CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCE NEW MEMBERS

Dan Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

The Board did introductions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Fallon reminded the Board that it’s not too late to register for the MASC workshop.

Laura also brought up the new education funding bill relative to education opportunity for students that addresses funding issues. It would add $1.5 billion in new investment in public education, before assuming the cost of inflation. It would fully implement the recommendations of the Foundation Review Commission. Some of the items it addresses are charter school reimbursements and SPED transportation costs.

Senators have until Friday at 2 PM to file amendments. There was a conference call with Senator Comerford and municipal and education leaders where they were able to voice their concerns around the legislation. One of the concerns was about the language around regional school districts as it implied there would be less autonomy and give DESE more control. There also isn’t anything to address the ways Charter schools are funded.

Regional transportation reimbursement is proposed at 82% instead of the 100% that was promised.

One individual on the call asked if there was anywhere to see projections.

Dan Hayes mentioned that there are avenues to find information about this such as MASC.

APPROVE MINUTES OF:

Board Meeting 6/26/19
A copy of the minutes were provided to all Board Members in their packets. There was one edit under the “CES Treasurer Don Scott” section of the minutes. Where Don noted that a batch of checks went out without signatures on them, the minutes say “went out with” whereas it should be “went out without.”

*Suzanne Crawford moved that the Board approve the minutes of the 6/26/19 Board of Directors meeting with the aforementioned edits. John Cotton seconded the motion. None were opposed and the motion passed. Keith McFarland and Barbara Doyle abstained.*

**Executive Committee 8/21/19**

A copy of the minutes were provided to all Board Members in their packets.

*Don Sluter moved that the Board approve the minutes of the 8/21/19 Executive Committee meeting. Laura Fallon seconded the motion. None were opposed and the motion passed. Keith McFarland, Barbara Doyle, Suzanne Crawford, Geoff Gougeon, and Humera Fasihuddin abstained.*

**Property Subcommittee 8/21/19**

A copy of the open session minutes were provided to all Board Members in their packets.

*Don Sluter moved that the Board approve the open session minutes of the 8/21/19 Property Subcommittee meeting. Laura Fallon seconded the motion. None were opposed and the motion passed. Keith McFarland, Barbara Doyle, Suzanne Crawford, Geoff Gougeon, and Humera Fasihuddin abstained.*

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Bill Diehl explained that, given this is the first meeting of the year, we need to vote for new officers and appoint committee members.. It was noted that we only received one nomination for Chairperson of the Board prior to the Board meeting. Dan Hayes is interested in being the Chair and being involved in the Finance and Warrant Committees.

**Chair of the Board**

*Laura Fallon moved that the Board approve that Dan Hayes be the Chair of the Board of Directors for FY20. Humera Fasihudding seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed.*

**Vice Chair of the Board**

Dan Hayes explained that it is easier to start with those who are interested and then go to nominations. In the packet is a description of what the vice chair does. Dan noted that as chair, he has always worked very closely with their vice chair and to be a partner with them to ensure sure all information comes from the Board and decisions are made from the Board.

Don Sluter volunteered to be Vice Chair of the Board.
Stephanie Conrod moved that the Board approve that Don Sluter be the Vice Chairperson of the Board of Directors for FY20. John Cotton seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed.

Executive Committee

Dan Hayes explained that according to the by-laws, the Executive Committee must consist of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board and three additional members with no more than two of the three additional members being from the same county.

Dan explained that it’s a very large Board and the Executive Committee elected by the Board is able to carry forward business in the event we do not have a quorum; that enables us to continue the meeting if we have vital votes that need to be done, such as hires and separations. If this happens, the Executive Committee would be voting instead of all members, though they would listen to what everyone says. The Executive Committee also has pre-arranged meetings once or twice a year to carry out tasks as assigned by the Board; for example, the Executive Committee meets once in the summer to approve hires and separations.

Stephanie Conrod, Laura Fallon, and Jennifer Mallett volunteered to be on the Executive Committee.

Don Sluter moved that the Board approve that Stephanie Conrod, Laura Fallon, and Jennifer Mallett be approved as the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. Gene Stamell seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed.

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY & TREASURER

Secretary

Dan Hayes explained that the Secretary role is generally considered the responsibility of the Executive Director.

John Cotton moved that the Board approve that William Diehl be appointed as the Secretary of the Board of Directors for FY20. Suzanne Crawford seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed.

Treasurer

Barbara Siegel informed the Board that Don Scott is willing to continue as Treasurer.

Humera Fasihuddin moved that the Board approve Don Scott as the Treasurer for FY20. John Cotton seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed.

