



Commission Meeting
Thursday, November 18, 2021
8:30-10:30 a.m. via Zoom
Minutes

DRAFT

Present:

Co-Chair Kate Pew Wolters, Co-Chair Lew Chamberlin, Lynne Ferrell, Maureen Hale, Sue Jandernoa, Hanna Jaworski, Melinda Johnson, Ron Koehler, Juan Olivarez, Julie Ridenour, Milt Rohwer, and Michelle Van Dyke.

Absent: Amanda Barbour, Kristina Donaldson, Pastor Howard Earle Jr., Claire Guisfredi, Bob Herr, Kelsey Perdue, Carl Ver Beek, and Sean Welsh.

FSK Staff:

Annemarie Valdez, Heather Boswell, Cati Cortes, Christine Timbol Larson, Kristen Sobolewski, Megan Streng, Daniel VanderMolen, Shelby French, and Jill B. Salisbury who recorded the minutes.

Welcome & Introductions:

Kate Pew Wolters welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Consent agenda:

Kate Pew Wolters asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda, including the minutes from the September 30, 2021, meeting.

Motion: Sue Jandernoa

Support: Michelle Van Dyke

Unanimous

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Equity:

- **Equity Talks Video Series Update:**

Megan Streng presented. The videos are being tested in the classrooms of Grand Valley State University, Aquinas College, Grand Rapids Community College, and Calvin University. Next, the Communications team is working on an outreach and marketing plan for the videos. There will be a launch event on February 9, 2022, from 2-4 p.m. at the Eberhard Center. The Board is welcome and encouraged to attend. Partnerships continue to form, including WGVU and Kent District Library. Nationally, we have a partnership with the Center for the Study of Social Policy.

- **Staff & Board DEI:**

Early Childhood and DEI Consultant Emmy Gomez-O'Dwyer helped FSK develop a DEI tool kit last year. A Staff Equity team meets bi-weekly to carry the DEI work forward using this tool kit. One component of the DEI tool kit is for the Board to determine how equity shows up in the work of

FSK. A Board DEI Task Force will be forming in January 2022. Kate Pew Wolters gave an open invitation to all Board members to join the Task Force.

Investing Early:

- **Finance Report:**

- **Financials:** Cati Cortes, FSK Financial Accountant, presented the September 2021 First Steps Kent and Ready by Five financials. These are the final financials for the 2020-21 fiscal year.
- **Audit:** The 2020-2021 Audit takes place the week of November 22. It will be done virtually. FSK's Finance Committee met in October with the auditors to plan it.

Motion to accept the financials as presented: Milt Rohwer

Support: Ron Koehler

Unanimous

- **Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage Update:**

- **Data & Evaluation:** Emmy Gomez O'Dwyer, an early childhood equity consultant, was hired to work alongside the Data and Evaluation company, Basis Policy Research. This contract was recently approved by the Kent County Board of Commissioners.
- **January 2022 Allocations:** Contracts beginning in January 2022 still need to be approved by the Kent County Board of Commissioners. This is expected to occur in January.

Supportive Policies & Programs:

- **Shared Services for Child Care Update:**

- **History, Overview, & Child Care Stabilization Grants:**

Annemarie Valdez, Kristen Sobolewski and Daniel VanderMolen gave a history of the Kent Shared Services Pilot Project and an update on the child care stabilization grants. This is the largest investment (\$1.4 billion) in the State of Michigan's history for child care. FSK was asked to be a part of Governor Whitmer's Start-Up team, a working group, that is helping distribute the money quickly while identifying priority areas. The stabilization grant payments will be distributed in January. An area of concern for child care providers is with the tax implications.

- **Building on the CARES Act Work:**

- Regarding the tax concerns, FSK is addressing the concerns with the help of a local tax preparer. She was used last year similarly with the CARES Act funding. She is conducting webinars for child care providers; including one conducted all in Spanish with the help of the Spanish-speaking child care provider network.
- The Shared Services Pilot Project continues to partnership locally with KSS Enterprises for bulk-ordering supply distributions, including piloting an App. that KSS Enterprises developed for the ordering.
- A partnership continues with Michigan People Group who are human resources professionals. They have been providing business resources and supports to child care providers including a "business health check" tool. They are also working on a project called an Employment Value Proposition to address the need and bolster the early childhood workforce across Kent County.
- One other partnership continues with People First Economy. They began their Good for Child Care Cohort. This network is addressing key services, helping access member hubs, networking, and sustainability.

Accessible Resources for Families:

○ **Communications Update:**

Megan Streng shared the various areas of focus including:

- Building the Case for Child Care
- Ready by Five award allocations
- FSK website updates
- Following a group of parents who are using Ready by Five services. She will continue to reach out to all areas of Kent County for representation.
- Equity Talks Video Series
- Normal was Never Enough Campaign
- The Center for the Study of Social Policy Anti-Racist Child Allowance parent listening sessions.

Megan asked Board members how they would like to be communicated with? She gave five options. Please email her mstreng@firststepskent.org if you have a preference.

Choices include:

- Email updates from Annemarie Valdez
- Updates on Topics/Projects
- Notification when FSK is mentioned in the Media
- Please do not communicate with me; I am up to date
- Other; please specify

Systems Foundations:

○ **Nominating/Governance Committee:**

○ **Retiring Board Members:**

Kate Pew Wolters thanked and praised the three members who are leaving the Board. Maureen Hale who has served since 2012, Julie Ridenour who has served since 2012, and Sue Jandernoa who has served since 2009. Many well-wishes were given by the Board.

○ **New Board Nominations:**

Nominating Committee Chair Melinda Johnson and the Nominating Committee met with three prospective nominees this month. They are recommending parent representatives Joslyn Ward and Anthony Queen and Urban Core Collective Co-Director Beca Velazquez-Publes to be added to the Board in January 2022. The new members first Board meeting will be January 27, 2022.

Motion to approve new Board members: Milt Rohwer

Support: Julie Ridenour

Unanimous

○ **Mission/Vision/Values:**

The Mission and Vision were given a fresh update. Staff collectively worked on the Values along with the help of Communications Consultant, Amy Turner-Thole. The Nominating Committee and Executive Committee also provided input on the document revision.

Motion to approve: Milt Rohwer

Support: Michelle Van Dyke

Unanimous

Other:

○ **2022 Board Meeting Dates:**

Please note the new meeting dates for 2022.

January 27, March 24, May 26, July 28, September 29, and November 17

Adjourn:

The meeting closed at 10:00 a.m.

Next Commission Meeting
January 27, 2022 -- 8:30 a.m.
Via Zoom.