



**Minutes of the September 22nd, 2020 EASTCONN Executive Committee Meeting
Hampton Office and ZOOM participants**

Present: Roll Call of Board Members:

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| Terry Cote, Eastford | Valerie May, Pomfret |
| Rod Perry, Scotland | Michael Morrill, Putnam |
| Maryellen Donnelly, Hampton | Katherine Paulhus, Mansfield |
| Amy Blank, Union | Lydia Rivera-Abrams, Killingly |
| Joan Trivella, Woodstock Academy | Judy Benson-Clarke, Region #8 |

EASTCONN Staff Present: Gary Mala, Carol Klemyk, Joni Weglein, Kim Mansfield, Melanie Marcaccio, Rich Tariff, Heather Plourde, Teddie Sleight, Ed Martin

The Board Meeting was called to order at 5:31 pm by Board Chair, Joan Trivella; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of minutes:

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| MOTION: | Katherine Paulhus moved to approve the minutes of the September 2020 meeting – with amendment |
| SECOND: | Terry Cote |
| VOTE: | Unanimous |
| ABSTENTIONS: | Herb Arico |

Additions to Agenda: Discussion to follow with regard to the Board Retreat on 9/24

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| MOTION: | Rod Perry moved to add the Board Retreat to the Agenda |
| SECOND: | Herb Arico |
| VOTE: | Unanimous |
| ABSTENTIONS: | None |

Audience with Citizens: Joni Weglein introduced Ed Martin, new EASTCONN Business Manager

Committee Reports:

The sub-committees will be structured and as we move forward we will be recording minutes of all sub-committee meetings. We will forward the minutes from Policy and Finance sub-committee meetings

(that took place earlier in the month) to the Board on Wednesday, 9/23. Moving forward, they be included in the monthly Board packets for all members.

Policy:

The Policy sub-committee had its first meeting. The group looked at a number of policies including medical policies that needed revisions. The sub-committee meetings do not need to be posted. If any other Board member wants to volunteer for any of the sub-committees please let Joan Trivella know.

Finance:

The Finance sub-committee met last Thursday and reviewed the financials through August 2020. Discussion around the cash position: \$1.4m after payroll. Last fiscal year should be closed out over the next month. One Board member asked if the money we will receive from the government (COVID funds or ESSER funds) factored into this balance. No, not at this time, because we do not know how much will be available to us; once we have this figure we can start drawing on it. The COVID Relief Funds application just came out today. One Board member asked if the projected income amount has changed. CFO, Joni Weglein replied yes because of some new revenue which was not included in the budgets; summer transportation for two months increase revenue by \$92k; that number will go up or down every month depending on where the actuals end up.

Facilities:

The Facilities sub-committee will conduct its first meeting on October 8th at 4:00 pm; Mike Akana, Director of Facilities will be joining the group. The full group consists of Mike Akana, Maryellen Donnelly, Amy Blank, Michael Morrill and Gary Mala. The group will meet in Hampton on October 8th then locations will be determined.

Updates from Head Start:

Diane Gozemba, Director of Early Childhood is not at meeting – report done by Kim Mansfield, Director of Head Start.

Review of the Policy Council Documents. Notice enrollment was a little down to start the school year. They started the school year with hybrid offerings (in person and virtual) to both students and parents. They also shortened the day to allow for better staffing and to ensure that there is no overlapping of individuals coming into the classroom; and offered a lower ratio in basic head start classrooms. Also added a learning application for families; so they can offer virtual visits with all families in different facilities within the communities. One Board member asked how the Head Start families are responding to the open community visits – the northeast area is very favorable. Head Start was awarded federal COVID funds of about \$340k; we have a balance of \$230k. Working on how to allocate funds for the remaining of the year – there are challenges with getting supplies in. One Board member asked about the area of non-English speaking families. Have any participants been identified as being in need of English language support? Kim Mansfield replied that Windham has seen an increase in non-English speaking families. Early Childhood and Head Start has implemented a program called “Seesaw” which translates over 100 different languages; also utilizing Spanish speaking staff in different areas. Another question posed was around the planning to accommodate transition into indoors from outdoor format? Thoughtful conversations with staff have been scheduled; making sure that masks are worn at all times; and utilizing space where they can spread out.

New Business:

EASTCONN's Enrollment Summary Report:

Also added to the enrollment report is another document that contains a breakdown of the number of remote and in person students for ACT, QMC and LEAP. There is an uptick in home schoolings. October 1st is the date that we will be going fully in person at the magnet schools. All enrollments are open enrollments and students can come into programs at any time. One Board member asked what "fully in person" means – does it mean "not offering remote classes"? That will be determined by student responses to physically being in the classrooms. Add a column to the enrollment report that includes enrollment numbers from last year for the corresponding month. The number of families choosing home schooling is on the rise; planning to do a virtual recruitment to bring the students into the classroom; which will be a challenge. The group discussed "what if" scenarios. Executive Director, Gary Mala stated that the programs are working on that; realizing the importance of being creative throughout this process. The most recent of closing of schools had more to do with staffing than it did with students. EASTCONN works with three different health districts; and will be as transparent as they can be. Each case is taken separately and handled differently; and the Department of Health will determine each case and the logistics associated with that.

