**A new board member orientation meeting was held at 6:00 PM**

Attendees present were Christy Boudreau, Dan Hayes, Denise Storm, Heidi Gutekenst, Julianne Tauscher, Susan Hollins, Bill Diehl, Karen Reuter, Kelly Hernandez, Emily Hoffman, Tom Dowling, and Steven Erickson.

**Call to Order and Introduce New Members**

The Board did a roll call of introductions and a quorum was established.

Dan Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

**Public Comment**

Barbara advised that members that they will be receiving a survey regarding the conflict of interest statement, demographics, and business owner.

Hearts are going out to the Frontier Regional school system with their recent tragedy

A modified version of the roll call vote will be taken when voting. Dan explaining that all in favor will say their name and will respond yay or I. Then, it will be asked for opposition and absentia.

**Approve Minutes of the September 30, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting and the November 13, 2020 Finance Subcommittee. (vote required)**

- A copy of the minutes from the 9/30/2020 Board of Directors meeting and the 11/13/2020 Finance Subcommittee meetings were included in the Board Packet on pages 2-17.

The Finance meeting minutes were approved with the correction of grammatical error.

*Jonathan Schmidt moved to approve the minutes of the 9/30/2020 Board of Directors meeting and the 11/13/2020 Finance Subcommittee meeting. Suzanne Crawford seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. William Tomb abstained. None opposed and the motion passed.*

**Annual Audit (vote required)**

- A copy of the Annual Audit was included in the Board Packet on pages 18-61
Barbara Siegel welcomed Steve Erickson and Tom Dowling of Whittlesey PC’s. Tom shared his screen and presented high-level details of the Annual Audit. The presentation can be found attached to these minutes. They advised the Board that they are able to present a clean, unmodified opinion, with an A+ rating.

Dan gave appreciation for the questions that were brought up in the Financial Committee meeting and contributed that he was pleased with the A+ rating. He explained that the audit is a way for the Board to know that they have had an independent review of all the financials.

*John Cotton moved to accept the FY20 audit as presented. Laura Fallon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. None abstained. None opposed and the motion passed.*

Bill provided gratitude to Barbara Siegel and Rebecca Lincoln for their work and assistance with the auditors, despite working remotely.

**Cumulative Surplus  (vote required)**

- Motion to be considered: To accept the FY20 cumulative surplus calculation as presented.

Barbara Siegel advised that Cumulative Surplus is part of the 2012 Collaborative Regulation that requires us to keep track of how well we are doing from year to year. If there is an excess of 25% or more in the General Fund would need to be refunded to the districts. This year the CES Cumulative Surplus is 3.1%, therefore, there is nothing to distribute and will only require a vote on the calculation. She provided that all of the monies are held at People’s Bank but the Cumulative Surplus is not all in cash rather a combination of all of our assets that pertain to the General Fund.

*Don Sluter motioned to accept the FY20 cumulative surplus calculation as presented. Gene Stamall seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. None abstained. None opposed and the motion passed.*

**#6  September Financials  (Barbara Siegel) (vote required)**  Page 62

- Motion to be considered: To accept the 9-30-2020 Financial Report as presented

Barbara Siegel directed those in attendance to reference the Financial Report in their packet of materials. This report is intended to provide a comparison to where we were last year at this time. This is the first year we have something to compare the numbers too and we are in a much better position. This year we have a 26K surplus. She proceeded to review the general fund data listed on the report. The Operational Continuity Team continues to work to keep a healthy picture with seeking areas to save money and increase revenue. They are reviewing each department every other month to check the current status and dedicating time to do everything possible to reduce the budget deficit.

*Melissa Nazzaro motioned to accept the 9-30-2020 Financial Report as presented. Don Sluter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. William Tomb abstained. None opposed and the motion passed.*

**FY21 revised budget  (Barbara Siegel) (vote required)**  Page 63

- Motion to be considered: To accept the adjusted FY21 budget as presented.

The statement of activities found in the packet of materials was reviewed next. Again, she provided review of the data, specifically the changes to the budget with a reduction of 200K. This savings is real and achievable throughout this fiscal year. She anticipates that some of the numbers will be adjusted as they continue to review each depart. Adjustments to the changes of grants with adjustments and additions of new grants are also illustrated on this report. She has no concerns at this time.
Barbara provided some history on the billing for Professional Development that was put into place a long time ago. She explained that there are 3 terms and revenue is recognized at the beginning of the term. However, the Fall term continues on through January creating a frontload of expenditures.

Don Sluter motioned to accept the adjusted FY21 budget as presented. Jonathan Schmidt seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. William Tomb and Susan Hollins abstained. None opposed and the motion passed.

Indirect rate surcharge (Bill Diehl) (vote required)

- Motion to be considered: To approve that the Executive Director or designee has discretion over the administrative/indirect rate for services provided to entities that are neither member districts nor nonmember districts nor individuals from member/non-member districts.

Bill Diehl gave context of the reason for this request and explained that CES can charge non-member districts up to 25% above the member district's rate, of which DESE had previously accepted. While collaborating ways to increase revenue, the idea was raised that we adjust how much we charge non-district organizations at the discretion of the Executive Director. According to DESE, this proposed opportunity would be up to the Board to approve. The intention of this vote is to give the Executive Director the flexibility to increase the indirect rate pricing depending on the organization, with the focus of not negatively impacting our at risk community members. It was noted that CES already does this but on the opposite side with reducing the indirect rate to create feasibility. The practice would be similar in this manner. A few suggestions were made that included:
  
  - Setting a limit on the increase rates to give some structure.
  - Others would rather not put a cap and limit revenue.