APPOINTMENT OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Dan Hayes explained that according to the bylaws, the Chairperson is an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee along with two other Board Members. Two Superintendents also serve on the Finance Committee. This Committee provides an opportunity for Board members to provide input into
the budget and other fiscal matters prior to a full Board meeting. It generally meets the week before Board meetings in the morning around 8:30.

Bill Diehl informed the Board that the Superintendents met last week and the Easthampton Superintendent will be on the Finance Committee so the Easthampton school committee member cannot be on the Finance Committee. In addition, Gill-Montague Superintendent Michael Sullivan agreed to serve on this committee.

There were no volunteers so we will leave this open and vote at the next meeting.

**ACTION ITEM:** Add the appointment of the Finance Committee to the November meeting’s agenda and remind Board members of this prior to the meeting.

**APPOINTMENT OF WARRANT SUBCOMMITTEE**

Dan Hayes explained that CES has a system of signing warrants electronically so this group does not meet face-to-face. Signing the warrants is delegated to a sub-committee on a weekly basis, but members are always able to look at the warrants and weigh in on them. Don Sluter, Dan Hayes, and Maureen Nichols are currently members of the Warrant Subcommittee as voted during the June meeting. Dan noted that we can leave it at this group unless someone else would like to join. There were no additional volunteers.

_Don Sluter moved that Don Sluter, Dan Hayes, and Maureen Nichols be approved by the Board as the members of the Warrant Subcommittee. John Cotton seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed._

**HIRES & SEPARATIONS 6/1/19-7/31/19 (informational only) & 8/1/19 - 8/31/19 (vote required)**

A copy of the 6/1/19-7/31/19 report was provided to all Board Members in their packet. This report is informational only as the Executive Committee voted on it during the 8/21/19 session.

A copy of the 8/1/19-8/31/19 report was provided to all Board Members in their packets.

Bill Diehl explained to the Board that the list includes a number of part-time and summer positions. Bill also discussed the recent selection of a new Deputy Director, Karen Reuter.

_Geoff Gougeon moved to approve Karen Reuter as the Deputy Director. Humera Fasihuddin seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed._

Anastasia Ordonez requested to see resumes for high level positions in the future.

**ACTION ITEM:** Send out future resumes of high level positions to the Board.

_Suzanne Crawford moved that the board approve that New Hires & Separations for dates 8/1/19 through 8/31/19. Gene Stamell seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed._

**AUTHORIZATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**
Dan Hayes noted that Bill ensures that the Board is aware of anything significant.

_Humera Fasihuddin moved that the Board approve that the Executive Director (William Diehl) is authorized, empowered and directed on behalf of the Collaborative to sign, seal, execute and deliver any and all contracts, agreements and other documents on behalf of the organization, as allowed by law. Don Sluter seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed._

**AUTHORIZATION OF DEPUTY DIRECTOR & DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

Dan Hayes noted that last year we added the Director of Finance and Operations in case Bill was not available to “sign, seal, execute and deliver any and all contracts, agreements and other documents on behalf of the organization, as allowed by law, if and only if the Executive Director is unable to fulfill these duties in a timely manner sufficient to meet specific deadlines”

_Humera Fasihuddin moved that the Board approve that the Deputy Director and the Director of Finance and Operations are each authorized, empowered and directed to act in place of the Executive Director to sign, seal, execute and deliver any and all contracts, agreements and other documents on behalf of the organization, as allowed by law, if and only if the Executive Director is unable to fulfill these duties in a timely manner sufficient to meet specific deadlines. Suzanne Crawford seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed._

**FISCAL REPORT**

**Update on FY19**

Barbara Siegel shared wonderful news that CES ended FY19 in a surplus. We are in the midst of our audit so we don’t have absolute numbers yet. It’s around $500,000. Barbara explained for the newer members that at the end of the audit process we have to determine what the cumulative surplus is due to collaborative legislation and typically it goes back to member districts. In the past, she was asked who was using our services as far as members versus non-members. Professional Development is the only area where non-member usage (64%) exceeds member usage. Everything else is around 25% non-member usage and 75% member usage.

Dan wants authorization from the Board to thank the staff not only for their hard work but also their focus. Last year we were looking at areas that were running at deficits. We looked at how to make this more sustainable and the staff looked at their individual departments to find ways to be more effective and close the gap. There is now a surplus. He would also like to put something in the next newsletter.

