

**CMSEC Board of Directors Meeting**  
**April 8, 2015**  
**MINUTES**

Board Members Present:

Dr. Melinda Boone  
Dr. Barbara Malkas

Others in attendance:

Ms. Mary A. Baker, Executive Director  
Mr. Neil Trahan, Director of Curriculum, Data, and Technology  
Ms. Lisa Roberts, WDS Site Coordinator  
Mr. Michael Kelly, CMP Director  
Ms. Jessica Pitsillides, HLC Program Director  
Mr. Joseph Meichelbeck, CMSEC Treasurer  
Ms. Beverly Tefft, Director of Finance and Operations

Meeting called to order at 9:08 AM

1. Approval of March 11, 2015 Board of Directors meeting minutes
  - a. Motion/approved
2. Presentation by Mike Kelly
  - a. History and current activities of Central MA Prep
3. Personnel
  - a. In addition to the hiring of the new Recovery High Principal, the following positions recently vacated were filled:
    - i. CMP Instructional Assistant
    - ii. RGA/THRIVE Teacher
    - iii. RGA/THRIVE ABA Program Coordinator
4. Director of Finance & Operations Report
  - a. FY15 Budget
    - i. No significant changes.
    - ii. Ms. Tefft stated that program directors will receive their FY15 profit and loss (actual vs. budget) statements with the intent to close all year-end spending prior to April 30, 2015. Ms. Tefft explained that this is a labor-intensive process due to accounting system limitations.
    - iii. Requests to move line items will be presented at the May 12<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, with final numbers available once all POs are submitted.
    - iv. Dr. Boone asked if there were anticipated legal costs secondary to current union negotiations. Ms. Tefft explained there was no knowledge of a potential union at the time the FY15 budget was being prepared, thus that line will be over budget.
  - b. Warrant Report: FY15
    - i. March 6, 2015-Approved and signed by board members

- ii. March 20, 2015- Approved and signed by board members
- c. FY16 Budget Update
  - i. Ms. Baker and Ms. Tefft met with finance subcommittee on March 31<sup>st</sup>, to review the FY16 budget and assumptions, as well as a review of items new to FY16. Of those items, CMSEC was directed to remove a full time accountant from the business office, as well as the expenses associated with the establishment of the central office and professional development center at Rockdale Street.
  - ii. Ms. Tefft presented a draft FY16 “break-even” budget with the recovery high school portion identified. Changes from the previous version included a 2% increase in non-member tuitions, maintaining a third WDS site (Fremont St.) and non-movement of WPS/CMSEC staff as previously discussed.
  - iii. This version also included the start-up costs of the computer lab at the recovery high school at \$49,000. Ms. Baker explained that the reason this was not included in the RHS budget is due to the intent to share this lab with CMSEC for PD. The finance subcommittee recommended that this amount be taken from surplus.
  - iv. Ms. Baker cautioned the Board about doing this given the current fund balance of one million dollars, which is only 8.1% of the FY15 operating budget. She expressed concern that since the RHS will be in its first year of operations, actual vs. anticipated enrollment is unknown, and thus if projected census is not realized, it may be necessary to utilize surplus funds by year end.
  - v. Dr. Malkas was willing to support the use of the revolving account for those funds.
  - vi. Dr. Boone indicated that since it is a relatively small amount, following the movement of FY15 line items, there may be other areas to cover that expense.
  - vii. Ms. Baker stated that the FY16 draft budget also includes the cost of the lease and utilities for the second floor of the Rockdale St. property. 165K as fixed rental expenses and a projected 28K in utilities as was planned for Central Office and Professional Development site.
  - viii. Ms. Baker wanted to point out the reasoning for moving Central Office to the new RHS. She reviewed what had been discussed at the Board level last year after CMSEC convened a building committee. A committee of program administrators also convened to discuss which programs could be housed together in anticipation of expiring leases and identifying new space for all. These committees were an outcome of the Board-recommended NESDEC Space Needs Study outlining the specific square footage needs of each program and central administration. Since the RFR for the RHS took precedence last fall, the recommendation of the building committee was to use that opportunity to at least move Central Office as part of a phase-in plan to find new space, and at the same time increase space for WDS at McKeon Rd. Per the NESDEC study, the intent from the beginning was to have enough space within central office to include a Professional Development Center.

- ix. Ms. Baker stated that since that time, things have changed and it is now clear there is no support for the Central Office move or the PD center. Subsequent to those objections, they were removed from the FY16 budget, which totaled \$60K. Ms. Baker further stated that we are unable however to remove the expenses associated with the cost of lease since it is already signed. Her recommendation at this time would be to delay a decision on how that space, paid for by the collaborative, will ultimately be utilized until after the hiring of a new Executive Director.
- x. Dr. Malkas stated that in actuality, the space does not yet exist since it is currently under construction. Lease costs are a fixed expense and the Collaborative may be able to rent the space down the road.
- xi. Dr. Boone asked what limitations from DPH were outlined in the RFR relative to co-habitation. Ms. Baker explained that while the RFR only had limitations as to proximity to certain areas, but not in regards to shared space. She stated that we have to be mindful of certain programs (CMA, WDS) due to student profiles that would not be appropriate for sharing space in the RHS building, unlike the potential of a program such as THRIVE.
- xii. Other potential implications to the FY16 budget include a final union contract, the outcome of the two RFPs for space and program and staffing considerations from WPS. Ms. Baker stated she had received an email from Dr. Rodrigues along with a proposal to designate one of the WDS sites for use as a middle school for students in need of assessment as well as those who have been suspended. Another consideration to be discussed is the potential addition of related service personnel.
- xiii. The next meeting of the finance committee is scheduled for May 5, 2015, which will take place prior to the next board meeting.