Executive Director's Report:

Executive Director Mala, stated that EASTCONN schools had a very successful opening. A truly big feat for all staff involved. Every day is a new day considering the pressures from the pandemic. Anxiety level of staff has lowered now that they are interacting with students. Gary relayed a report from IT that chrome books for all students are on their way; the vendor could not keep up with all the orders they received. ERATE funding – we received part of it; it is earmarked to pay for upgraded equipment for students. One Board member asked about the RESC Alliance updates. Executive Director Mala stated that they are all working together and collaborating and sharing valuable information; working with the Governor's Office to learn what can do done further by the Alliance.

One Board member asked about negotiations and if we had an agreement yet? Executive Director Mala stated that we have not signed a memo of understanding for things related to COVID; officials were brought in last spring and have been involved in all the conversations about reopening.

Personnel Report:

Melanie Marcaccio, Director of Human Resources reviewed the report with the Board. We have about 80 vacancies that we are trying to fill at this time. Total employees for EASTCONN is approximately 640. Discussion followed around staffing levels since enrollment is down related to COVID. EASTCONN has increased staffing in other areas of the agency to provide services not tied to our magnet schools. One Board member asked if COVID funds could be used to increase staff. Funding would supplement temporary additional staff – but not for permanent full time positions.

Finance Report:

The fiscal office has billed 25% of the Special Education revenue for the Agency. October 1st is another big day for invoicing; there will be a hug uptick in invoicing over the next few months. One Board member asked about the Transportation Department and related revenue for this area. Next month, EASTCONN's CFO will do a subset of this report that will include a variance report for each director and his or her division. Included in this report will be their projected targets; roadblocks and where they need to be at this time.

Consent Agenda:

Approve the new format of calendar for all Board meetings:

NO NEED TO VOTE ON THIS AGENDA ITEM – just presenting and distributing to the Board

Approve the First Read of New Policies:

#5157 Bullying
#5158 Service Dogs

MOTION: **Herb Arico moved to approve the First Read of New Policies as presented**
SECOND: **Amy Blank**
VOTE: **Unanimous**
ABSTENTIONS: **None**

Approve the First Read of Revisions to Policies:

#5125.11 Health/Medial Records
#5141 Student Health Services
#5142.21 Administering Medications
#5141.25 Students with Special Health Care Needs

MOTION: **Maryellen Donnelly moved to approve the First Read of Revisions to Policies as presented**
SECOND: **Terry Cote**
VOTE: **Unanimous**
ABSTENTIONS: **None**

Approve the CACFP Grant Application for Head Start:

MOTION: **Amy Blank moved to approve the CACFP Grant Application as Presented**
SECOND: **Herb Arico**
VOTE: **Unanimous**
ABSTENTIONS: **None**

Approve the State Head Start Innovation Enhancement Grant Application for EASTCONN and Windham:

MOTION: Herb Arico moved to approve the State Head Start Innovation Enhancement Grant Application for EASTCONN and Windham as presented
SECOND: Amy Blank
VOTE: Unanimous
ABSTENTIONS: None

Approve the Contract for ECI with DPH:

MOTION: Amy Blank moved to approve the Contract for ECI with DPH
SECOND: Lydia Rivera-Abrams
VOTE: Unanimous
ABSTENTIONS: None

Approve the First Read of the Family Handbook for Head Start:

MOTION: Amy Blank moved to approve the First Read of the Family Handbook for Head Start
SECOND: Herb Arico
VOTE: Unanimous
ABSTENTIONS: None

Discussion of Board Retreat schedule for 9/24/20 – 4:00 pm:

Logistics of commitment from Board members to participate. The Goal of the Retreat is to give a roadmap and blueprint to Executive Director Mala, so he can create and actionable theory of action.

Comments from Board Members:

Board Chair, Joan Trivella, stated that she is thrilled with all the work that each EASTCONN Division is involved in; she appreciates all the efforts and is excited about the Retreat on Thursday. Herb Arico stated that he is very thankful to Gary, EASTCONN Administration and Staff for all their hard work and the for the excellent job that is being done. Lydia Rivera-Abrams thanked Gary for his press release giving more details to the COVID situation. Katherine Paulhus stated that she is very appreciative of all the work being done by Gary and all his staff. Rod Perry stated that he agrees with all the statements; EASTCONN has an excellent Leadership Team.

Adjournment:

MOTION: Lydia Rivera-Abrams moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 pm
SECOND: Amy Blank
VOTE: Unanimous
ABSTENTIONS: None

**Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Klemyk**