



FOUR RIVERS EARLY LEARNING HUB

Serving Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco & Wheeler Counties

November 29, 2016

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Pine Grove Early Intervention and Library
Hood River, OR 97031

Governance Board MEETING MINUTES

Present (Italics indicate Governance Board Member)

Nancy Patten – Early Learning Services, Interim Chair

Kristen Richelderfer – Parent Representative

Amber DeGrange - Sherman County

Christa Rude - 4RELH Coordinator

Jennifer Bold – Business Sector

Teddy Fennern – Gilliam County

Debby Jones – Wasco County

Terri Vann – Hood River County

Cassie Whitmire – Hood River EI / ECSE

Zenaida Lyles – Oregon Dept. of Education Early Learning Division

John Rust – Hood River Community Education Director

Milt Dennison – CGESD Superintendent

Anne Carlos – Hood River Special Education District

Nora Zimmerman – GOBHI

Dan Goldman – Hood River School District Superintendent

Janet Hamada – Social Services & The Next Door

Teri Thalhofer – Health (ELC member)

Jennifer Heredia – OCDC (Director)

Mike Goris – Communications Specialist

Absent or Excused Board Members:

Barb Seatter – Behavioral Health

Debbie Starkey – Wheeler County

Debra Gilmore – DHS District Manager

Welcome and Introductions

Chair calls meeting to order and introductions are made around the table.

Approval of the Minutes

Review of September and October minutes.

There are corrections to the Sept. 27 minutes:

- Pg. 2 – purpose is misspelled
- Pg. 5 – ACES is misspelled

Debby Jones moved to accept Sept. 27 minutes. Teri Thalhofer seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

In regards to the Oct. 25 minutes, the Chair asked if there were any additions or corrections.

A question was raised about whether the structural racism training could be recognized by the Oregon Registry system. The Chair responded by saying that Oregon Registry certificates would need to be issued. The Coordinator noted that she would follow up with trainers so that participants could receive certificates.

Terri Vann moved to accept the Oct. 25 minutes. Jennifer Bold seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Additions to the Agenda

The 4RELH Coordinator noted that Letter C in the agenda (Preschool Infrastructure Recommendation) under the Fiscal Report section was added to the agenda. There was also a request to provide website updates by the Communication Specialist.

The Health Representative requested to add an update on QRIS revision and rebranding.

The Hood River Superintendent asked to speak to the group on behalf of the 4RELH efforts on the Cascade Locks Preschool Program. He addressed the board and thanked them for the work that they all do. He emphasized his appreciation for the collaborative efforts and being able to see the fruits of labor. He also mentioned that Hood River County is increasing its focus on early childhood programming noting that it is necessary to reach children in order for them to be successful in school. The ultimate goal for Hood River is to have every child graduate with real choices. The Superintendent spoke on the data concerning low kindergarten readiness across the state but mentioned specifically that Cascade Locks and Park Valley have extremely low scores. He noted that approximately eight out of every ten children are in abject poverty and the Cascade Locks area has no access to formal preschool programs or access formal health care. Currently the K-12 school was downsized to a K-5 school due to a dwindling population. The district has shifted its focus on building community and have created health care rooms at the elementary school to help provide services these children need. They have the space and the need for it. He also emphasized that the district is focused on providing and sustaining resources to expand preschool access in the area. He finished by stating that they are looking forward to collaborating with the board, the coordinator, and the community partners involved with getting the mobile preschool program up and running.

The Chair thanked the superintendent for his comments and made mention of his dedication to address the concerns and needs of the community. She also noted that not only is there no preschool in Cascade Locks but also no childcare. This has been an overall struggle and this partnership between the Hub and the school district is a very positive beginning.

Fiscal Report

The Coordinator thanked the superintendent once more for his comments and then addressed the contract recommendations being brought to the board using the overview document in the board packet which included:

- An attached overview provides another review of the approved budget and allocations. The highlighted areas on the overview are the places where approval to move forward with contracts is needed. The overview identifies who the intended contractor is, the amount, and what it buys for the proposed contracts as well as budget allocations and contracts that have already been approved
- There is also an agreement template that outlines how the contracts will be laid out (with approval from the state)

The coordinator noted that if the board approves the contracts as outlined, they will be executed (in concert with Sherman County) and based on the funding stream amounts noted in the approved budget and reporting.

There was a question about one of the revenue sources and the Coordinator clarified that the continuing service payments were in regards to services being paid for before the Hub existed. This funding stream kept some services going during the transition between the Commission On Children & Families to the Hub.

Overviewing - Contract Recommendations

The coordinator provided an overview of each of the funding areas with specific focus on the areas that were proposed for contracts:

Our Kids Network: Public Health, HVC & Vista Logic

This is the basis of OUR KIDS NETWORK and starts with to the \$10k Vista Logic contract which will start to build the platform for tracking and connecting with children and their families in the region in partnership with Public Health. Later this week, there is an anticipated meeting to further discuss how that funding could be utilized to support Public Health and efforts already in place with the Home Visiting Connections efforts.