## 5. Executive Director Report

### a. Recovery High School Update

- i. Ms. Baker stated that Ms. Susan Strong, newly hired Principal, has begun on a part time basis, and will be working full time as of May 1, 2015. She has already conducted community outreach with several agencies and attended targeted meetings.
- ii. Ms. Baker has had discussions with both the Worcester City Manager and Mayor regarding the announcement of the location of the recovery high school. This has resulted in a public informational session, scheduled for May 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM at the Norrback Avenue School in Worcester. The purpose of this meeting is to share information with the public, particularly within the district where the RHS is located, about CMSEC in general, the Recovery High School and the initiatives associated with the Opiate Task Force.
- iii. Dr. Malkas stated that Deborah Morris at the Cope Center in Webster is working on how to coordinate referrals and reengage incarcerated youth who have dropped out of school. They are working on protocols together and Dr. Malkas anticipates future conversations with Ms. Strong.

- iv. Dr. Boone indicated that Worcester County Superintendents group which meets monthly has expressed interest in having Ms. Baker and Ms. Strong present at their next meeting. Dr. Boone will contact the chair for confirmation and forward specifics to Ms. Baker.
  - v. Ms. Baker stated that due to the location of the RHS's proximity to Interstate 190, Fitchburg and Leominster are potentially strong referral districts.
  - vi. The Collaborative is contracting with Community Healthlink for a Recovery Counselor for the first year. Other RHS positions have been posted on SchoolSpring.
  - vii. Ms. Baker stressed the importance of the public information session with official notice of the location in order to conduct marketing as soon as possible. This includes district secondary principals, pupil services/special education directors, and guidance personnel in addition to community referral agencies.
  - viii. Dr. Boone stated that she wants the city to understand that the Recovery High School falls under the umbrella of collaborative, and not Worcester Public Schools, so that they can work directly together.
- b. RHS Tuitions
- i. Ms. Baker asked the Board to reconsider the tuition rates that were originally presented at the April Board Meeting for final vote. Discussion ensued relative to comparative rates to other recovery high schools, as well as special vs. general education considerations.
  - ii. In consideration of district transportation costs, Dr. Malkas believed we would have a better response if we reduced the rate by \$1000 or \$1500 for general education tuition making it closer to foundation funding. Ms. Baker asked if the rates for Special Education could remain as drafted. Dr. Malkas agreed, and believed if we at least lowered the rate for general education by \$1500 in year one, it will give us a place to go in year 2.
  - iii. Acceptance of Recovery High School 2015-2016 tuition rates leaving the Special Educations rates at \$15,000 member, 18,500 non-member; and lowering the rates for General Education to \$10,500 for both member and non-member. Motion/approved
- c. FY16 CMSEC Non-Member Tuitions
- i. Ms. Baker stated that the finance committee recommended a 4% rate increase. The current version of the draft FY16 budget reflects only 2% due to the Board recommendations during the March Board Meeting.
  - ii. Dr. Malkas asked how many non-members are currently enrolled. Ms. Tefft said 25.
  - iii. Dr. Malkas expressed concern that a 4% increase may price CMSEC out of the market. Ms. Baker stated that even with the 4% increase we are still approximately \$10,000 lower than competitive collaboratives. She would like to recommend 4%, particularly since tuition rates have not changed in five years.
  - iv. Dr. Boone asked how many of the 25 are graduating or aging out. Ms. Tefft said that 25 is the number of students not aging out or graduating,

and built the budget on that number. Other factors may impact their enrollment, but age-wise they are still projected to attend.

- v. Discussion regarding the FY16 tuition rates with a 4% increase across all programs. Motion/approved
  - d. Facilities Update
    - i. RFPs for McKeon and Fremont locations have a bid deadline of May 1<sup>st</sup>.
    - ii. Building Committee is scheduled to meet on May 4<sup>th</sup>.
    - iii. Packets have been picked up by both landlords and one additional party.
6. Member Requests/New Business
- a. Dr. Malkas announced that she will be going out on leave and would like to appoint Mr. Ted Avlas from the Webster Public School Committee to the Board in her absence.
  - b. Dr. Malkas and Dr. Boone both agreed that they should seek out a proposal and cost estimate from NESDEC for a committee empowered by the board to move forward with advertising, reviewing resumes, initial interviewing and presenting final candidates to the Board. Dr. Boone stated she will contact NESDEC within a couple of days given the critical timeline.
  - c. Dr. Boone expressed appreciation to all that volunteered for the transition team, but finds it impractical to get staff from classroom level due to disruption of classroom. She feels it should be leadership and program level. The Board will decide on members.
  - d. Dr. Malkas commented that she had worked with Mr. Michael Palladino from NESDEC and he is very knowledgeable with seeking out executive directors. She feels that he would be a good choice in heading the search for the new Executive Director. He has knowledge of CMSEC as well as other collaboratives in the area and would be able to provide guidance.
  - e. Dr. Boone will reach out to NESDEC. Dr. Malkas stated that if an additional board meeting needs to be scheduled to approve the NESDEC contract, they could contact Mr. Avlas.
7. Motion to enter into executive session at 10:14 AM according to MGL 30A, Section 21 (a)(2) for the purpose of conducting strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with the non-union personnel/Executive Director/ if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the body, as declared by the Chair.  
Approved.

Motion to adjourn at 11:08 AM

Minutes submitted by Mary Dubuque, HR/Operations Coordinator