**ACTION ITEM:** Send a letter to staff and add it to the next newsletter.

**Year to Date Update**

Barbara noted that the Board may recall that when we passed the budget in June we had an unknown pot of money to bring in ($60,000 of indirect). As of today we’re at $80,797. We have already exceeded the goal and it’s September. At Dan’s request Barbara explained what indirect meant.
Michael Merritt asked if there was a foundational budget for the ups and downs. Barbara said we are not allowed to have a rainy day fund. The only way we can put money aside is if we have a Capital Plan, which is a major undertaking and requires a board vote. We are not ready to start that process yet. However, she will be asking the board to allow us to keep the surplus on the books after the results of the audit are complete. This will be part of the Cumulative Surplus vote at the November meeting.

While we have brought the $80,797 in from new grants and contracts, we are lower than planned with the contracts we knew about when the budget was passed. We are lower by about $44,000 but we have not yet received our DYS Title I contract from Comm Corp. That one contract will eliminate that $44,000 shortfall. She is hoping by the November Board meeting we will have that contract in hand.

In Salesforce we have around $350,000 worth of contracts that are booked and those will be consistently added to. This past year we took on an employee from Hampshire Council of Governments who works specifically in cooperative purchasing. Last year was $31,000. This year we are already at $58,000 and still another $33,000 will come in from future contracts. So we’ve already met the costs of bringing in another employee and surpassed the budgeted amount.

**Status of 1500**

Barbara noted that the picture is as is expected at this point in the year. Programs that run on the school year cycle are just getting underway. We always have costs that occur early in the year, like our commercial insurance, and the revenues catch up as the year progresses.

**Update on Audits**

Barbara noted that both of the audits are going well. Whittesly is moving along well. It’s becoming a faster and faster process because of the tools we have. In their first day they were able to give reports and requests for more information that we typically wouldn’t see until next week.

For the state auditors, we’ve just started scheduling the first round of interviews that they’ve requested. Dan noted that audit sounds scary but it’s pretty routine.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION**

Dan Hayes explained that this is one more responsibility of the Board. Bill walked the Board through the process that was made available to the Board in their packets. Bill noted that we’ve made the process more accessible online. Dan noted that if you compare it to the superintendent process it’s much easier. This process has worked really well so we’ll continue with that.

Bill discussed his goals for the year, which were in the packet. It’s a similar set of goals as last year with some updates and additions to reflect changes in FY20. Since Bill is a Superintendent, his goal areas, and his evaluation by the Board, follow DESE’s framework and are aligned with what district superintendents do.

Anastasia commended Bill on district improvement goal number one-item number six (“Continuing to take a leadership role, to the extent permitted by applicable law, in identifying and advocating for issues and opportunities pertinent to our member districts”). She said it’s really great to see CES take a
leadership role. It helps get information to a lot of our members with things affecting their districts on a daily basis. She also mentioned Executive Director goal number five-item five (“Continuing implementation of a strategic plan to infuse more social justice and equity principles and practices in the agency”). Her member district cares a lot about this and it’s something they are constantly discussing. Anastasia also asked about social justice and equity in Executive Director goal number three-item 1 (“Expanding the professional development, consulting, and other assistance to our member districts in the areas of… social justice and equity…”). Anastasia said she would add gender awareness – that’s coming up a lot in their district with administrators. They need the skills to be able to communicate properly and address the issues youth are concerned with now. Bill, with the Board’s permission, will add that to this goal. Bill also noted that we just hired a second person to help with the equity work.

Dan asked Laura Fallon to speak to her conversation with Senator Commerford. Laura informed the Board that Commerford commented how much Bill has helped and how instrumental he has been to moving educational issues, especially about our districts, forward.

**ACTION ITEM:** Bill to add SJE this to the goal.

_Humera Fasihuddin moved that the board approve the Executive Director Goals for 2019-2020. Don Sluter seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed._

Stephanie Conrod and Don Sluter volunteered to be on the Executive Director evaluation committee.

Dan noted that anyone can join - there are no limits. It gives you the opportunity to be able to create questions and synthesize the information that comes out of the sessions. With the tools that CES has in consolidating the info it’s pretty easy. The committee generally meet around three times. In the past, they generally met in the afternoons or evenings, but they did it whenever the group was available.

Dan noted you can tell us at another meeting as well if you are interested.

**DISCUSSION OF DESE PRIORITIES - “OUR WAY FORWARD”**

Bill gave the background to the Commissioner’s Our Way Forward document, which was included in the Board’s packet. Bill noted it’s important for us as it will set the direction, including what funding will be made and what the emphasis will be, including testing. It talks about doing more performance-based and hands-on work. We feel we need to be on top of and in front of this in order to assist our member districts. We don’t serve DESE and the Commissioner doesn’t tell us what to do, but we work towards assisting what the districts need to do. We figure out how this will support students.

