

Approved February Board Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2021
9:00 A.M.-12:30 P.M.
Zoom Video Conference

Attendees: Liz McGonagle, Joanne Haley Sullivan, Theresa Craig, Jacki Clark, Cindy Landanno, Roland Joyal, Rick Reino, John Demanche, Chris Scott, Cathy Lawson, Cyndy Taymore, Catherine Cooper, Fran Rosenberg, Steve Donovan, Donna Flaherty, Paulajo Gaines, Ruth Hersh, Christine Romancewicz, Karen Brann, Dan Schaffner

Welcome and Introductions

Liz McGonagle welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting began with Joanne Haley Sullivan's Executive Director Report.

Executive Director Report

FY2021 State Coronavirus Prevention Fund

Joanne briefed the board that on January 7, 2021, the legislature authorized line item 7061-0027, which provides for \$53,060,000 for one-time grants to school districts, charter schools, and educational collaboratives for additional assistance to support coronavirus prevention efforts and to maintain and increase educational quality during the pandemic. Collaborative funds total \$317,037.50 to support 4,223 students served.

Executive Director Budget update

Emily and Joanne have completed a careful review of the FY21 budget and have identified approximately \$10,000 in savings due to the limitations of COVID this year. Included in this is the mileage reimbursement for \$4000 which is in the Executive Director contract. Due to COVID shutdowns, Joanne is not comfortable taking that reimbursement this year and therefore would like to consider it as unspent. Additionally, due to the COVID shutdown, conferences have been all virtual this year and the costs have been minimized as a result. We anticipate that will be reduced by \$6000 in FY21.

Rather than being a transportation stipend, Chris Scott made a motion that the \$4,000 mileage reimbursement become a COVID stipend for FY21 and that Joanne receives this payment in full. This motion was seconded by Fran Rosenberg. The motion passed unanimously.

Coalition for Special Education Funding

On February 16th, two parents will be speaking to the legislature and legislative aides about the need for full funding of Circuit Breaker.

Meeting with Congresswoman Katherine Clark's office

Joanne attended a meeting to advocate for federal funding targeted to support students with disabilities with Katherine Clark's office.

Job alike meetings

This month, the Data Specialists, In-home service leaders, and the Special Education Program Leaders Job-Alike groups met.

MOEC on Facebook

In an effort to expand our social media presence, we have created a MOEC page on [Facebook](#). We hope you will like and follow our page for updates. Emily will email MOEC Members with a link to Facebook page.

Pooled Testing

Liz, Cathy, Fran, Jackie and Joanne had a meeting with Russell Johnston and the team addressing pooled testing to explore the nuances for collaboratives with multiple sites in multiple locations. There was a brief discussion surrounding pooled testing and whether or not collaboratives are participating.

Approval of the December and January Meeting Minutes (FOLDER 1)

Liz McGonagle made a motion that the minutes of the December 14th and January 11th meetings be accepted as presented. Second by Fran Rosenberg. Minutes were accepted unanimously.

Discussion of Regional Representatives Meeting with the Commissioner

This meeting was held on January 12th and began our implementation of the regional aspects of the new law. You can view the presentation that was prepared for the meeting [here](#) and our follow-up letter [here](#).

Mental Health Needs in Students

As part of the Commissioner's meeting, we discussed the reported increase in pediatric patients presenting in emergency rooms with mental health needs including suicidal ideation or attempts. As a follow-up, Theresa, Fran, Steve, Jackie, Susan, and Sanchita joined with Joanne to meet with Associate Commissioner Rachelle Engler Bennet and her team on Monday, February 1st. At that meeting, Rachelle shared information about an array of DESE guidance and PD resources underway to support mental health and wellness across the state. We presented to them about capacity collaboratives have and are willing to expand to mitigate the tsunami of mental health needs that are arising during this pandemic. [Attached](#) is a link to the types of supports and services that we referenced in our discussion as existing capacity on which to build.

We discussed this topic as a Board for direction about next steps. Paulajo & Ruth are meeting this week to discuss further action items & next steps to continue the support of Mental Health Initiatives.

Professional Development Committee Report

Liz McGonagle reviewed this month's [Professional Development Committee Report](#).

Discussion of When to Charge for PD and Establishing a Finance Committee

The subject has come up about whether we should be charging for the Professional Development that we offer. As you may recall, the MOEC budget this year somewhat relied on deeper use of

our cumulative surplus and we said that dues would have to go up unless revenue was generated in another way. The MOEC Board discussed establishing guidance on when MOEC should or should not charge fees for PD for future opportunities.

