



The Coalition's Mission is to provide leadership and advocacy that builds a community where all children are prepared for success in school

Special Called Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 13, 2011

4:00pm to 5:30pm

Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend Region

Northwood Centre, 1940 North Monroe Street, Suite 70, Tallahassee, FL 32303

Committee Members Present:

Larry DiPietro, Chair
Linda Nelson
Kim Kelling Engstrom

Staff Present:

Joey D'Souza, Governance Coordinator
Lauren Faison, Executive Director

Committee Members Absent:

Rodney Reams
Catie McRae

Guests Present:

n/a

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Larry DiPietro, Chair, welcomed committee members and staff. Roll call was taken and quorum was established at 4:05pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

The motion to approve the agenda for this meeting was made by Linda Nelson. This motion was seconded by Kim Kelling Engstrom. This motion was approved.

3. Approval of Minutes for June 7, 2011

The motion to approve the minutes for the Executive Committee Meeting of June 7, 2011 was made by Linda Nelson. This motion was seconded by Kim Kelling Engstrom. This motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Discussion Items

a. Office of Early Learning Transition

Lauren F. informed the committee the Office of Early Learning is currently in the process of actually moving out of the Caldwell Building and into their new home at the Lotto Building. Currently Matt Gussey is serving as interim director for the office while the Governor conducts interviews. The impact of OEL leaving AWI and moving under DOE is still unclear. The legislative committees that fund early learning and

VPK are going to be entirely new committees this year and they have to undergo education on the programs. Committee meetings start next week and there is a real need to meet with legislators on those committees to inform them on early learning and VPK. Lauren along with other member of the AELC have already met with the policy staff of those committees and the Governor's Office to educate them on School Readiness. In those meetings they asked for the budget to be increased and not be cut again.

There is a lot of conversations happening with legislators and on the audit performed by the Auditor General. The scope of the audit was only financial and does not truly examine the entire reach of the Coalitions. Lauren F. met briefly with Speaker Cannon and expressed her concerns about the limited scope of the audit. Board members were supposed to have had questionnaires sent to them by the Auditor General, yet none have received them as of yet. The final report has yet to be released.

b. Legislative Meetings

Lauren F attended the Family Safety Summit the previous week and during the presentations she saw the potential for a lot more collaboration with DCF in providing quality service to children and families. The Coalitions are more holistic in their delivery of service and do not just focus on educating children. This will need to be explained to the legislative committees as they being to examine what the Coalitions do and at what level to fund them.

The statewide AELC has determined the talking points for this year's session and distributed them around the state. They are: restore funding, support the current model, support high quality VPK. Lauren F. has been in communication with Sen. Montford to get him to tour the office and meet with her. He is the Vice Chair of the Education Committee, which is the committee that now funds the Coalitions. Lauren F. has continued to do a lot of outreach to elected officials and other people of interest to increase the awareness of the Coalition and its importance.

c. Audit Schedule

Since January the Coalition has undergone three different audits, the Auditor General, external financial audit and the OEL audit. All duplicated the work of the others. Larry D. asked how many FTE hours were lost as a result of the audits. Lauren F. could not say for certainty but that she would let him know by the board meeting. The auditors from OEL just completed their field work in the office last week. Last year it took eight months before the final report was received.

d. Outreach Update

Lauren F. recounted that Kia Autosports just finished their support drive for the Coalition. They raised a lot of supplies for providers and the owner donated an additional \$5,000 to be put towards unrestricted funds. The ELC is one of three nonprofits receiving support from Kia. Earth Fare also donated \$1,000 to the Coalition during their back to school drive.

During this past week both Mayor Marks and the aide from Rep. Southerland's office came for a tour of the office. The aide came in advance for what should be a visit from the Congressman himself. The Mayor would like to return to put on a reading event for children. Upcoming visits to the office are, Sean Pittman, John Hogan, John

Johnson and Tom Lynch. We have begun to reach out to Sen. Bill Nelson to invite him to a visit. There are some additional board vacancies and we need to cultivate people for those positions. Lauren F. commented she would like to recruit a marketing/PR person for the board.

e. Board Membership Update

Larry D. restated that he has officially resigned as board chair, yet is still remaining on the board and committed to the organization. He feels the organization is healthier and stronger since having first been appointed as chair and feels confident being able to step down. Lauren F. let the committee know that Bob Gabordi has also stepped down from the board.

