



Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors Meeting

May 22, 2020 -- 9:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m.

Virtually via teleconference

MINUTES

Present: James Cummings, Chair, Joseph Sawyer, Gregory Martineau, Ernest Houle, Brooke Clenchy, Maryellen Brunelle, Marco Rodrigues, Mary Jane Rickson, Michael Bergeron. **Also Present:** Cathy Cummins, Mark Graziano, Ina Williams. **Not present:** Jeff Zanghi, Amber Bock

Call to Order: James Cummins, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05.

Minutes of April 17, 2020: Ernie Houle motioned to approve the Minutes of April 17, 2020. Maryellen Brunelle seconded the motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: James Cummings, Joseph Sawyer, Gregory Martineau, Ernest Houle, Brooke Clenchy, Maryellen Brunelle, Marco Rodrigues, Mary Jane Rickson, and Michael Bergeron voted to approve the minutes. The minutes of April 17, 2020 were approved unanimously (9-0)

Executive Director's Report

Cathy Cummins updated the Board of Directors on a variety of design and redesign efforts underway at AVC. In her report, she invited Board members to reflect on the last several years in AVC's journey toward prioritizing educational equity and cultural proficiency as central to all work happening in the organization. She shared historical documents that showcased the Board's support for this foci and described how AVC's learning and leading in this domain has evolved, now facing a crossroad that is both fueled by and potentially hindered by the current global health crisis which has forced AVC to transform practices, innovate, and create deep connections across squads. She described efforts the leadership team has started to take to share leadership more effectively - with each other and with faculty throughout AVC. She also described how equity, cultural proficiency and recent learning in human-centered design have supported the leadership team in taking these risks, engaging more meaningfully across domains, and in readiness to take next steps to more comprehensively and deeply redesign AVC's future. She introduced a concept supported by the leadership team to take next steps in moving from hierarchical organizational leadership to a shared leadership model. She asked the Board to consider a proposal to "flatten" the compensation provided to current "leaders" across AVC in one of many more steps to come to more equitably distribute resources, status, influence, and power throughout AVC. Dr. Cummins noted that this was a radical idea and that Board members would need time to reflect and consider this idea. Board members asked if job descriptions would be revised and also inquired about the risk that might come if the Board reduced Dr. Cummins' salary so significantly and then couldn't compete in the marketplace for a quality candidate if she decided to leave in the near future. Dr. Cummins noted that the leadership team was asking the Board to pilot this for one year as one vital step to aligning our practices and systems with our published commitments to equity. She described that this first step was a technical one - redistributing compensation more equitably; she noted that future steps would be complex, organic and fueled by principles of human-centered design, shared leadership, culturally responsive practices. Board members asked Dr. Cummins to provide a formal

proposal at the next meeting and to include research articles, evidence base and rationale for them to consider.

Dr. Cummins concluded her report with updates on AVC's programs and services. She described the work being done across squads to implement and refine remote learning plans, to begin planning for re-opening, to engage in budget discussions and decision making. She noted that AVC's tuitions and services for next year are currently believed to be stable but that the looming economic downturn created some undefined uncertainties for revenue sources. She noted that OSA will plan to add 4th grade with the hope of opening an elementary program in FY22 that could be seeded with 4th and 5th grade students and expanding downward to include younger grades. She noted that this expansion would be contingent upon next year's financial stability. She noted that REACH and Evolution are both projecting increases in enrollment next year.

Dr. Cummins reminded the Board that the current contract with AVC's special education transportation vendor was due to expire June 30, but eligible for extension. She noted that given the uncertainties about what safety parameters will be required for transportation services when schools reopen, AVC and Van Pool have not yet reached an agreement about what a contract extension would entail. Van Pool has noted that some of the predicted safety parameters may require decreased ridership on each route and may necessitate a revision to the pricing methodology in our current contract. Van Pool may need to propose changing from our current "route rate" to employ a "van rate" instead. As things continue to unfold in the coming weeks, AVC will provide updates and engage superintendents, business managers and special education directors in decision-making. At this time, it may make sense to extend the current terms of the contract as is and reopen for negotiations if needed during the reopening process.

Business Manager's Report

Mark Graziano updated the Board regarding the progress of the OSA Roof project. He informed the Board that he had received the specifications and pricing for the project which will cost between \$650,000 and \$890,00 based on timing, materials, and if we staggered the project. Mr. Graziano recommended that based on the uncertain times due to Covid-19 that the organization hold off on replacing the roof completely and budgeting \$25,000 to patch the roof during FY 21.

