



Board of Commissioners Meeting

Hybrid – at Kent ISD & Zoom

Thursday, May 25, 2023

8:30-10:30 a.m.

Minutes

Present:

Co-Chair Kate Pew Wolters, Co-Chair Lew Chamberlin, Amanda Barbour, Robert Herr, Pastor Howard Earle, Claire Guisfredi, Dr. Hanna Jaworski, Melinda Johnson, Ron Koehler, Dr. Juan Olivarez, Anthony Queen, Milt Rohwer, Randy Thelen, Carl Ver Beek, and Joslyn O. Ward.

Absent:

Lynne Ferrell, Kelsey Perdue, Michelle Van Dyke, and Sean Welsh.

Guests: Kiel McQueen, Basis Policy Research; Claudia Bajema, Meghan VanderMale, and Thomas Macholan, Together West MI.

Staff:

Jennifer Headley-Nordman, Heather Boswell, Cati Cortes, Shelby Glover, Evan Hile, Kyle Johnson, Kristen Sobolewski, Megan Streng, Christine Timbol Larson, Daniel VanderMolen, and Jill B. Salisbury who recorded the minutes.

Welcome:

Kate Pew Wolters called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

Consent agenda:

Kate Pew Wolters asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda, including the minutes from the January 26, 2023 meeting.

Motion to adopt the consent agenda: Ron Koehler

Support: Milt Rohwer

Motion Passed

Public Comment:

Three members from Together West Michigan were in attendance. Meghan VanderMale spoke on behalf of the group indicating that their organization has several working groups; one specifically around child care.

Equity:

Daniel VanderMolen gave an update on:

- **Board Norms:**
Emmy O'Dwyer, Advancing Communities for Equity, will be in person at the July 27, 2023 Board meeting to present the board norms that were crafted in January.
- **Equity Talks Video Series:**

On July 27, Emmy O'Dwyer will be in person to conduct a Training of the Trainer session for the Equity Talks video series. About ten local partners will attend to test and inform the content. Then the series will be available for professional development use within the community, fall 2023.

Investing Early:

○ **Finance Report:**

April Financials:

Bob Herr presented the April First Steps Kent and Ready by Five financials.

Motion to approve as presented: Bob Herr

Support: Howard Earle, Jr.

Motion Passed

○ **990 Tax Return:**

Bob reported that this is being reviewed by the Executive Committee.

It will be presented at the July board meeting for approval and filing.

Claire Guisfredi suggested reviewing the verbiage describing First Steps Kent on the 990 because this wording is a good marketing tool that prospective funders look at to learn more about the organization.

○ **New Treasurer Appointment:**

Bob Herr recommended that Josh Sayles, Assurance Senior Manager at Ernst & Young, be appointed as Treasurer. Josh was recommended by the Finance Committee.

Motion to approve Josh Sayles as treasurer: Bob Herr

Support: Melinda Johnson

Motion Passed

○ **Basis Policy Research Presentation:**

Kiel McQueen presented the Ready by Five Year One (2022) Evaluation report.

A period of questions and answers followed.

- Hanna Jaworski offered to help connect First Steps Kent to the provider regarding data collection.
- Dr. Juan Olivarez stressed the importance of reporting back to the community before the millage renewal in 2024 regarding the gap around school readiness for children of color.
- Randy Thelen suggested innovative thinking around incentives and target numbers in an effort to maximize services.
- Additional questions revolved around outreach and navigation.

Next steps for the evaluation team include defining kindergarten readiness along with a cost/benefit analysis. This full report will be sent to board members.

○ **Ready by Five Reprogramming for the remainder of 2023:**

Kyle Johnson explained that reprogramming is a process that allows First Steps Kent to re-allocate funds from underspent/underperforming contracts. Funds within contracts that have spent down their awarded funds are able to be re-allocated if there is still a need for additional services.

