

Draft Minutes

Committee Members in attendance: Leslie Anderson, Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Philip Belcher, Christy Cheek, Kit Cramer, Jane Hatley, Rich Johnston, Chavaun Letman, Susan Mims, Robert Pressley, Mistie Riesing-Cogbill, Glenda Weinert, Al Whitesides.

County support staff in attendance: Michael Frue, Lamar Joyner, Rasheeda McDaniels, Rachael Nygaard, Max Taintor, Patricia Wallin, Burnett Walz, and Stacey Woody.

Welcome and agenda review by Jasmine Beach-Ferrara. Included a moment of reflection for former Buncombe County Commissioner Mike Fryar who passed away on Sunday, February 2.

Minutes

A motion was made by Philip Belcher and seconded by Christy Cheek to approve minutes from January 9, 2020. Vote of approval was unanimous.

Old Business

Community Engagement Reflections - Committee discussion:

- Wish there had been more community (parents) engagement rather than just a session with early childhood professionals. Maybe we should consider other times of day for future events.
- Good to be open and out in the community
- Wish more people had attended; it was good dialogue
- Part of the work we do is specific to early childhood education, but another part is helping the County engage and be transparent in different ways
- Enjoyed opportunity to connect one-on-one
- It gave grantees a chance to understand some of the constraints and realities of the committee's work.

New Business

Meeting Procedures Training – Jasmine Beach-Ferrara introduced this topic as a way to build equity through clarifying, and educating committee members about, meeting procedures. County Attorney Michael Frue and County Clerk Lamar Joyner reviewed sections of the committee's by-laws, provided an overview of the legal framework for committee procedures, and answered questions from committee members. Key topics included:

- Public body (this committee, as formed by the Board of Commissioners)
- Official meeting (a majority of the board conducting business together)
- What constitutes a Public Record
- Conflicts of interest (direct and readily identifiable, as well as apparent conflicts)
- Duty to report conflicts (when in doubt, report)
- Duty to vote
- Special meetings vs. continuations to a date certain
- Types of motions (main/substantive vs. procedural motions)

- Public comment

Next steps:

- Staff to review the newly adopted “Committees Policy” adopted by the Board of Commissioners for any potential inconsistencies with Early Childhood Committee by-laws
- Staff to add By-Laws Review to the FY2021 roadmap in the summer (July/August) timeframe

Models for Success: Lessons Learned & Promising Practices from Other Communities – Rachael Nygaard gave a presentation, which is included in the meeting materials and made a part of the minutes for this meeting.

- Overview of 6 NC counties to look at as “bright spots” for early learning: Durham; Forsyth; Guilford; Mecklenburg; Transylvania & Wake.
- Discussion about annual county investments in those communities; it would be good to have comparative information about these county funds over time.
- Discussion of leverage or “attractor” funding and potential investments from private foundations, corporate partners, and others with capacity to increase support for early childhood education.

Next steps:

- Commissioner Whitesides to try to arrange a meeting between Dogwood Health Trust and Board of Commissioner members of the Early Childhood Committee to discuss potential funding partnerships.

Grant Review & Meeting Schedule – Rachael Nygaard reviewed a proposed schedule and process for spring grant making that:

- February
 - Applications due Feb 14
 - Applications sent to committee Feb 17
- March
 - Regular meeting set for March 3
 - Proposal to move to March 17 (to give a month for review): discuss applications & identify questions for applicants
 - Questions sent to applicants on March 18 with responses due March 27
 - Responses sent to committee March 30
- April
 - Recommendation for no in-person presentations
 - Regular meeting on April 7: review top scoring proposals by category & discuss funding recommendations
 - Proposal to schedule additional meeting for April 21: finalize funding recommendations
 - Recommendations due to Budget Office by April 24

Philip Belcher moved to adopt the grant review and meeting schedule as presented. Susan Mims seconded, and vote of approval was unanimous.

Next Steps

- Staff to review the newly adopted “Committees Policy” adopted by the Board of Commissioners for any potential inconsistencies with Early Childhood Committee by-laws
- Staff to add By-Laws Review to the FY2021 roadmap in the summer (July/August) timeframe
- Commissioner Whitesides to reach out to Dogwood Health Trust to request a meeting with Board of Commissioner members of the Early Childhood Committee to discuss potential funding partnerships.
- Staff will send instructions to committee members on or near February 17, 2020 for scoring grant applications.
- Committee members are to complete initial scoring by the rescheduled March meeting, including questions for applicants.

Public Comment

- Bettie Council – Are there community members on commission? Request revision in bylaws for public comment. I want to push back on the idea of having Preschool for children. Asheville has a history of not doing well for black students and they are struggling and traumatized in school system. My pushback is if there is Pre-K from 3-4 it’s just an earlier pipeline from school to prison. Have daycares instead of Pre-K and have the teachers trained in racial equity and cultural competency.
- Amy Berry – Wanted to highlight a couple things –The Asheville Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative has been part of a group for the past three years with most of the “Models for Success” counties mentioned earlier, and that group has been exploring a variety of potential funding streams for early childhood development. Also, we should note that 3 of counties highlighted focus specifically on 4-year olds; they recognized that there is not enough state money for NC Pre-K and expanded the NC Pre-K model only. I appreciate that this committee is looking beyond that. Finally, we are learning from other counties that are creating family-friendly childcare systems by having a single shared application..

Next meeting – March 17, 2020, 1:00-2:30 pm, 200 College Street Ground Floor Conference Room

Adjourn – Motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Glenda Weinert and seconded by Commissioner Al Whitesides. The motion carried unanimously.