Chris Scott speaking from the perspective of the MOEC Treasurer, the surplus going into FY21 was \$68K, we have to use \$24K to balance the budget for this year. Revenue is not keeping up with the operating budget. After a brief discussion with Joanne, there is a possibility that we would need to increase dues by approximately 13% to balance the budget. To offset this, targeted Professional Development could have a fee; while general Professional Development could be offered at no charge. Some classes/sessions could be offered as a benefit of MOEC Membership.

Liz McGonagle made a motion to establish a finance committee with the following responsibilities:

- Provide input in the development of the the budget
- Identify other sources of revenue for MOEC and what the rates should be for each;
- Set Rates for Professional Development;
- Evaluate the MOEC dues structure and identify any recommended changes;
- Be comprised of one (1) representative from each region;
- Be chaired by the Treasurer

This motion was seconded by Theresa Craig, and the motion passed unanimously.

Emily will email General Membership asking for volunteers to serve on the Finance Committee.

Legislative Committee Report

The Legislative Committee met on Friday, January 29th. Catherine brought us up to date on their [report](#).

Follow-up on Virtual Financial Seminar Discussion of Cumulative Surplus

Dan Schaffner identified the following areas for the Board to consider to follow up in working with DESE regarding Cumulative Surplus:

- Further clarification from DESE surrounding the waiver process, including form of request, scenarios for requesting a waiver, timeline of such requests, etc.
- Adding possible flexibility to the existing Collaborative regulations, primarily related to the timeline for management and board decisions surrounding the capital reserve funding or OPEB trust funding. For example allowing Collaboratives to retroactively apply contributions to the funds after fiscal year end but before the audit is complete. (Side note, this would ease the administrative burden of having to perform very frequent calculations and scrambling to get the board to vote)

- Adding additional specific scenarios to allowable uses for funds in excess of the 25% - ie allow carryover of the excess to the subsequent fiscal year in circumstances where a deficit is budgeted due to unusual circumstances (pandemic or other funding issues) or if a particular large capital project is forthcoming and the timing or size of funding a capital reserve is impractical.
- The above are the primary areas where there have been questions. The ideal situation would be a clarification of the regs so that if the above items are approved by DESE, they don't have to go into the collaborative agreements. In addition to the above, the existing guidance might be able to be revised so that the usage/calculation of surplus, OPEB, capital reserve, etc is a lot clearer for Collaborative leadership to interpret.

FY21, expenses are being cut/spending freeze/etc but our threshold for Cumulus Surplus will be lower for FY21 so we'll have to return funds which may lead to issues for FY22.

As a follow-up, Dan Shaffner will send questions in writing to Joanne Haley Sullivan for forwarding along to Ruth Hersh for clarification.

Regional Representatives Reports

We heard from our regional representatives about the meetings or other issues of note in their regions.

Greater Boston (Jacki Clark)

Region will be meeting on the last Friday of the month. Cumulative Surplus was a big conversation at the recent meeting with more and more Collaboratives owning/leasing their own spaces due to space restrictions at public schools. Cyndy Taymore suggested looking at the Charter School financial parameters for surplus. Ruth Hersh stated that Charter Schools only have 25% surplus; anything greater needs to be returned to the other school districts.

West Region (Roland Joyal)

Karen Reuter would be a good person to add to the Finance Committee; CES does a lot of PD work.

Central Region (Cindy Landanno)

Region meets quarterly, and hasn't met since the last MOEC meeting.

North Region (Fran Rosenberg)

Has not met since the last MOEC meeting.

Southeastern Region (Catherine Cooper)

Met last week to discuss Social Justice initiatives. South Shore Collaborative facilitated a session via Zoom that was impactful

Joanne suggested that the Regional Reps discuss the Finance Committee with the members.

Treasurer's Report

We heard a [report](#) from Chris Scott about the MOEC finances.

Catherine Cooper made a motion that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as presented. Cathy Lawson seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Procedure for Executive Director Evaluation to be completed in March

Liz McGonagle will coordinate with Emily a time for the Board to meet and discuss the Executive Director Evaluation.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As you know, we had a panel presentation at our general membership meeting in January and we heard from the IDEAS program at the Let's Open Our Doors session on January 26th. MASS has put a process in place to focus their work on this topic (see [powerpoint](#)). The Board will discuss what steps they may like to consider.

Cyndy Taymore suggested an internal Job-alike group.

Professional Development Committee could possibly spearhead this?

Suggestion to bring authors from the anti-racism field for an open discussion/lecture series

Suggestion to watch authors' TedTalks then use breakout rooms in Zoom to further discuss.