Bill then reviewed the areas that will affect us, one of which was deeper learning for all. The book the Commissioner mentioned in the report reflects alternative education projects that are project-based and competency based learning. Laura Fallon described how she and others went into a classroom that was doing this and noted her concern about the funding needed to provide the resources to implement these deeper learning programs.

Bill noted that New Hampshire has moved forward with competency-based education, which is trying to model the learning we do as adults. The previous Commissioner was very focused on standardized
testing and this one is opening the doors more. Laura Fallon noted that we also need to provide PD around dealing with potential pitfalls such as gender/race/class dynamics.

Anastasia Ordonez noted that the Commissioner made a point of highlighting how MCAS can be detrimental to a specific group of students, but there’s no plan to deal with that. There is a disconnect between how it’s talked about in this report and elsewhere and how it’s being employed. The other concern of hers is early childhood. Most districts still don’t provide early childhood education. She’s hoping CES can help by amplifying the need for those things and continue that conversation publically. Our communities are very interested in these issues, but also interested in maintaining our “number one in the nation” status in education. Bill pointed out that the report does make clear that we continue to fail to appropriately educate a portion of our students, especially students of color, ELs, students with disabilities, and other groups that have traditionally been marginalized. We have to be able to provide the funding, the strategies, and the political will to change that.

Michael Merritt seconded Anastasia’s comment about early childhood education. That is such a crucial point in development and we need to put funding into efforts to make sure children are ready for school so they can be successful throughout their schooling. There are pretty robust standards for preschool but if not all students have access to preschool then it’s not equitable. If we’re talking about social justice and equity, then that’s a good place to start.

Humera Fasihuddin is very optimistic about deeper learning. She sees great promise in the state taking a leadership position on this. There’s a lot of work that needs to go into retraining and CES can provide a leadership role in providing teachers with opportunities with how to facilitate these types of learning and breed a culture of collaboration with more peer-to-peer learning and more connection. She can see how this can be a game changer for our state if we do it right. Then and only then can we can take the pressure away from testing, but it’s going to take a transition period.

Stephanie Conrod took note of theme 2. We talk about deeper learning and inequity across the state as far as western and eastern MA goes, but there is also a lot of inequity within our own counties. Her community has a lot of SEL issues and trauma. If we don’t address theme 2, then we’re never going to get to deeper learning. A lot of this is wonderful content, but where is the money going to come from to ask our educators to take more time out of what they need to to visit students in their homes. There’s no roadmap to how he’s going to implement any of this.

Bill noted that we are looking for ways to serve our member districts. His takeaways from this discussion are that internally, we need to get our folks together to talk about and research deeper learning. At its purest, competency-based education means you no longer base education on the time you have, but the amount of learning that takes place. There’s beauty in this, but major barriers as well. So what does it mean to move towards that. The other item is to see what we can do to support our districts being able to provide better supports in mental health, specifically. Because our region doesn't have enough providers; how can our districts collaborate with CES’ help to find a solution for that? Bill asked the Board if there are other areas the Collaborative can help.

Laura Fallon pointed out that she is glad we included educator workforce diversity in our efforts.
Dan Hayes pointed out that one of the things that is going in Union 28 is universal design for learning. He found it fascinating and said that it’s really a philosophical way of approaching learning and educating all students. It’s providing access to every student at their level. Union 28 been doing this for 3-4 years and it’s interesting to see the transformation in people. It’s not a big expense, but it takes a lot of training and positive reinforcement (ex. The Superintendent going into the classroom and positively reinforcing strategies they are employing). Like with social justice and equity, you have to create a culture.

Gene Stamell commented that the core values are to respect each kid and increase self esteem in each student. For students who have SEL issues that’s just a drop in the bucket towards that, but if you respect the child and how they’re doing something well, it reinforces what that kid is good at. His concern is SATs. HS Education is still pretty heavily geared towards SATs and he is concerned what we’re preparing kids for. We have to get them ready for reality.

Humera Fasihuddin pointed out that change is very slow, but we have seen signs that higher education is looking at different ways of educating. Use of portfolios is one area that is taking hold. If we think more about using portfolios to demonstrate learning while students are in HS, it’ll be easier for higher ed to accept those things.

Bill requested that the Board email him with additional ideas.

**AMENDMENT TO THE CES COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT (vote required)**

A copy of the proposed amendments to the Agreement of the Collaborative for Educational Services was provided to all Board Members in their packet.

Bill noted and reviewed the memo that was also in the Board packet, which describes the steps to accept new member districts and the changes to the agreement.

