school age and adult programs and services. Of note, the Director notified the Board that the Collaborative's Primary Language Program remains under-enrolled, with only one current and one additional incoming student, however, based on the merits, quality and recent enrollment history of the PLP, the Director recommends keeping the program open for at least for the remainder of the current school year to determine if enrollment will increase to a financially sustainable level. Discussion ensued and the Board members present indicated their agreement with this recommendation.
12. **DISCUSSION** The Director presented a synopsis of the recent and upcoming professional development activities offered by SMEC for educators from the region.
13. **SET** The date for the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Collaborative Board of Directors is Thursday, January 31, 2013 at 6:00 P.M at the Collaborative's administrative office.
14. **VOTED** To adjourn at 7:10 P.M.

APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine S. Cooper
Secretary to the Board

**Left the meeting prior to adjournment:*

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

Mr. Nunes left the meeting following Agenda Business Item C.

Dr. Schwartz left following Discussion Item A.

****Subsequent to the meeting, the auditors determined that the FY12 audit should be revised to include the LUSA/DDS payback liability. A board meeting was scheduled for December 13, 2012 to review the revision and vote to approve.**