



**Minutes of the November 24th, 2020 EASTCONN Executive Committee Meeting
ZOOM MEETING**

Present: Roll Call of Board Members:

Terry Cote, Eastford	Valerie May, Pomfret
Rod Perry, Scotland	Michael Morrill, Putnam
Maryellen Donnelly, Hampton	Lydia Rivera-Abrams, Killingly
Joan Trivella, Woodstock Academy	Judy Benson-Clarke, Region #8
Herb Arico, Willington	Sonia Greene, Woodstock
Amy Blank, Union	

EASTCONN Staff Present: Gary Mala, Carol Klemyk, Joni Weglein, Diane Dugas, Diane Gozemba, Melanie Marcaccio, Rich Tariff, Teddie Sleight, Ed Martin, Amy Marglony

The Board Meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by Board Chair, Joan Trivella

No Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of minutes:

MOTION:	Herb Arico motioned to approve the minutes of the October 2020 meeting as presented
SECOND:	Terry Cote
VOTE:	Unanimous
ABSTENTIONS:	Lydia Rivera-Abrams

Additions to Agenda: None

Audience with Citizens: None

Presentation of Highlights of EASTCONN Work 2019-2020 by Teddie Sleight, Director of Marketing and Communications.

Discussion Followed. Document will be posted on the Board platform.

Committee Reports:

Policy:

The Policy sub-committee met on November 12th and started the 6000 series. It was a very productive session. The evidence of work is the First Read of Updated Policies on the Consent Agenda.

Facilities:

The Facilities sub-committee met on November 12th. The group toured the EASTCONN Autism Program at Commerce Drive – the tour was led by Amy Margelony and Ravit Stein; they both play a very integral part in the program. A discussion followed around long-term capital needs at the facility – including the area of restraint.

The group discussed the “looking for space” issue. We cannot use Killingly High School anymore and the Autism Program will not fit into Commerce Drive. The group will look at what our programs physically look like and compare that to what properties/buildings are available. The inventory to look at buildings that would be suitable is very small. The full review and update will not be ready until the end of the year. Compare our sites with the Hampton Site – and have a future discussion about the logistics.

The next Facilities Sub-Committee meeting will be on December 10th at 10:00 am

Finance:

The Finance Sub-Committee met on November 17th. The team reviewed financials and the breakeven analysis. Some discussion around FEMA funds. EASTCONN has applied but no determinations have been put in place. EASTCONN as a whole agency is eligible but there is a very narrow list of eligible expenses that will apply under the FEMA funds. EASTCONN will have to use the ESSER funds first before using FEMA funds.

The ESSER funds is specific to those things that were necessary to open and keep schools ongoing. When FEMA funds were first introduced, it was going to cover overtime for cleaning if we contract with an outside service. Now there are new restrictions. For things not covered under ESSER or COVID relief grants EASTCONN can go back and apply for those things that were necessary to keep the schools open.

Updates from Head Start:

Prior to the monthly updates there was a discussion around GEER funds. Funds received through GEER would generally supplement funds received by impacted institutions through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER). A portion of GEER funds must be used to provide emergency grants for K-12 LEAs that have been impacted by COVID-19. Diane Gozemba stated that EASTCONN has the letter of intent – now moving through channels for the contract. We have a preliminary agreement in place.

Report that there are no instances of positive COVID cases. Plainfield and Killingly classrooms closed because the districts went to full remote learning. Enrollment is looking good in Windham. The northeast program is still challenging with regard to recruitment efforts.

Only 55% of the students were up to date on immunizations – which is a very low percentage. In addition, preventive dental care is very low at 37%.

New Business:

Board Chair, Joan Trivella introduced and welcomed new Board of Director's member: Sonia Greene from Woodstock Public Schools.

Enrollment Report:

Continues to change just a bit in our Special Ed programs – they are carrying their typical enrollments. Enrollment is down in the two Magnet Schools due to COVID.

Review of the new document: breakeven analysis. This is based on programs that are student based and tuition based. Struggling with enrollment counts in the Magnet Schools and LEAP – which is in alignment with the other RESC's. We are down 10% at QMC and more than that at ACT. The districts are seeing this decline as well as families are opting for home schooling.

Discussions around public education after COVID and what will that look like? Will look into bringing together regional professionals to be proactive and think forward after COVID. The other thing to look at is LEAP – use this as a tier three school and align with Adult Ed students.

The issue to find suitable locations and how we procure that is the challenge. There are no buildings in our proximity to look at and no empty commercial space. We have one agent that we are working with for a possible NRP relocation. If we want to grow bigger and increase enrollment then we will have to relocate. Executive Director will continue to provide updates and conversations around this.

Executive Director's Report:

Staff is suffering from COVID fatigue with a heightened level of anxiety with cases increasing. Working with staff to see what we can do to help lessen the anxiety level of staff through the Employee Assistance Program. EASTCONN does not have as many cases that they have in the area districts that we serve. How is EASTCONN reacting to the fact that the Northeast Department of Health is leaning towards the decision that schools should close? Cutoff is the key word. We have been having conversations with all the Superintendents in the area; some smaller districts have no cases and do not want to close; so it would not be a regional effort around closure.

A board member asked about Item #1 under the Leading and Learning piece in the report. Last year, when COVID hit the state changes were made around teacher evaluations. Given the impact on SEL for both students and staff, teachers annually have to set goals. This year the goals can be around SEL for students. Leading and Learning is supporting the work and have modified our program so teacher have a goal on SEL with their students.

Finance Report:

Ed Martin presented the financials. He reviewed the YTD financial report and the YOY financial report. In the YTD financial, the big item is the bottom line of projected net income; that is still on target. For the YOY financial report the big issue is due to timing of invoicing. The fiscal department has started to invoice monthly and quarterly as opposed to yearly. This will allow for departments like transportation to give us a more realistic number. Special student programs just finalized their billing and that figure will come out in about a week. Discussion followed around funds and grants related to the pandemic; and how that fits into the financial reports. Joni and Ed will build a report around the FEMA and ESSER funds for future reference. In addition, variance reports for all divisions will be compiled and distributed.

Consent Agenda:

Approve First Read of Policies:

6000/6010/6111/6112/6114/6114.1/6114.7/6114.8/6115/6120/
6121/6121.1/6140/6141/6141.2/6141.311/6114.312/6141.32

MOTION: Rod Perry moved to approve the first read of amended policies as presented
SECOND: Maryellen Donnelly
VOTE: Unanimous
ABSTENTIONS: None

Comments from Board Members:

Thanks to all of EASTCONN employees for their continued work
Thank you to EASTCONN for the listing of acronyms
Small discussion around the anxiety level of staff due to pandemic. Also around the limited staff numbers and trying to keep schools open related to this
Thank you for the presentation of the highlights of EASTCONN work

Executive Session:

MOTION: Rod Perry motioned to enter into Executive Session at 7:10 pm
The Board invited Gary Mala, Executive Director and Melanie Marcaccio, Human Resources Director to join the Executive Session
SECOND: Terry Cote
VOTE: Unanimous
ABSTENTIONS: None

The Board exited Executive Session at 7:39 pm

MOTION: Maryellen Donnelly moved to approve the EASTCONN Federation Of Instructional Assistance, AFT Connecticut, AFT, AFL-CIO contract
SECOND: Amy Blank
VOTE: Unanimous
ABSTENTIONS: None

Adjournment:

MOTION: Lydia Rivera-Abrams moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 pm
SECOND: Amy Blank
VOTE: Unanimous
ABSTENTIONS: None

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Klemyk