*Geoff Gougeon moved that the Board approve the revised and amended Agreement of the Collaborative for Educational Services as presented. Don Sluter seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor and the motion passed.*

Bill then explained the next steps involving the school committees. Bill hopes to meet with each school committee between now and the end of January and seek their approval. If that’s not possible for a school committee, Bill plans to ask that school of January, we will likely have enough time for DESE to review and the Commissioner to approve in time for Gateway and Worthington to join next fiscal year. Bill will send out a letter to School Committee Chairs and Superintendents and will cc our Board members with the request to approve and sign the revised Agreement.

Suzanne Crawford clarified that Board members don't personally have a next step. Bill requested that once you know the email has gone out to encourage that this item gets on the agenda.

Laura Fallon brought up the Articles of Agreement and a discrepancy with the regulations regarding responsibilities of the Board to provide information to their school committees. Our Agreement says after each meeting (6 times); the regulations say quarterly. (Our by-laws don’t give a time frame). Bill noted that the discrepancy is because the Board has always done it based on our six meetings; after
each meeting we send out the Executive Director reports to be shared with School Committees. Stephanie Conrod noted we have just gone beyond the requirements, but still accomplish the minimum.

The Board discussed this and decided to put this as point of consideration the next time we revise the Agreement.

Stephanie pointed out that Orange doesn’t have a December meeting and Suzanne noted that their next one is the same as this Board meeting.

**MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION (M.G.L. 30A, SECTION 21(A)(6), “TO CONSIDER THE PURCHASE, EXCHANGE, LEASE OR VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY IF THE CHAIR DECLARES THAT AN OPEN MEETING MAY HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE NEGOTIATING POSITION OF THE PUBLIC BODY”**

Dan Hayes requested that the Board of Directors invite Barbara Siegel, Sarah Molloy, Cheryl Rogers, and Kathy Levesque from CES to join the Board of Directors in Executive Session.

Dan noted that we will go back into open session.

*Don Sluter moved go into executive session (m.g.l. 30a, section 21(a)(6), “to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.” Anastasia Ordonez seconded the motion. A roll call was performed and all Board Members voted in favor and the motion passed.*

The minutes from the Executive Session are in a separate document.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

*Don Sluter moved that the Board go back into open session. Michael Merritt seconded the motion. A roll call was performed and all Board Members voted in favor and the motion passed.*

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Bill expressed appreciation for the Board members sharing this report with their school committees. Bill then reviewed some highlights, including opportunities that have arose from assuming some cooperative purchasing contracts from the now-defunct Hampshire Council of Governments. Kathy Levesque discussed a new shared service CES is involved in having to do with translation services. Kathy noted we’ve heard from a bunch of superintendents and business managers of a need to find cost effective, either local or virtual, interpretation or translation services; this led us to signing an agreement for CES with Lexikeet. Because we entered into an agreement for our own services, we can also provide the discounts we get to our member districts. Bill shared that there is a new lead teacher at Mount Tom Academy. Matt Wilhelm asked how the transition was handled with the students since there seemed to be a strong bond. Bill said that when he visited it seemed like it was going well. Kathy described the two new programs at Pioneer Regional - one is an early grades therapeutic classroom and the other one is a transitional classroom. Kathy also described the new Literacy Center at HEC Academy. Bill added that we’re trying to build on this model with Pioneer Valley for helping districts set up SPED programs. We also have our R&E people doing research about recovery high schools (recovery from substance abuse). We’re talking with Lower Pioneer to see if we want to house something in the Pioneer Valley.
Dan noted that if you can read the Executive Director’s report there is a lot of information there. The Collaborative is designed to serve member districts and keep students in your schools, provide PD etc.

**TOPICS OF BOARD INTEREST**

Stephanie Conrod shared that her district was hoping to, in the spirit of SEL and trauma-informed care, hire a licensed social worker. Their override did not pass in Orange; now, they are going to have to reallocate that money for an unanticipated unbudgeted out of district placement. If there is a district close to them that is exploring hiring a social worker, she asked the Board members, if possible, to share that with her.

Suzanne Crawford mentioned that Hawlemont school has allowed a social services outreach group to use their room where they can meet with students to provide services that school cannot. It saves the students having to go a far distance to get the services.

Barbara Siegel also mentioned the Behavioral Health Network. Barbara Doyle suggested talking to Athol-Royalston. After a grant ended they developed a sustainability plan.

Dan Hayes added that if there are things you want to talk about email Bill or Sarah.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Don Sluter moved that the Board adjourn the meeting. John Cotton seconded the motion. All Board members were in favor and the motion passed.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM.