

Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative Board
Minutes of March 31, 2014 Board Meeting

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

Members Absent: James Muse

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

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

1. **VOTED** To approve the Minutes of the Board's January 30, 2014 general meeting and the Minutes of the January 30, 2014 Executive Session as submitted.

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 retirement request of Gail Conceicao including Ms. Conceicao's request to remain on the Collaborative's insurance benefit plans in accordance with SMEC's Retiree Benefit Policy.

APPROVED

4. **VOTED** To approve the maternity leave request of Meghan Gagnier as submitted on Agenda Attachment 3.

APPROVED

5. **VOTED** To approve the Collaborative's Three Year Strategic Plan as submitted on Agenda Attachment 4.

APPROVED

6. **VOTED** To approve the proposed revisions to the policies currently included in the SMEC Student Handbook as submitted on Agenda Attachment 5.

APPROVED

7. **VOTED** To approve a procedural change to the SMEC warrant process whereby SMEC employee benefit payments will be paid on the general payables warrant at the end of each month.
- APPROVED**
8. **VOTED** To confirm the correct version of the SMEC vacation policy for year round employees to be included in the SMEC employee handbook, as indicated on Agenda Attachment 6 and to include a military leave statement in the employee handbook as indicated on Agenda Attachment 7.
- APPROVED**
9. **VOTED** To approve the proposed amendment to the Collaborative FY14 Operating Budget as submitted on Agenda Attachment 8.
- APPROVED**
10. **REVIEWED** The Board reviewed the proposed Collaborative FY15 Operating Budget as a first reading, including proposed FY15 tuitions and service fees and a revised paraprofessional salary scale (Agenda Attachments 9-12) and backup documentation. The FY15 Budget will be presented for a vote at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.
11. **DISCUSSION** The Director informed the Board that the Collaborative's Articles of Agreement, which are still in the process of being revised per the Collaborative Legislation passed in 2012, are still pending DESE approval. The Director informed the Board that she forwarded the latest draft and all communication received from the DESE regarding the amendment to the Collaborative's legal counsel in February in order to facilitate the completion of the process. The Director is scheduled to meet again with the DESE Collaborative Oversight team during the first week of April to once again try to gain consensus on the final language for the document.
12. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director reported that she and the Collaborative Business Manager have a meeting scheduled on April 15, 2014 with representatives from Rockland Trust to discuss the development of a SMEC OPEB trust account.
13. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director provided a brief synopsis of the new fingerprinting requirement of the CORI background check, and its associated costs, and the Board discussed the pros and cons of offering cost reimbursement to Collaborative employees for this new state requirement. The Board concluded that additional information will be needed once the process is clear to determine whether to consider and/or vote to approve cost reimbursement for employees through the Collaborative budget.

14. **DISCUSSION** The Director provided a summary of the effects of the implementation of Chapter 257 on certain state contracts held by the Collaborative and the potential increase in unit rates paid for some Collaborative provided adult services. She also explained that Ch. 257, as it applies to our Residential Support contract, could require changes to the current model that the Collaborative utilizes, whereby SMEC provides, and has always provided, only staffing, not occupancy costs, for our eight residential consumers and that the state may now require the provision of occupancy cost for this contract. The Director indicated that she anticipates a discussion with DDS regarding a possible change in contract activity code and/or further discussion with the SMEC Board as to whether the changes required by Ch. 257 will be in the best interest of the Collaborative as it applies to this contract or whether some other arrangement for services may be necessary. Further discussion with the contracting state agency, DDS, will occur in the spring and the results will be presented to the Board at a future meeting with a recommendation for a vote if needed.
15. **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.
16. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director updated the Board regarding both the Professional Development activities being developed by SMEC including a two-day workshop in May for Speech Pathologists and a graduate course for educators at the end of June on Differentiated Instruction.
17. **DISCUSSION** The Director provided a brief synopsis on the activities of the SCRO.
18. **SET** The date for the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Collaborative Board of Directors is Thursday, May 29, 2014 at 6:30 P.M at the Collaborative's administrative office.
19. **VOTED** To adjourn at 8:16 P.M.

APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine S. Cooper
Secretary to the Board

**Mr. Kuthan arrived during the discussion of Business Item 5: Strategic Plan.*

***Mrs. McKenna left the meeting prior to Discussion Item 14: Ch. 257.*