

Steamboat Springs Education Fund Board
March 3, 2021
5:30PM
Zoom virtual meeting

Education Fund Board Directors participating included Sam Jones, Cristina Magill, Norbert Turek, Jeanne Mackowski, Jill Brabec, Kandise Gilbertson, Adam Alspach, Jon Wade, and Jim Beers. Julie Tourigny was absent. Also in attendance were Linda Thomas (SSEF accountant); Mark Rydberg, Brad Meeks, and Jay Hamric (SSSD); Christy Sinner and Brian Hoza (HSD); Michael Girodo and Darcy --? (MVMCS); Rim Watson (Soroco); Brandon LaChance (NRCCS); and Jenny Maxwell (GC). Sarah Katherman prepared the minutes.

- **Call to Order:**

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

- **Public and Advisory Board Comment**

No comments.

- **Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2021:**

MOTION

*Cristina moved to approve the EFB meeting minutes cited above, as written. Kandise seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.***

- **Committee Reports**

Governance – Norbert reviewed the additional suggested edits from Jenny to the red-lined by-laws included in meeting materials. He offered that if additional changes to the by-laws were needed, it could be discussed in a summer session. He recommended that succession planning should also be discussed at a summer session.

MOTION

*Norbert moved to approve the Eighth Amended By-Laws as presented with the additional minor edits, as discussed. Kandise seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.***

Finance – Sam reported that he had contacted the City regarding the extraordinarily high December (October) receipts, as discussed at the January meeting. He said that the discrepancy is the result of the difference between when fees are received and when they are recognized. He added that due to changes being made to the building codes, an extremely high number of building permits were issued prior to year-end to avoid the increase in use taxes.

Communications – Jeanne said that the next press release would be put out when grants are awarded in May.

- **Financial Report**

Linda reviewed the financial reports, included in the meeting materials. She noted that the current available cash is \$1,819,925.20. Linda stated that revenues year-to-date are up 5.62% over forecast (last year's actuals). The expected funds to be available at fiscal year end are \$5,866,490, assuming that the

remaining deposits are equal to last years' deposits. Sam noted that the expected reserve balance is very high because of the reduction in grant funds awarded last spring due to uncertainty related to COVID-19.

Sam reviewed the budget discussion page of the financial report, which shows the anticipated allocations assuming that all available funds are granted and that a 10% cash flow cushion is reserved. He explained that the budget is presented somewhat differently than in the past because in addition to the cash flow cushion, the funds allocated to administration and the grant writer requests are shown as dollar amounts rather than as percentages and are taken out of the total prior to applying the allocation model to the remaining funds. The percentages allocated to the districts and the community group grants have been adjusted to equal 100%. Sam suggested that the revised budget presentation was cleaner and much easier to understand.

Sam noted that under this scenario the grant writer applications would be pulled out of the allocations, which returns to the issue of the collaborative grants. He added that this change would allow all requests for grant writers to be treated the same.

Jeanne asked why this issue was being brought up. She said that it had been discussed several times in the past and that it was her recollection that the EFB had voted to retain the concept of "collaborative grants" to encourage collaboration between the districts. She said that the collaborative grant writer serves three districts; the grant writer for Montessori would serve only one school. Sam noted that when the issue had been discussed previously, Montessori did not have dedicated grant writer, but now they do. He offered the example of the grant for strider bikes, which is the result of cooperation among all the schools/districts. He said that the collaborative aspect could also be that the grant writers would collaborate with each other. Jill expressed her agreement with Jeanne, adding that nothing had changed to alter her position that funding for the Montessori grant writer should come out of that school's allocation. Jenny stated that another change from last year is the new categorical approach to the district grants. She said that there would be no individual program applications other than the carve out for the grant writer. She offered that the grant writer does not fit into the defined categories.

Michael discussed various ways to consider collaboration. He noted that although there had been discussion of Emily working with Montessori as well as the other schools, she does not have the time to do so. He offered that adding another part-time position to work with Emily increases the efficiency of the process for all concerned. Michael noted that cooperation on individual grants should also be considered collaboration, and that is already occurring.

There was a discussion of whether or not to reincorporate all the grant writer requests in the allocation model or not. Cristina and Norbert agreed that pulling the non-percentage based expenditures out of the allocation model makes sense. The issue is whether to include Montessori's grant writer request.

- **Consideration of current year budget**

Sam reviewed that when the budget was reduced last spring, there was discussion that additional disbursements could be made if funds were available. Brandon noted that this was a very difficult year, and that additional funds would be very beneficial. He said that additional funding could support a summer program. Michael agreed, noting that some positions were not filled and no raises were awarded. He said that additional funds could be used to provide bonuses. Jill stated her support for making supplemental grants, but said that documentation would be needed to ensure the funds would be spent during the current year. Several EFB members agreed that knowing how the money would be used was important. Jeanne noted that there also had been discussion of retaining the supplemental funds as a step toward cash accounting.

Mark suggested that an alternative would be to make payments on next years' grants early. Following discussion, Sam offered that making the payments in the current fiscal year would be cleaner in terms of accounting and process. He expressed support for the idea. Brad stated that distributing the funds sooner would benefit the districts. He added that the taxpayers would want the money to be spent. Cristina suggested that how to adjust the payment schedule could be discussed by the Finance Committee.

- **Preliminary budget**

Sam reviewed the budget discussion again, as presented in the meeting materials. He noted that this would be a preliminary budget, and that all of the grant applications would be reviewed by the Grants Commission. The final budget will be approved in May.

It was confirmed that with the amended by-laws having been approved, Jenny is now a board member. Jeanne said that a vote had been taken in February of 2020 regarding the collaborative grants. Sarah read the discussion and the motion to retain the definition of "collaborative" from the February 2020 minutes. In the discussion of the 2020 motion Sam had stated that the issue could be revisited in the future. That motion carried unanimously. There was further discussion of including one or both grant writer request(s) in the allocation model or not, and the rationales for the change. Jill asked what would happen in the future if the Montessori request was for a disproportionate amount of money. Jenny stated that the grant writer applications would be reviewed by the GC, which would make a funding recommendation to the EFB. Jeanne noted that while the people currently in the grant writer positions are willing to collaborate, that might not always be true. She offered that a vote on the matter would apply to this year only; the issue may need to be revisited each year.

MOTION

*Adam moved to approve the preliminary budget as presented in the meeting materials. Cristina seconded the motion. **The motion carried 7 – 1, with Jill dissenting.***

Jon and Kandise had left the meeting prior to the vote.

Sam stated that the cash flow cushion, as well as all other elements of the budget would be reviewed prior to approval in May. Sarah will distribute applications to the districts, each with its preliminary allocation.

- **Agenda for April meeting**

- Review GC preliminary grant recommendations
- Review contracts
- Determine vacancies

The EFB meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.