It was established that the Board members favored not having a policy and to put their trust in the Executive Director’s hand.

Laura Fallon motioned to approve that the Executive Director or designee has discretion over the administrative/indirect rate for services provided to entities that are neither member districts nor non-member districts nor individuals from member/non-member districts. Christy Boudreau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. None abstained. None opposed and the motion passed.

Hires and Separations for 9/16/20 - 11/15/20 (vote required) Pages 64-65

- Motion to be considered: To approve the hires and separations for the period of 9/1/2019-11/15/2020 as presented.

Bill explained that one page provided those associates with Direct Services and the number of hires was due to the recent acquisition of the MMEP contract. While the second page represents those affiliates with the state contracts.

John Cotton motioned to approve the hires and separations for the period of 9/1/2019 - 11/15/2020 as presented. Suzanne Crawford seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. None abstained. None opposed and the motion passed.

Massachusetts Migrant Education Program (MMEP) Presentation (Emily Hoffman)

Karen Reuter advised that CES was awarded the MMEP grant and proceeded to introduce Emily Hoffman, Migrant Education Program Director. Emily shared her screen and presented the attached PowerPoint. Upon completion, questions were fielded to include the following details:
- MMEP serves between 400-600 students annually
- Recently, there has been a shift in family dynamics with more men taking care of the children without the mothers being in the area.
- The CES member districts with students in the MMEP are as follows: Frontier Regional, Gill-Montigue, Amherst, and Hadley
- All were encouraged to share the details of this program with their districts to get the word out.
- MMEP staff would love to have the opportunity to put screeners in place to identify students that would be eligible to obtain services.

**Annual Report (vote required)** Pages 66-130

- Motion to be considered: *To accept the annual report as presented.*

Bill Diehl advised the Annual Report is a requirement and needs to mention everything CES does, the cost, a comparison with similar organizations to prove we are cost-effective. It is informative and shows the range of services CES provides. He recommended taking the opportunity to read through it and to share it with the districts for the background of the Collaborative. The first part is a summary of the year and noted that the deficit is reasonable due to not having the opportunity to participate in programs like the CARES Act. In each section, there is a pre-COVID and pandemic description, due to the pivoting that the pandemic created. The goal was to navigate what the districts needed, one of those was the paraprofessional professional development training. He expressed his happiness with the ways the staff had stepped up to meet the demands of the changes the year had brought. CES is also working on the next strategic plan and working on opening opportunities through this process. CES is looking at how they can do better for the young people in our communities. He provided the update that the DESE audit has been passed and we did well. However, the state audit is still ongoing, moving forward, and we hope it will be coming to an end soon. He is hopeful that the report will be released by the end of December. Within the report, there is a section of challenges of which he outlined at a high level.

Kathy Levesque, Director of Business Development and Communication, noted that all, current and past, Annual Reports can be found on the CES website. This report is organized by our goals as represented by the agreement with the Board to assist with organizing what is presented. The next step is to submit it to DESE for approval but requires the Board of Directors approval prior.

A shorter brochure, Many Highlights, will be designed to summarize some of the key stories and the people involved. It will be forthcoming.

*Johnathon Schmidt motioned to accept the annual report as presented. Laura Fallon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Christy Boudeau abstained. None opposed and the motion passed.*

**Academies updates (Karen Reuter)**

Karen Reuter reported to the Board that a school nurse had been secured for HEC Academy. She has had school base and mental health experience and is already leading us in regards to exposure and keeping staff calm and kids safe. HEC Academy has had some staffing challenges, similar to districts with health accommodations and childcare needs. HEC Academy has an enrollment of 24 with 16 students’ families having chosen to be served remotely and 8 students preferring in-person learning. Due to the shift of in-person staffing, the in-person students have been split into cohorts with a max of 5 students. This created the flexibility to add to them over time.

Mount Tom is a smaller program with an enrollment of 13 students with 6 students being serviced in-person. Due to the number of students preferring to be serviced with remote learning, they are able to offer students the opportunity to come to school 4 days a week by merging the cohorts.
Ultimately, we are working on how to navigate what would require the decision to be fully remote. The commissioner has not provided guidance on how collaboratives should determine this, therefore, CES is working on establishing a matrix. MT and HEC Academies do not have unions negotiate with unlike the contracts (DYS/SEIS) do.

Dan Hayes acknowledged that the teachers are dedicated to the students and provided his appreciation to their work.

**CES Updates / Report (Bill Diehl)**

Bill Diehl took the opportunity to express his appreciation and that our educators are the real heroes - in the Academies and the contracts. All of them are dealing with some form of grief and personal needs of their families.

This is his 40th and last Board meeting with his impending retirement. He expressed that he got to do what he loved and loved what he has done. He offered an outline of his background and how his passion came to be. He started out serving those who were underserved that led his dedication to this work. He came to the Collaborative just as Franklin County joined and got to implement the rebranding and involving all in the decision making process. He expressed his pleasure for the success he has been honored to have been part of. He also provided his appreciation for all those who he has worked with including the Board.

Karen Reuter will be in place as interim Executive Director while the search continues. She expressed her gratitude for her time she has had to work with Bill and is thankful to be with the collaborative. She is committed to bridge the gap till June 30 and feels privileged to have this opportunity.

Dan Hayes recalled being part of Bill’s selection committee when he became the Executive Director. He reflected on his work, accomplishments, and ability to use his vision through the reorganization and how he was able to put it into action. Because of this, CES is a better place.

**Topics of Board Interest**

Dan advised the Board to feel free to email himself, Kelly, or Karen any topics that they would like to be discussed at future Board meetings.

**Adjournment**

Dan adjourned the meeting at 8:48 PM