



Board of Commissioners Meeting

Via Zoom

Thursday, November 17, 2022

8:30-10:30 a.m.

Minutes

Present:

Co-Chair Lew Chamberlin, Amanda Barbour, Claire Guisfredi, Pastor Howard Earle, Lynne Ferrell, Dr. Melinda Johnson, Ron Koehler, Dr. Juan Olivarez, Anthony Queen, Milt Rohwer, Randy Thelen, Michelle Van Dyke, Carl Ver Beek, Joslyn O. Ward, and Sean Welsh.

Absent: Co-Chair Kate Pew Wolters, Kristina Donaldson, Bob Herr, Dr. Hanna Jaworski, Kelsey Perdue, and Beca Velazquez-Publes.

Staff:

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

Welcome:

Lew Chamberlin called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Consent agenda:

Lew Chamberlin asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda, including the minutes from the September 29, 2022 meeting.

Motion to adopt the consent agenda: Carl Ver Beek

Support: Michelle Van Dyke

Motion Passed

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Investing Early:

- **Finance Report:**

- **September Financials:**

- Financial Accountant Cati Cortes presented the September First Steps Kent and Ready by Five financials.

Motion to accept the financials as presented: Carl Ver Beek

Support: Melinda Johnson

Motion Passed

- **Audit:**

- Cati mentioned that auditors from Rehmann will be conducting the audit the week of November 28, 2022.

- **Authorized Signatory:**
Mercantile Bank requires documentation regarding authorized signatories. Low Chamberlin noted that First Steps Kent President, Jennifer Headley-Nordman needs to be designated as a check signer and added to the First Steps Kent accounts at Mercantile Bank.

Motion to designate and add Jennifer Headley-Nordman: Michelle Van Dyke

Support: Milt Rohwer

Motion Passed

- **Ready by Five Update:**
Heather Boswell reported that Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage Resident Proposal Review Board (RPRB) recommendations were approved by the Kent County Board of Commissioners on October 27, 2022. On January 1, 2023, 48 contracts will go into effect. She reminded that in addition to these contracts, there is additional funding in the amount of \$464,878, that the RPRB designated for the purpose of ensuring parent voice is prioritized. Because these funds have already been approved by the RPRB, the award process is simplified and will entail First Steps Kent staff overseeing the application process and First Steps Kent's Executive Committee approving the funding. The funds need to be spent by September 30, 2023.

It was noted that the Kent County Administration is moving from a calendar year to a fiscal year. The RFP process will happen earlier in 2023 for this reason to ensure we have approvals in place for funding allocation that will begin on October 1, 2023.

Regarding the Ready by Five Evaluation that is being conducted by Basis Policy Research, the year one report should be complete in March or April 2023 with data for the first six months. So far, services are on track with over 11,000 children being reached.

Equity:

- ["The Cost of Child Care Video"](#)
The video was watched together, and Daniel VanderMolen explained that the video was created to explain the challenges that the child care profession is experiencing. This video's theme is about creating awareness while elevating the profession. Additional videos could be made around other themes such as wages or pathways to the profession. The video will be used for advocacy and will be shared with early childhood partners. Many partners helped in the creation of the video.
- A diversity, equity, and inclusion interactive Zoom poll was conducted as part of a First Steps Kent funding requirement. The results will be shared once all board members have participated.

Accessible Resources for Families:

- **Communications Update:**
Daniel VanderMolen gave updates on the following projects.
 - Equity Talks launch - On August 3, 2022, First Steps Kent debuted the videos in partnership with The Center for the Study of Social Policy's EC-LINC network convening held in Grand Rapids. Approximately 150 attended.
 - Normal was Never Enough Campaign – This recently focused on early childhood topics related to voting this November.
 - RAPID-EC Survey - A project in partnership with Stanford University's Center on Early Childhood. A data report presentation will be held December 9, 2022, to share the results of the first couple of surveys. Kent County is one of the first communities to launch a

local survey. Similar surveys are also being conducted nationally through Stanford University.

Supportive Policies and Programs:

- **Mainspring Early Care Alliance Update** *(formerly called Kent Child Care Shared Services Pilot Project):*

Kristen Sobolewski and Daniel VanderMolen reported that the pilot project has moved to implementation. There are five priorities. An Alliance advisory is being formed with applications due this month. A new Mainspring logo is being designed and a website is being created.

Systems Foundations:

- **Nominating/Governance Committee Update:**

Chair Melinda Johnson announced that there is one outgoing Board member, Parent Leader Kristina Donaldson. The Board thanked Kristina for her six years of service.

The Committee is still looking for a Treasurer successor and any additional member names or parent leader names should be sent to Melinda.

President's Update:

Jennifer Headley-Nordman said the first few weeks as president have gone well. She continues to get to know new people and holds weekly meetings with staff. She is planning to re-visit and refresh the Strategic Plan with staff in January 2023. She was interviewed by Wood TV-8 about the issue of child care on November 14, 2022. Early Learning Nation has also requested an interview on November 22, 2022.

2023 Board Meeting Dates:

Dates were included with the calendar invite. Please use the updated document that is labeled November 2022.

Executive Session and Adjournment:

Co-Chair Lew Chamberlin ended the meeting at 9:40 a.m. There was not an executive session.

Next Commission Meeting:

Thursday, January 26, 2022 - 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Location: via Zoom