Cascade Locks & Play and Learn Groups (formerly known as Mobile Preschool)

Cascade Locks: The allocation that has already been approved, and the contract represents staffing and supplies for preschool start up in partnership with Cascade Locks Elementary (a part of Hood River School District). The contract is with Hood River School District for \$55,000. Hopes are that this initial effort will be the start of partnerships with other programs and support on going sustainability.

Play and Learn Groups

The Coordinator mentioned that the two allocations related to the Play and Learn groups include:

- Consulting Services through an agreement with Ginger Fink (consultant who started the mobile preschool program in Hawaii)
- Direct Services Contract with OCDC to implement the model.
- o Originally, mobile preschool was going to be run out of the ESD but there were not enough applicants for the lead teacher position and sustainability was a question
- o The Coordinator met with Donald Dodson, OCDC Executive Director, to see if she would be open to supporting the preschool model. Ms. Dodson was very interested, which prompted conversation with OCDC director Jen Heredia for contracting with OCDC for the PAL Program for long-term sustainability.
- o Recommendation agreement with OCDC is for two locations: Chenoweth and Colonel Wright elementary school zones for the first two PAL groups with a staffing pattern of two people – a lead and an assistant.

The Coordinator mentioned that she also made a call to the state regarding implementing a direct agreement. As long as there is board approval and a strong relationship with community entity, it is okay to move forward with the project. Total Budget of \$137, 453.00

A question was raised: Have either the PAL program or Cascade Locks preschool program submitted a work plan or budget?

Coordinator noted that Cascade Locks did create a budget but it is not present today. There is a significant amount of “in kind” funding that the district is providing around oversight of the program and facility use.

As for PAL groups, the goal is to get the contract in place (with Ginger and with OCDC) in order to provide support for hiring a lead teacher AND creating a work plan. The coordinator has worked with Ginger and OCDC to identify deliverables for the contract and the work plan will come out of that initial work. Work plan and budget could be included in the agreement documentation.

Another question was raised: Is there any wiggle room in the budget? Response: The Coordinator stated that it would have to be up for approval at the next board meeting where she could send a report back with the sample budget.

A question was raised: Do we move to approve contracts with this specific amount or “up to this amount”? Response: The Coordinator agreed that “up to this amount” would be best. She noted that with the Vista Logic

contract, if they only require time equivalent to \$5k to create the specifications document, then that is all the Hub will pay. The “up to this amount” cost would also apply to Ginger Fink. All funds released are on an invoice system and “reimbursable”.

A question was raised: What is the vision for sustainability of the PAL program? Response: The Coordinator responded that PAL is a key strategy for how to reach families and preschool aged children, especially in areas that are not easily reachable and for families who may not qualify for other programs. The Hub is also applying for an Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative (OPEC) grant and that funding has opportunity in it for expanding the PAL program into other areas in the region.

A concern was raised about what is it that is being created with the PAL program and how would it achieve long-term sustainability? Response: The Coordinator responded by stating that because the Hub has taken the time to discuss various models it would be specifically focusing on funding that will help support sustainability of the program. The initial amounts would get PAL up and running but next year the goal is to work with existing programs and agencies to keep it going.

The Coordinator commented that for PALs there could be two models of evaluation: pre and post surveys with families or possibly use the Parenting Ladder (currently the OPEC evaluation tool). It will also be important to consider ways to measure the long-term child level outcomes for the next biennium. It was noted that even at the state level, there is still work being done around the best way to track child-level outcomes for children. The Coordinator noted that Developmental Screening and OKA scores are currently metrics being used at state level. The Wasco County Representative mentioned that she sits on the Measuring Success Committee, which would be meeting next Friday. She asked that if anyone had any comments to relay back to them to let her know.

A question was raised: How much time will be allocated to keep this project (PAL's) afloat? Are any funds from other grants going to be available to other programs? Response: It was noted that the workload would be less for the Hub staff if the PAL program is contracted through OCDC. This means that the Coordinator will not oversee PAL but will receive reports from those contracted with.

Amber DeGrange moved to approve up to \$55k to be contracted with Hood River School District for the Cascade Locks preschool program. Teri Thalhofer seconded the motion and it unanimously passed.

Amber DeGrange also moved to approve the contract with Ginger Fink for up to \$5k in consulting supports implementation of the PALs program. Terri Vann seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed.

Amber DeGrange moved to approve up to \$137k for the total funding of the Our Kids Connections PAL program contracted out with OCDC. Terri Vann seconded the motion and it unanimously passed.

Regional Preschool Access

There is a recommendation in the agenda coming shortly from the review group.

Preschool Infrastructure Recommendations

The Coordinator passed out the overview of Preschool Infrastructure funding to the group. She mentioned that there were applications received and the review team asked clarifying questions, which were discussed.

The overall process was reviewed and the recommendation document provides an overview of the insights and comments as well as the recommendation from the review team which include: Jan Leonard – Mental Health Sherman County School District, Julie Smith – ELD Child Care licensor, Noemi Ochoa – Child Care Partners, Susan Gabay – Department of Human Services, Self-Sufficiency, Lisa Roth – Center for Living - GOBHI

The Coordinator shared that applicants were requested to provide high and low funding request. The total of lowest requests was almost exactly the amount of funding the Hub has. The Review team made a

recommendation that the Board fund at the lowest levels that each applicant suggested. The Coordinator noted that the same contract would be used to work with these entities and would be created with the board's approval of the recommendation from the review panel.

