



North River Collaborative Board of Directors
Friday, September 22, 2023 - 9:00 AM
Meeting Minutes

Present: Paul Tzovolos, Marie Grable, Ellen George, Alan Cron, Jeff Szymaniak, Peter Schafer, Christine Godino, Joseph Baeta, Julie Hamilton, Liz Legault, Mark Bodwell, Ryan Powers

Absent: Matt Ferron

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Alan Cron at 9:05 AM

I. Executive Session

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) “to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.”

1. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of June 23, 2023

Motion: Liz Legault made a motion to open the executive session Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) “to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.” Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Motion: Peter Scahfer made a motion to accept the executive session minutes of June 23, 2023 and not to release them until all matters are settled. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Motion: Peter Schafer made a motion to adjourn the executive session and return to open session. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote. Open session re-opened at 9:10 AM.

II. Approval of Minutes of June 9, 2023

Motion: Liz Legault made a motion to approve the minutes of June 9, 2023. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Approval of warrants

Motion: Liz Legault made a motion to approve the warrants. Peter Schafer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Discussion/Action Items

FY24 Financials-FY24 Budget Update- Ellen George, Director of Business Services, reviewed the General Fund Revenue and Projection report. The current deficit position is (\$79, 291). Ellen stated that the deficit will remedy itself as programs usually experience additional enrollment in October and November. Ellen went on to offer that:

- The NRC Medicaid program is looking to expand.
- Transportation is running a little behind projection but hopes the recruitment campaign currently underway will help to to hire more drivers and monitors and thus increase our ability to offer more routes.
- NRC’s investment account is earning great interest due to its recent move from Rockland Trust to MMDT, the state sponsored investment pool offered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to its public entities.

Motion: Jeff Szymaniak made a motion to accept the FY24 General Fund Revenue and Projection Update. Julie Hamilton seconded the motion Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Acceptance of Staff Resignations, Hires, Terminations, and Changes in Contract-**Paul highlighted the recent hires of a Teacher of the Visually Impaired and a new Outreach Specialist for Independence Academy who will help to target middle school level students as well now. In addition, Paul advised the Board that a fifth Learning Center classroom has been added for the 2023-2024 school year.

Motion: Peter Schafer made a motion to accept the staff resignations, hires, terminations and changes in contract. Liz Legault seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- C. Entry Plan Update-**Paul updated the Board on his and Assistant Executive Director Marie Grable's entry plan:

- Relationship building and trust - Paul and Marie have been meeting with teams and individuals to get an understanding of their job and responsibilities and ideas they may have for their department or position. Paul said it was quite impactful.
- Visiting all the classrooms-Paul and Marie have visited all the classrooms multiple times during the summer and for the start of the school year and have made a few small programmatic changes.
- Addressing the needs of North River School- a Wilson trained teacher has been added this year.
- Worked with HR to ensure non-bias and diversity is incorporated into the interview process through a bias review and insertion of a DEI question into each interview process
- Developed a goal based evaluation system for all employees some of whom had not been evaluated in several years.
- The Administrative Team meeting calendar has been set for the year
- The Instructional Leadership walk through calendar for all classrooms has also been set. The goal is to enhance all of our programs and provide instructional and curricular feedback as well as to have reflective conversations with leadership.
- Have established a great connection with MOEC through general meetings, committee meetings, and new director meetings.
- Want to make a strong connection with families of students served in our programs including transportation.

Motion: Liz Legault made a motion to accept the entry plan. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- D. Overview of Students Success Plan Timeline-**Paul reviewed the Student Success Plan Development Timeline for the Board. Included are:

- Targeted surveys
- The review of feedback from the surveys
- Forming a core team to draft the mission, vision, core beliefs, DEI statement, pillars and initiatives
- Presentation and approval of the plan by the Administrative Team, Board, SNAC, staff and parents.
- Development of action items for SY24-25

E. Executive Director Goals- Paul explained the four key areas for his 2023-2024 executive director goals:

1. Instructional Leadership
2. Student Success Plan
3. Budget Development
4. Evaluation System

Motion: Jeff Szymaniak made a motion to approve the Executive Director Goals for 2023-2024. Liz Legault seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

F. MOEC Information- Paul reviewed MOEC information and upcoming programs.

G. Board Member Reminders and Responsibilities- Paul asked Board members to review the DESE Board Member Reminders and Responsibilities, specifically on training and responsibilities.

H. FY23 OPEB Trust Fund Report: Paul reviewed Treasurer Art Sullivan's FY23 OPEB Trust Fund Report on the financial standing of the OPEB Trust as of June 30, 2023. The trust experienced a positive rate of return at 14.6% and the trust was able to generate enough income to cover a total of \$973,534 in retiree health insurance benefits over the same period of time.

Motion: Liz Legault made a motion to accept the FY23 OPEB Trust Fund Report. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

I. Other Matters of Interest to Board Members

- Chairman Alan Cron asked Executive Director Paul Tzovolos what the Board can do to support the Collaborative. Paul responded that he would like to see full participation on the upcoming Student Success Plan Google survey as well as participation as a member of the core team for the Student Success Plan. Paul went on to ask that the Board encourage their Special Education Directors to attend the Special Needs Advisory meetings which are held 4 times during the school year..Liz Legault suggested that there should be a combined meeting of Superintendents, Special Education Directors and School Business Directors twice a year so that there is an understanding of what goes on in and out of the Collaborative.
- Liz Legault asked if Brockton Public Schools had made any further inquiries with regards to joining the Collaborative. She feels Brockton has space to offer as well as transportation. Peter Schafer asked what the potential benefit would be and stated that he would rather hold steady with the current membership the Collaborative has. Julie Hamilton stated that the member districts have to be the priority. Joe Baeta asked Paul to find out how many Brockton students currently attend the Collaborative.
- Paul Tzovolos introduced a reallocation of a FTE for Transportation. The subject was tabled until the next board meeting.
- Alan Cron stated that he has a concern with the number of referrals, testing requests, and IEP's coming into certain grades. Additionally he stated that the physical behaviors are overwhelming. Chris Godino asked if the Collaborative could hire a BCBA to train paraprofessionals 2-3 days prior to the beginning of the school year as well as offering on the job support. The Board members liked the suggestion and added that paraprofessionals are one of the keys of success to a student. Paul said that he would follow up with the Board on this important PD item.

V. Informational

- A. Professional Development Offerings
- B. Hanover Lions Club Donation
- C. Massachusetts Mechanics Grant

Motion: Liz Legault made a motion to adjourn. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 AM

Respectfully submitted by,

Julie Hamilton, Board Secretary