Currently there is no provider representation on the board; the prior representatives had fulfilled their terms. The Coalition announced the vacancies and has received applications from four private, for-profit providers and from one faith-based provider. Lauren F. presented the applications to the committee for them to review and then vote on membership. The faith-based provider application was from Stacey Duggar from Trinity United Methodist Church Preschool. By reason of their being no other applications, Stacey was elected by the committee to be put up for nomination to the board to fulfill the faith-based provider slot.

The four private, for-profit providers were: Tony Jackson from Little Angels in Training, Dr. Luisa Martin-Holmes from Birght Stars, Christine Bertoch from Annsworth Academy, and Roy Keister from Scottsdale Academy. Larry D. commented on the quality of applicants to choose from and Lauren F. reiterated the comment. Lauren F. told the committee she would be able to provide any additional insight on the applicants such as the size of the centers, population served and other information. Lauren also informed the board there were three additional applicants but they were disqualified for various infractions of their contract with the Coalition.

Linda N. asked if all of the applicants could be added to the board under private sector slots since there are vacancies. They would not qualify under the board membership requirements as well as take spots away from other possible community representation. Lauren F. also informed the committee that all of the applicants were currently on the Provider Advisory Council so the Coalition does get their input even though they are nonvoting members on the board. Larry D. suggested that Dr. Martin be given the spot and Roy from Scottsdale be the second choice if Dr. Martin says no. Larry D. commented that Dr. Martin should be able to replace some of the knowledge and expertise that was lost when Dr. Burton and Ed Feaver rolled off the board. Kim E. and Linda N. agreed with his suggestion.

Larry D. then asked if Lauren F. or anybody from the Coalition has been in contact with Andy Jackson from Taylor County, and if not he should be asked to resign from the board since he is no longer participating. Lauren F. added that the board needs a new person to fill the County Health Department slot since Marlon Hunter took a job in North Carolina. Linda N. commented she knew the CHD from Madison and she would be a good candidate.

Lauren F. informed the committee that Bryan Desloge has expressed an interest in serving as the chair and has submitted his application to the Governor's Office and that Rodney Reams will serve as interim chair.

f. Technology Support Services

Lauren F. notified the committee the Coalition has served its 60 notice of contract termination with Aegis as its IT service provider. The contract was going to end in January, but it was decided to end the contract earlier since the Coalition is without an IT Director and to rebid the IT contract taking that in to effect. Lauren F. also told the committee that our current needs were not being met by the contract, which was acknowledged by Aegis as well. The RFP was announced and there are five companies looking at submitting a bid. Bids are due by COB on Friday. The new contract should save the Coalition around \$40,000 a year; our current contract costs \$9,000 a month. The board needs to approve staff to engage in a contract that exceeds \$25,000 which the Finance Committee has already done, but the Board needs to approve the decision as well.

Larry D. asked who at the Coalition is responsible for IT inventory and tracking. Lauren F. responded it is tasked to the Finance Department.

Lauren F. asked the committee for their thoughts on inviting Mike Watkins from DCF to the December board Meeting to do a presentation with Lauren on what the Coalition does for foster children and the partnership we have with them.

Larry D. asked Lauren F. about the fund development plan which was included in the packet. Lauren explained the Coalition needs to raise \$255,000 in match funds, but projects to raise over \$300,000. Lauren commented that a need right now is to build up the nonrestricted funds to pay for incidentals such as food in the service area for children or birthday cakes for staff and so forth. Pam Butler from the Advocacy and Resource Development Committee has taken on this task and is committed to raising \$300 a month in unrestricted funds.

Larry D. asked Lauren F. if she would pose Brewfest volunteering opportunities to staff since the ELC is a recipient of Sunrise Rotary funds.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Minutes recorded by: _____
Joey D'Souza, Governance Coordinator

Full Committee Approval Date: _____

Committee Chair's Initials: _____

Board Secretary Initials: _____