Agencies that have multiple contracts are allowed to move funds from one contract to another if the contract receiving funds has a need for additional money. There was a total of five requests.

| <u>Agency</u> | <u>Program</u> | <u>2023 Award</u> | <u>Action</u> |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| 1. Bethany Christian Services | R4220157 Child Safety Program | \$89,615.00 | Reprogram to move <u>\$3,280.00</u> from Bethany Christian Services' Translation and Interpretation Services (R5230170) contract that is underspent to Bethany Christian Services' Child Safety program. |
| 2. Kent County Health Department | R4220156 Lead Program Expansion | \$582,720.00 | Reprogram to move <u>\$91,137.00</u> from the Prioritizing Parent Fund to Kent County Health Department Lead Program Expansion. |
| 3. Family Futures | R4220159 Child Safety Initiative | \$45,000.00 | Reprogram to move <u>\$71,371.00</u> from Family Futures' Healthy Kent contract (\$41,500.00 - R42200163) and from the Prioritizing Parent Fund (\$29,871.00) to Family Futures' Child Safety Initiative. |
| 4. Family Futures | R4220148 Connections – Outreach and Navigation | \$870,250.00 | Reprogram to move <u>\$17,500.00</u> from Family Futures' Healthy Families Kent County contract (R42200163) to the Family Futures' Connections – Outreach and Navigation program. |
| 5. Healthy Homes Coalition | R4220155 Nido Home Screening Project | \$240,710.00 | Reprogram to move <u>\$1,400.00</u> from the Prioritizing Parent Fund to Healthy Homes Coalition's Nido Home Screening Project. |

Motion to reprogram funding in the amount of \$184,688: Milt Rohwer

Second: Claire Guisfredi

Motion passed.

- **Prioritizing Parents Fund:**

Claire Guisfredi asked why there was still money left in the prioritizing parents' fund. Back in September 2022, the Ready by Five Resident Proposal Review Board recommended the allocation of \$464,878 into a fund that allows agencies to request additional funding for parent-focused initiatives. The intent of these funds is to support various initiatives that ensure parent voice is prioritized and to help further agency responsiveness to the need of families with young children in Kent County in the coming year. Kyle Johnson explained that there was some money left over (\$171,502) after four rounds of prioritizing parents funding. A total of \$293,376 was distributed to seven agencies during the four rounds of funding. The remaining funds were included in reprogramming.

- **Resident Proposal Review Board (RPRB):**

The RRPB meets in June for round six of funding allocations. Kate Pew Wolters mentioned that Lynne Ferrell, who was scheduled to be the RPRB chair this year, is on medical leave. Kate has agreed to fill in as chair. Heather Boswell shared [all the funding opportunities](#) and explained there is a new proposal around child care, investing in a local infrastructure. Proposals are due June 1, 2023. The RPRB meets June 22 and June 26-29, 2023. Recommendations will be before the First Steps Kent Commission at its July 27 meeting. The Kent County Commission expects to approve recommendations in September. A reminder that Kent County is transitioning from a calendar year to an October 1, 2023 fiscal year. All contracts will begin January 1, 2024.

- **Ready by Five Millage Renewal Campaign/PR Firm Update**

Jennifer Headley-Nordman reported that First Steps Kent has hired Byrum & Fisk to help with the Ready by Five Millage Renewal campaign. In 2018, the campaign budget was \$621,099. This amount included both the YES campaign and the First Steps Kent information campaign. Jennifer provided a budget estimate for 2023/2024. The budget range is \$400,000 - \$642,500.

Accessible Resources for Families:

- No Communications update as a list of recent media coverage was sent by email earlier in the week.

Supportive Policies & Programs:

- No Mainspring Early Care Alliance update

Systems Foundations:

- **Nominating/Governance Committee Update:**

Melinda Johnson reported that the committee welcomes any candidate names, including parent leaders. The next meeting is May 31, 2023.

President's Update:

Jennifer Headley-Nordman shared that First Steps Kent is attending meetings regarding the Regional Planning grant that was recently awarded to Vibrant Futures and The Right Place. The focus is on expanding child care in the western region. The data that is being collected will inform policy and practices. She also shared that First Steps Kent is going to partner with The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) on a community advisory group around the area of early relational health. [She shared a video explaining early relational health.](#)

Tribute to Bob Herr:

Today was Bob Herr's last meeting. Kate Pew Wolters presented words of praise. Bob has served on the board since First Steps Kent began in 2009. Thank you so much for your service!

Adjournment:

No executive session was held. Kate Pew Wolters ended the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Next Commission Meeting:
Thursday, July 27, 2023 - 8:30-10:30 a.m.
Location: Hybrid – at Kent ISD & Zoom