

Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative Board
Minutes of April 29, 2020 Board Meeting
(Meeting held by Zoom due to declared State of Emergency)

Members Present: Carole Clifford, Christopher Cotter, Ann Fernandes, Christopher Oliver, Michael Shea, Michelle Smith, Suzanne Tseki

Members Absent: Sarah Gomes, Donna McKenna

Staff Present: Catherine S. Cooper, Executive Director
Christopher Haraden, Director of Finance and Operations

Others Present: John Nunes, SMEC Treasurer

Mrs. Smith called the meeting to order at 5:34 P.M.

1. **VOTED** To approve the Minutes of the Board's March 29, 2020 meeting as submitted. Mr. Shea made the motion and Ms. Fernandes seconded.

APPROVED

2. **VOTED** To receive, accept and place on file the LEA, SAIL and ADH funded staff appointments, transfers, promotions, resignations, terminations, and reductions as submitted on Agenda Attachment 1 with the additional appointment of Dara Cordeiro to the temporary per diem position of accounts payable/adult service billing at \$21.79/hour. Mr. Cotter made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Shea.

APPROVED

3. **VOTED** The Executive Director and Director of Finance and Operations provided an update to Board members regarding the status of all Collaborative programs, services and staffing under the current State of Emergency and Stay at Home Advisory proclaimed by Governor Baker due to COVID-19. All school and adult day programs and services remain closed. Residential services continue to be provided and will be paid with an additional 10% supplemental payment for March and April and an additional 25% to cover extraordinary costs for May and June. State guidance regarding adult service revenue is still in flux as of the date of the meeting, however the advisory from DESE has consistently been for districts to continue paying tuitions and services during closure. Third quarter LEA invoices have been sent to districts and to date there has been no stated opposition to paying them. LEA transportation invoices were discounted 10% as of the first day of closure to account for lack of gasoline use. Updated guidance received from DDS and MA Health has changed since the March Board meeting. New guidance from MA Health indicates that so long as we are making contact with our ADH members at least once per week, which we are exceeding, we will be able to bill for 100% of each member's regularly scheduled attendance at a per diem rate, however transportation and food are not included. DDS guidance regarding day funding has also been rescinded from the prior stated guidance that we would receive 80% administrative payments for day services, however new guidance has not yet been received. The Executive Director and Director of Finance indicated the intention to continue to pay all staff, including hourly staff but

exclusive of substitutes, as revenue allows, to implement furloughs as needed if final guidance is not as promising or if revenues do not allow us to continue to pay all staff. Residential staff will continue to be paid up to time and a half for covering all of our residential support consumers during the State of Emergency. The Director of Finance and Operations provided an update on the Collaborative Spending Plan as submitted on Agenda Attachment 2 with proposed reductions based on current revenue information as of the date of the meeting and will address additional adjustments at the June meeting pending additional guidance from the state and finality of information and calculation of incoming revenue from the districts and adult service agencies. Mr. Haraden indicated that one additional cost cutting measure would be to take a percentage of the van fleet off the road to reduce insurance costs further, however Mr. Cotter cautioned against that due to the likelihood of vandalism and other Board members concurred with Mr. Cotter. Mr. Cotter made a motion to approve the revised FY20 Spending Plan as submitted on Agenda Attachment 2 which was seconded by Mr. Oliver.

APPROVED

4. **VOTED** To increase the teacher and paraprofessional salary scales by 2% for the 2020-2021 school year and to provide a 2% COLA to all other non-scaled staff effective July 1, 2020. Ms. Tseki made the motion which was seconded by Ms. Fernandes.

APPROVED

5. **VOTED** To increase the rate for the SMEC classroom leases with member districts by 3% for FY21. Ms. Fernandes made the motion which was seconded by Mr. Oliver.

APPROVED

6. **VOTED** To approve a second amendment to our lease with Four Kings Realty for the two buildings on Russells Mills Road as submitted on Agenda Attachment 5 to defer the annual increase from April 2020 to August 2020 while extending the lease term by three months. Motion made by Ms. Clifford and seconded by Mr. Cotter.

APPROVED

7. **VOTED** To table the agenda item regarding an extension to the lease with the Fairhaven Public Schools for the Tripp School building until further information is received from the Fairhaven Superintendent. Motion to table by Mr. Cotter, seconded by Mr. Oliver.

TABLED

8. **VOTED** To request additional classroom space from the Mattapoisett School Committee at the Old Hammondtown Elementary School in order to expand our MLC program at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. Motion by Mr. Oliver, seconded by Mr. Shea.

APPROVED

9. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director explained that the Fall River Public Schools voted unanimously to accept the SMEC Articles of Agreement as revised and to become a member of SMEC. Once all Board members have signed the original draft, it will be submitted to the DESE Commissioner.
10. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director informed the negotiation subcommittee that she will send information regarding her contract renewal to them by the end of this week.
11. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director informed the Board that there is legislation filed to clarify that town accountants can pay all contracts, tuitions, etc. despite the provisions of MGL 41.
12. **SCHEDULED** The next scheduled SMEC Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 1, 2020 at 5:30 PM by Zoom as the schools will continue to be closed at that time.
13. **VOTED** To adjourn at 6:47 P.M. Motion made by Ms. Clifford, seconded by Mr. Cotter.

APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine S. Cooper
Secretary to the Board