

Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative Board  
**Minutes of June 1, 2020 Board Meeting**

- Members Present:** Carole Clifford, Christopher Cotter, Anne Fernandes, Sarah Gomes, Donna McKenna, Christopher Oliver, Michael Shea, Michelle Smith, Suzanne Tseki
- Members Absent:** N/A
- Staff Present:** Catherine S. Cooper, Executive Director  
Christopher Haraden, Director of Finance and Operations
- Others Present:** John Nunes, SMEC Treasurer

**Mrs. Cooper called the meeting to order at 5:33 P.M.**

1. **VOTED** To approve the Minutes of the Board's April 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. Motion by Mr. Shea, Second by Ms. McKenna.  
  
**APPROVED**
  
3. **VOTED** Following the distribution and review of proposed line item adjustments and an updated FY20 revenue projection, the Board voted to approve the FY20 amended spending plan, with line item adjustments and an overall -1.32% decrease to the total, as presented by the Director of Finance and Operations and as submitted on Agenda Attachment 2. The Executive Director and Director of Finance and Operations explained the continuing uncertainty over the final revenue figures, particularly with regard to inconsistent guidance from the Department of Developmental Services and the delays in some districts' payments for transportation. Mr. Cotter made the motion; Ms. Clifford seconded.  
  
**APPROVED**
  
4. **VOTED** The Executive Director and Director of Finance presented the Board with a proposed FY21 Preliminary Spending Plan, including backup documentation, showing a proposed FY21 expense total of \$10,542,800, including current retiree health premiums and contingency funding, along with proposed FY21 tuition and service fees. This was a first reading of the proposed FY21 Spending Plan and due to the pandemic's effects on program operations and referrals as well as the uncertainty of the state and local budgets, the Director of Finance explained that FY21 financial

situation is fluid at the time of this meeting. The Executive Director informed the Board that we still do not have FY21 contract numbers for our adult service contracts with DDS and MCB, therefore the program budget for the SAIL program is based on existing FY20 figures and will be amended, along with any major change to our ADH and LEA numbers, to reflect actual contract totals and services in place in September. The Board voted to approve the FY21 Tuitions and Fees as submitted on Attachments 4-5 and will bring the FY21 Preliminary Spending Plan back for a second reading and vote a mid-June Board meeting. Motion to approve the FY21 tuitions and fees made by Ms. Tseki, second by Ms. McKenna.

**APPROVED**

5. **VOTED** The Executive Director and Director of Finance explained that as a public entity, the Collaborative is not eligible for PPP loans through the SBA, nor will we have direct access to the CARES Act money being distributed to the districts. However, during recent discussions regarding our eligibility status, we have determined that we may be eligible for public 501c3 status, which may provide opportunities for grants funding and direct donations. The Collaborative had been denied 501c3 status in the 1970s but several Collaboratives in the state have since been determined eligible for public 501c3 status in later decades. The Board voted to allow the Director of Finance to reapply for public 501C3 status on behalf of the Collaborative. Motion by Mr. Shea, second by Mrs. Smith.

**APPROVED**

6. **VOTED** To receive, accept and place on file the retirement notice of Mary Anne Sousa effective September 2, 2020 submitted on Agenda Attachment 6 and to allow Mrs. Sousa to remain on the Collaborative's dental plan per the Retiree Benefit Policy. Motion by Ms. Fernandes, Second by Ms. Gomes.

**APPROVED**

7. **VOTED** At the recommendation of the Executive Director, Treasurer and Director of Finance, the Board voted delay any decision on a deposit to the SMEC OPEB Trust or Capital Reserve Account until the Collaborative's end of year financial picture is more certain and the FY20 Audit certifies the FY20 surplus if any. Motion by Mr. Cotter, second by Ms. Fernandes.

**APPROVED**

8. **VOTED** The Board discussed and completed an annual evaluation of SMEC's Treasurer, Mr. Nunes, as submitted by the Chairman on Agenda Attachment 8. Motion by Ms. Fernandes, second by Ms. McKenna.

**APPROVED**

9. **DISCUSSION** The Executive Director provided an update on the status of our Articles of Agreement, the need to obtain 3 additional Board member signatures on behalf of their respective School Committees as well as that from the Fall River School Committee representative/Chairman before sending to the Commissioner for final approval.

10. **DISCUSSION** The Director shared additional updates on the status of our programs, all providing remote services while awaiting DESE and the Governor's summer and fall guidance. She also shared that there are still plans in place to extend our lease for the Tripp School with Fairhaven but under the circumstances, the process has not been finalized. Ms. McKenna shared that Fairhaven High's graduation had been the day prior so district staff have been very busy but that the School Committee remains in favor of extending the lease with SMEC.
11. **DISCUSSION** The Director shared the status of legislation H525 and that there were no real updates on the ongoing litigation with a prior employee, for which SMEC is a co-defendant.
12. **SCHEDULED** The next scheduled SMEC Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 15, 2020 at 6:00 PM by Zoom.
13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The Board voted to enter into Executive Session to discuss the Executive Director's contract negotiations with the negotiation subcommittee. At that time, the Executive Director and Director of Finance left the meeting. The Board discussed the Executive Directors' requests, draft contract and backup information. They then invited the Executive Director to rejoin the meeting and Ms. Tseki made a motion, seconded by Ms. Smith to return to public session. Mrs. Tseki made a motion and Mr. Shea seconded to approve a new five year contract with the Executive Director as submitted by the negotiating subcommittee members, Mr. Cotter and Mr. Oliver. Motion passed unanimously. Ms. Fernandes then made a motion and Mrs. Gomes seconded to also also approve the Executive Directors' requested salary adjustment for the Director of Finance and Operations. Motion passed unanimously.
14. **VOTED** To adjourn at 6:35 P.M. Motion by Mr. Cotter, Second by Mr. Shea.

**APPROVED**

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