

Steamboat Springs Education Fund Board and Grant Commission
October 5, 2016
5:30 PM
Human Service Center Board Room

Education Fund Board Directors present included Sam Jones, Kristin Wilson, Kandise Gilbertson, Alissa Merage, Jay O'Hare, Norbert Turek, Jeanne Mackowski and Cristina Magill. Grant Commissioners present included: Stuart Handloff, Kathy Wichelhaus, Beth Wilhelm and Katie Armstrong. Also present were Linda Thomas (SSEF accountant); Tim Miles (SSSD and Soroco); Karla Setter (grant writer) and Jenny Maxwell, prospective GC member Sarah Katherman prepared the minutes.

- **Call to Order:**

Sam Jones called the joint meeting of the Steamboat Springs Education Fund Board and Grant Commission to order at 5:30 PM.

- **Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

- **Orientation**

Sam reviewed the structure of the EFB and the GC, the funding for the Education Fund and presented a breakdown of the award funds that have been granted over the years, and the model that serves as a guideline for the allocation of funds. Sam noted that the spike in SSEF funds granted in 2015 was the result of spending down the cash flow cushion. He reviewed the mission statement and governing documents, and emphasized the need for accountability to the community. He emphasized the need to focus on student facing proposals. He also reviewed the roles of the EFB, the GC and the applicants in the process. Sam noted that the districts role is to focus on needs and to present their proposals without making recommendations regarding allocations. Regarding accountability, he stated that the districts should define the desired outcomes of the projects supported by grant funds, and use those outcomes to assess the programs' success, rather than only cataloguing the outputs (what was purchased, the number of kids served, etc.). Sam stated that it is the job of the Board and the Commission to evaluate proposals and assess efficacy.

Sam stated that in an effort to include the districts in the decision making process regarding the community programs that are supported by the SSEF, the districts will be given the opportunity to rank the Community Group and Innovation Grant applications.

Sam noted that although the sales tax that funds the SSEF is scheduled to expire in 2019, he would like to put the ballot measure up for renewal in 2018. He also noted that the decision of how to accommodate new charter schools would be discussed at a later date.

Sam reviewed the first and second reading process. Norbert offered that there might be a more efficient decision-making process through which grant applications could be vetted. He said that if the current two-step process is retained, he would prefer calling it "consideration and final recommendation" instead of "first and second reading."

Regarding the applications submitted by teachers, there was a discussion of how to encourage truly innovative proposals. Kathy suggested collaborating with other groups as a means of directing different projects to the appropriate funding source.

Jay reviewed the online application and review process.

- **Grant Writer Annual Report**

Karla reviewed a spreadsheet listing the grants that she had submitted for the three school districts since starting the position in 2011. She stated the 67% of the grants she applied for were funded, which is above the average success rate for staff grant writers. She noted that in addition to grant writing, she also manages the grants that are received to ensure that the funds used are within the grant requirements. Karla stated that nine staff positions have been fully funded through grants. In response to a question from Stuart, she said that she no longer applies for some of the small locally-funded grants, but that teachers sometimes apply for those themselves. Karla reviewed the details of the grants received in 2016, which totaled over \$740,000, noting that some are multi-year grants. There was a discussion of the aspects of the SSSD that limit its eligibility for some grant funding. Sam commended the ability of the SSEF to leverage \$80,000 for a grant writer into \$740,000 for the districts.

- **2016-17 Meeting Calendar**

Cristina reviewed the calendar that had already been discussed and slightly revised by the EFB and the GC. Sam noted that this year the grant cycle has aligned. The majority of the work will be occur between January and April, when all grants will be awarded.

- **CC4E**

Cristina reviewed the history of the CC4E and stated that input had been sought through community forums, surveys and meetings with stakeholders. She said that from the comments received, the following task forces were formed: finance, accountability and policy, demographics, programs and staff, and facilities. The groups are completing their work and preparing to present their findings to the larger group. Cristina read the CC4E mission statement, noting its alignment with the SSEF mission statement. She said they are aiming at putting a bond or mil levy on the ballot in 2017. In response to a question from Jeanne, Sam said that SSEF does sometimes offer an opinion on community issues that relate closely to its mission.

- **Communications Plan**

Jeanne presented the communications plan included in the meeting materials. She noted that many elements of the plan correspond to points that were discussed during the orientation. She emphasized that importance of engaging with the community to ensure that everyone understands the importance of the SSEF and what it provides for the schools. Jeanne discussed ways in which projects funded by the SSEF could be publicized and associated more closely with the SSEF. She also stressed the importance of EFB and GC members getting out to the schools on a regular basis, attending staff meetings, meeting with principals and seeing the projects that the SSEF has funded in action. She suggested that an update of these visits could be provided at each EFB meeting. There was also a discussion of scheduling visits to each school to discuss and promote Innovation Grants. Jeanne reviewed the target audiences of the communications plan, highlighting the importance of maintaining close relationships with the districts and the principals.

Sam stated that in addition to the annual presentation to City Council on the state of the fund, he intends to report on the SSEF to City Council at least one additional time each year. He also suggested that the SSEF should reach out to the realtors in the community, noting that they should promote the SSEF

because selling schools is a key part of selling real estate. There was a discussion of the best way to establish a relationship with the local realtors. Sam offered that the communications plan should serve to thoroughly educate the public about the SSEF in preparation for the ballot measure in two years.

Jeanne reviewed the budget for the communications plan and discussed the proposed changes to the website, which would allow for easy updating by the EFB/GC members.

- **Financial Report**

Linda reviewed the financial statements as included in the meeting materials. She highlighted that sale tax revenues have come in 13.51% higher than forecasted for the first three months of the fiscal year. She stated that the SSSD grants have been paid and the cash position is lower than last year at this time mainly due to dipping into the cash-flow cushion, as Sam mentioned in his presentation. Sam reviewed the function of the cash flow cushion.

- **Meeting Minutes – September 7, 2016:**

MOTION

*Cristina moved to approve the EFB meeting minutes of September 7, 2016 as written. Jay seconded. **The motion carried unanimously.***

- **Committees**

Sam noted that the EFB must approve and adopt a resolution each year to create the committees that were discussed at the September meeting. The committees will report to the EFB at each monthly meeting.

MOTION

Norbert moved to adopt three resolutions forming the following committees: finance, governance and communications. Kandise seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

- **Agenda for the November meeting**

- By-laws, Policies & Procedures
- Audit and tax return
- Rescissions

- **Other Business**

Tim suggested that the accountability report could be done as an online form. Sam suggested that after the matrix has been established, setting it up through Google Docs would be a next step in streamlining the process.

The next EFB meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.

- **Adjourn**

MOTION

*Kandise moved to adjourn the meeting; Cristina seconded. **The EFB meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.***