A question was raised: Was there anyone that did not get funding? Response: No. Another question was asked: Where is ABC Preschool? Response: ABC is located in Wasco County and is a child care program that is hoping to expand to preschool. The ABC Huskies application focused on long-term partnerships and collaboration, which would add strength to their program.

The Sherman County Representative commented that one of the big proponents in the application is that there would be alignment with school districts and preschool programs. She raised a question asking if ABC would be engaging with the county. The Coordinator responded that they could co-partner and that the board could include a blanket recommendation that those programs receiving resources from the Hub work closely with local school districts.

A concern was raised that some programs that applied for funding have a smaller number of children that they serve but are receiving just as much or more funding than a program that is serving three times the number of children. The Coordinator noted that this is part of the collaborative funding process and that applicants were asked to request based on need.

Terri Vann moved to approve the recommendation from the review team as presented for Preschool Infrastructure funding. Janet Hamada seconded the motion. Amber DeGrange, Teddy Fennern, and Jennifer Bold abstained from voting. The motion was approved.

Update on Board Terms & Vacancies

The Coordinator introduced an update on board terms, noting that the old copy of the agenda showed two board member vacancies but there is now only one. Wheeler County filled the position with Debbie Starkey. The Coordinator also made mention to say a special thanks to Cindy Johnson – EI/ECSE for all of her notes and information gathering in updating the Board Term Document.

The board will review the components of the overview and reflect on elements for discussion at the Board Retreat in January. Possible considerations include: application process, appointments, size of group, representation, role and data sharing

A question was raised: Is it intentional that all representative positions expire at the same time? Response: The Coordinator responded that it is intentional and can be found in the bylaws. The County and Sector positions are staggered though.

Legislative Update

While at the COSA conference, the Regional Coordinator participated in the Hub Leaders conversation about the upcoming legislative session. A document was shared noting key questions and important legislative dates.

The Coordinator suggested the creation of a task force in order to update the board via email about the Legislative Session. She also requested to know how the board would like to see its level of advocacy in the upcoming session.

A question was asked if there was any conversation at COSA about the Hub Executive Directors. The Coordinator responded that the Children's Institute has been discussed as a potential partner and she offered to forward board members the emails from the institute.

The Executive Director of NDI mentioned that her organization does have a lobbyist and NDI would be happy to provide updates on Legislative Sessions to the board as well.

The group agreed that no formal task force was needed at this time, and that everyone would do their part to share information as it became available.

Email Voting Policy

The Chair introduced the possibility of an email voting policy, for items that need voted before the February (this would require updating the bylaws). The Coordinator provided a draft document and discussion ensued.

A question was raised: Are we a public body? If so in the state of Oregon board members cannot vote by email. A comment was made that the Hub would have to add record retention to the email voting policy.

Janet Hamada moved that if the Hub is qualified to do an email vote that the proposal be approved with follow up on public body questions. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Bold and was unanimously approved.

OREGON PARENTING EDUCATION CONSORTIUM GRANT - OPEC

The Coordinator introduced an overview of an expansion grant from the Oregon Parenting Education Collaboration. Currently NDI is the lead entity receiving the grant for Hood River and Wasco counties. The expansion would expand across the five county region and transition from NDI to the Early Learning Hub. Approval would lead to a conversation with Sherman County regarding the fiscal components of the grant. If approved, the Coordinator requests a RFA committee to review the final proposal prior to submission. The Coordinator will also be working on this proposal with support from the Collective Impact Specialist, Paul Lindberg and data from the Community Health Assessment.

A summary of the core components of the grant was shared. A The Coordinator noted that if the board would like to create a Hub committee or fiscal team to review the application, their feedback is welcomed.

Amber DeGrange moved to support the Coordinator's application to the OPEC grant with feedback from the local ECC chairs and check-ins with each community. Terri Vann seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Teri Thalhofer introduced that childcare rules were reviewed at the last ELC meeting and with the Coordinator's permission if it could be sent through the review process or wait to be commented on publicly. The Chair mentioned that Early Learning Partner Forum entities would be meeting Thursday in Wilsonville, Or.

Teri T. also provided updates on QRIS: a rating and improvement program with a three, four and five-star rating system. The current language had led to confusion about program requirements and there have been two prior unsuccessful attempts for rebranding. Now the program will be renamed SPARK. It will be streamlined for easier comprehension of requirements and the tag lines have been created in five languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Somali, Russian and Vietnamese. It was noted that the Quality Improvement Specialists play an important role and need to be part of the process.

A concern was raised about the new changes and how that would affect programs currently going through QRIS. The Chair responded that any work being done would be accepted.

The Coordinator mentioned that the Diversity Training would be taking place December 16th. She thanked those who had signed up and asked for those who had not to do so by the coming week.

The Meeting adjourned at 2:51pm.

Respectfully submitted by Mike Goris, Communications Specialist