

Approved 6/18/2020

CONCORD AREA SPECIAL EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

120 Meriam Road, Concord, Massachusetts 01742

Telephone: 978-318-1534

Minutes of CASE Board of Directors Meeting of May 29, 2020

Board Members in attendance (Virtual Meeting):

Peter Light, Acton-Boxborough

Jon Sills, Bedford (dep 2:10 pm)

James O'Shea, Carlisle (dep 1:30 pm)

Laurie Hunter, Concord, Concord-Carlisle

Linda Dwight, Harvard, Chairperson

Rebecca McFall, Lincoln

Bella Wong, Lincoln-Sudbury (dep 2:00 pm)

Kelly Clenchy, Littleton

Mary Jane Rickson, Maynard

Brad Crozier, Sudbury

Also in attendance:

Sanchita Banerjee

Russell Dupere

Members of the CASE Community

Abigail Desjardins

Andrew Paquette

MINUTES:

At 12:32 p.m., Linda Dwight called the meeting to order.

A motion was made by Brad Crozier to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2020 Board of Directors meeting as presented. Kelly Clenchy seconded the motion. Peter Light abstained. All others were in favor.

The Executive Director provided a general update to Board members. The enrollment data has not changed since the last meeting. CASE is currently getting referrals for the summer and fall. The Program Administrators have done some unique things to support the referrals that are coming in. They have provided virtual tours of the buildings, have parents join in on parent meetings already taking place program-wide, and have the potential student participate in classroom activities. The Program Administrators have done a lot to support the referrals.

Transportation Update: The Student Opportunity Act information needed by member districts to claim circuit breaker for transportation costs have been shared with each member district. Sanchita Banerjee thanked Marty Finnegan for his tremendous work in this regard.

Re-Opening Update: At this time, we do not have any information on when schools are going to start back up. We are planning on remote programming for summer and have been working behind the scenes to get this planned. One Board member suggested that we find out the plans of the other districts regarding their summer programs. Most of the districts have decided on remote programming. A couple of the districts are waiting for further guidance from the commissioner before they make

their decision. This year Concord has agreed to host the CASE Summer Program, but most likely it will not happen onsite. Laurie Hunter indicated that she doesn't feel ready to have an onsite program. Jon Sills stated that he doesn't think that this is a Board decision, and the Board agreed that the Executive Director can make the decision on remote programming.

In terms of fall 2020, the Executive Director has set up a task force of representatives from different stakeholder groups to come together and work on a plan for re-entry to school for CASE. There has been a great response from the community so far. Linda Dwight offered to be a representative on the task force if needed.

Celebration of Students: The Executive Director would like to dedicate this report to our graduating students. The amazing accomplishments of our students who are graduating this year are: Andre McQuade, *Littleton*; Will Weidman, *Acton-Boxborough*; Maria Cowan, *Lincoln-Sudbury*; Angela Mancuso, *Littleton*; Piper Picorelli, *Maynard*; Jonathan Eskew, *Lexington*, Eduardo Malta, *Marlborough*. Their work and commitment to get through the finish line has not been easy. But, with our amazing staff's support and guidance, they have made it. The Executive Director asked the Board to join her in congratulating students who have made this truly significant milestone and in commending all our staff and administrators for their work. We are truly proud of our graduates.

A drive-by graduation for the Colebrook students will take place on June 15th, and an invitation will be sent out to Board members.

Celebration of Staff: We would like to honor our three retirees for their significant and long-term tenure at CASE: Jeff Donaldson, Fleet Manager (with CASE since September 1996); Peggy Loscalzo, Occupational Therapist (with CASE since September 1996); Tess Daigle, Speech/Language Pathologist (with CASE since March 1998). All three of them are retiring this year and we thank them for their work at CASE and for making a difference in our students' lives. We wish them the very best as they embark on their next chapter.

Board Members stood and congratulated the graduating students and retiring staff with an applause.

The Treasurer's Report was included in the packet for the Board to review.

Public Comments: Karen Levy, CASE Association Co-President, thanked the Board for their continued support of the CASE staff and that they really do appreciate it. She is amazed at the work going on in the classrooms and that everyone is working very hard. Karen indicated that she saw the messages from Bedford and Harvard and understands and recognizes how hard and difficult this time is financially in towns. She wants to speak to the potential cuts of the hourly employees and fully understand where it is coming from, but wants to bring up a couple things for the Board to consider as they make those decisions. The level of support that is provided remotely will be difficult to carry-out, not so much for summer than in the fall, if remote continues with fewer of those hourly employees. If hourly employees are laid off, it

could be very difficult to get them back. These hourly employees are very familiar with the students, and wanted to know if there is a possibility of furloughing instead of actually laying off. Karen indicated that she knows the Board is being very thoughtful and these are very difficult times, but she did want to let the Board know the classroom side.

The transportation budget (\$6,313,526) and the transportation assessments (\$6,093,172) Option 2 was presented to the Board at the last meeting. The Board accepted Option 2.

Abby Desjardins presented and reviewed the different options (regular versus furlough versus layoffs) for CASE drivers. There was a discussion regarding the best option regarding furlough versus layoffs. It was agreed that the best option would be to furlough the drivers. Even though there would be unemployment costs, there would still be cost savings. This would allow the drivers to collect unemployment and to be able to maintain their health insurance through the end of the summer. With the cost for furlough, the health insurance would cost \$60,000 a month and we plan to pay for two months for their insurance. The health insurance for the months of July and August is continued over the summer.

Kelly Clenchy stated he would like to keep the drivers working, and was hesitant about furloughing the drivers during the summer. He did question if the drivers were furloughed, would we lose the drivers. He wants to make sure that the students are well supported.

Jon Sills would like to explore the furlough option and to continue to pay for health care. Bedford is looking at layoffs for next year so he is hard pressed to pay people their full salary during the summer for services not rendered.

Linda Dwight indicated her district laid off 50 hourly workers as of the last day of school and that their health insurance would continue through the end of August.

Marty Finnegan discussed furlough versus keeping the drivers on their regular pay during the summer. For the majority of the drivers, they are paid for 4 weeks of work during the summer. They are better off on the furlough for July and August. This would benefit the drivers.

James O'Shea concurred with both Marty Finnegan and Jon Sills in regards to the furlough.

A motion was made by Jon Sills to furlough the drivers for the summer and keep paying their health insurance. James O'Shea seconded the motion. A roll call vote took place as follows: McFall, aye; O'Shea, aye; Crozier, aye; Light, aye; Sills, aye; Hunter, aye; Clenchy; Dwight, aye. Mary Jane Rickson and Bella Wong abstained.

This is the second reading of the Program Budget. There is no change in the program budget being proposed. However, a reduced option for the summer budget was brought to the Board. The summer budget was originally proposed at \$620,578.47 on

May 29, 2020. The budget for teaching assistants during the summer has been reduced. Due to analysis done of other costs not being incurred during remote summer programming, a reduced summer budget of \$539,914.47 is now being proposed.

The Board next discussed the summer budget at length. Sanchita Banerjee requested that the Board not layoff or furlough summer teaching assistants, but to keep them in the teams so that they can contribute in the way that they have been contributing. Sanchita indicated that she has received a lot of positive feedback from parents who are extremely grateful for the kinds of connections that the teaching assistants and the other members of the teams are accomplishing.

Sanchita Banerjee indicated that Abby Desjardins will present different scenarios for the amended summer budget. Because we are looking at remote learning, she wanted to bring to you some of the costs we will not be incurring. As a result, there will be a difference in our budget for the summer causing the summer rate to be lowered for districts. In terms of summer, the summer member rate was set at \$5,800 and non-member rate at \$6,500. In looking at some of the line items that we would not be expending, we were able to reduce the rate for members to \$5,000 and for non-members to \$6,000. There is a difference in rates in the summer when we look at the amended summer budget being brought forward today.

Sanchita Banerjee reviewed with the Board the list of tasks that the teaching assistants are performing during this remote learning. Some of the teaching assistant functions during this remote learning include: assist the teacher, maintain communication logs for the teacher, reach out to the students directly, zoom calls with students, read to the students independently with teacher supervision, attend weekly meetings, attend support groups with students and staff, CETT trainings, Professional Development, help teachers make physical materials, create videos, and phone call duties to check with the students. The one task teaching assistants cannot do is design lessons.

Peter Light stated that was an extensive list of tasks for the teaching assistants and appreciates what they are doing. He was interested in knowing if all of our teaching assistants are performing all of the functions, and if they are working the equivalent of a full-time job. Sanchita indicated that some teaching assistants had some access and connectivity issues and that not all of the teaching assistants are involved full-time. The Summer Program is separate and not everyone is invited back to work for the summer.

Bella Wong expressed that she feels uncomfortable with paying full salary as opposed to half across the board. Not confident that people are fully utilized.

Sanchita Banerjee indicated that the summer hours are actually reduced, but can definitely look at that further to see how it works out.

Peter Light suggested to leave the budget as presented, but that people might track what hours they are actually working instead of having a default number.

Kelly Clenchy would like to approve the budget of \$539,914.47 with the expectation that Sanchita would look for potential efficiencies in the program.

Bella Wong said that leaving the budget as presented is too vague. Hourly employees should be compensated for the work that they actually perform. Lincoln-Sudbury is paying their hourly employees through this school year, but going forward they are being more conservative in not paying hourly employees fully unless they perform the duties.

Becky McFall wanted to add that these are very challenging times in terms of supervision and oversight in knowing exactly what is actually happening. Decisions should be based on needs. Based on student needs, work needs to be done with your program administrators and essential staff on how they will be working with the students. Leaving the budget where it is, but ask that the work be done. We are all doing this not only for the summer but fall as well.

Bella Wong stated that she really feels that compensation should be for work actually done. Becky McFall indicated that is really hard to do in these conditions with the hourly workload based on the student needs.

A motion was made by Kelly Clenchy to approve the summer program budget in the amount of \$539,914.47 with the expectation that Sanchita Banerjee will work with the program administrators to again apply any potential efficiencies. Becky McFall seconded the motion. A roll call vote took place as follows: McFall, aye; Crozier, aye; Light, aye; Hunter, aye; Clenchy, aye; Rickson, aye; Dwight, aye; Wong, nay; Sills, nay. Motion passed.

Linda Dwight asked Sanchita Banerjee to come back to the Board with any adjustments when she finds any other efficiencies in the summer budget.

The Board will vote on the program budget at the next meeting.

The MOA regarding staff evaluations will be tabled for the next meeting. The Union is working on reviewing this document.

The extension of programs at 8 Post Office Square, Acton will be tabled for the next meeting

The Board needs to evaluate the Executive Director. She has completed three years, and a new contract will need to be negotiated. Linda Dwight will gather input from Board members and this will be discussed at the next meeting.

At 1:53 PM Linda Dwight made a motion to go into executive session to conduct strategy sessions for the purpose related to contract negotiations with union personnel. A roll call vote took place as follows: McFall, aye; Crozier, aye; Light, aye; Wong, aye; Sills, aye; Clenchy, aye; Rickson, aye; Dwight, aye; Hunter, aye.

At 2:06 PM Linda Dwight made a motion to return to open session. A roll call vote

took place as follows: Dwight, aye; McFall, aye; Crozier, aye; Hunter, aye; Sills, aye; Clenchy, aye; Rickson, aye; Light, aye.

Linda Dwight indicated that the meeting is back in regular session and ready to talk about the contract that was negotiated.

Jon Sills stated that he is very challenged by this decision. These are very uncertain times, and he cares about the staff, but conditions have changed dramatically in the past month or so and he will take that into consideration when he votes.

A motion was made by Laurie Hunter to approve the contract as submitted. Brad Crozier seconded the motion. A roll call vote took place as follows: McFall, nay; Crozier, nay; Sills, nay; Hunter, aye, Clenchy, nay; Rickson, nay; Light, nay, Dwight, aye.

The contract is not accepted and not ratified by the Board. The Board will go back to the negotiation subcommittee and restart the discussion about what they will bring back to the group.

Russell Dupere will reach out to the MTA rep, Mr. Stamm, to let him know the outcome and another subcommittee meeting will need to be scheduled.

Linda Dwight asked Sanchita Banerjee to communicate that this is not the Board's lack of appreciation for the subcommittee's work nor for the teachers' hard work over these months. Each of our districts is in a new and different position than it was when we ended negotiation talks and that we are eager to come back to the table and to talk with them about that in session. Brad Crozier thanked Linda for her statement and said that was well stated and that is the heart of the matter here.

It was agreed that the next Board meeting would be scheduled for June 12, 2020 at 12:30 PM.

At 2:11 PM Linda Dwight made a motion to adjourn the meeting. A roll call vote took place as follows: McFall, aye; Crozier, aye; Hunter, aye; Clenchy, aye; Rickson, aye; Light, aye; Dwight, aye.