Cooperative Purchasing

On May 18th Mark Graziano and Suzanne Pomerleau held a virtual bid opening for school supplies, office supplies, and copy paper. The bid opening was represented by a sales rep for W.B and a sales rep for Lakeshore. Mr. Graziano reported that W.B. Mason was the only vendor to bid on the copy paper bid. W.B. Mason also submitted documents for the school and office supplies along with Lake Shore and Cascade. Mr. Graziano presented the information that was provided by the bidders along with the bid tabulation for all three bids. W.B. was the lowest bidder on all three bids. Paper pricing reflects significant increase. Mr. Graziano recommends pre-purchasing paper if possible for FY21 to take advantage of lower FY20 prices.

FY20 Budget Update

Mr. Graziano updated the board on the current financial position of the collaborative. The Collaborative's current bank balance is \$3.1 million and we have \$2 million in potential revenues for the remainder of the year. Mr. Graziano is projecting a balance of \$14,955 as of June 30, 2020. The reduction of revenue is due to conservative projections regarding lost revenue for transportation and consulting services. There was a discussion regarding the deposit for the new Evolution space at Lord Road. There was agreement that the payment should stay the same as we had approved in February. Mr. Graziano reported that the April revenue and expenses and May revenue and expenses through the 15th were running at similar

patterns to previous fiscal years. However, he reported that we are seeing a bit of a delay in accounts receivable which seems to be associated with processing payments by school districts during the Covid-19 closure. However, Mr. Graziano felt confident in collecting on the outstanding receivables due to a bill that would require payments by districts to collaboratives. This bill is currently waiting for Governor approval.

FY21 Preliminary Budget Presentation

Mr. Graziano presented the preliminary budget along with recommendations for salary and tuition increases. There were two scenarios presented for the FY 21 budget. Scenario one did not include a cost of living increase for salaries, but did include increases associated with employees moving through steps and levels on the salary scales. This option also presented a zero percent increase to tuition, transportation, and consultation services. Transportation was projected to increase by 2% and membership fees increased by \$2,000. It also included a new position for an administrator at OSA, Technology Director, and increases to FTEs at OSA. This option had a budget deficit of \$115K. The second scenario was to freeze salaries at the FY 20 rates and no increases to tuition, transportation, and consulting services. There were no new positions recommended in this option. This option had a budget surplus of \$600K. Mr. Graziano did not ask for a vote on these budget scenarios, but did ask for a vote for salary and tuition, transportation, and consulting services. Superintendent Sawyer commented that we should be conservative in our approach. Superintendent Bergeron asked about enrollment and said he found it difficult to have any increase or added positions based on what our member districts were doing. Superintendent Bergeron also mentioned that districts are impact bargaining with unions. Superintendent Martineau stated that “we should monitor fiscal reality to adjust salaries if possible”

Superintendent Burnelle noted that the collaborative budget amendment process is nimble and that we could freeze the budget now and then make adjustments later. Board members reached consensus that we currently do not have enough information to make decisions in face of looming recession and unemployment; a more conservative approach now still leaves room for adjustment later. Superintendent Cummings commented that district reductions compromise ability to do anything other than freeze. Superintendent Houle stated that he has seen 10-20% cuts due to state revenue shortfalls and concerns related to districts funding tuitions/fees/transportation. There was significant support for the addition of the Ed Tech position.

Action Items

Vote to award bid for paper supplies

Motion made by Joseph Sawyer; Second Maryellen Brunelle to approve W.B. as the copy paper vendor. A Roll Call Vote was taken: James Cummings, Joseph Sawyer, Gregory Martineau, Ernest Houle, Brooke Clenchy, Maryellen Brunelle, Marco Rodrigues, Mary Jane Rickson, and Michael Bergeron voted unanimously (9-0) to approve W.B. as the copy paper vendor.

Vote to award bid for office supplies

A Motion was made by Maryellen Brunelle and seconded by Ernie Houle to approve W.B. as the office supply vendor. A Roll Call Vote was taken: James Cummings, Joseph Sawyer, Gregory Martineau, Ernest Houle, Brooke Clenchy, Maryellen Brunelle, Marco Rodrigues, Mary Jane Rickson, and Michael Bergeron voted unanimously (9-0) to approve W.B. as the office supply vendor.

Vote to award bid for school supplies

Motion made by Greg Martineau and Seconded by Ernie Houle to approve W.B. as the school supply vendor. A Roll Call Vote was taken: James Cummings, Joseph Sawyer, Gregory Martineau, Ernest Houle, Brooke Clenchy, Maryellen Brunelle, Marco Rodrigues, Mary Jane Rickson, and Michael Bergeron voted unanimously (9-0) to approve W.B. as the school supply vendor.

Vote to approve FY21 Tuitions/Rates

Michael Bergeron motioned to freeze tuitions, consultation services, and transportation fees for FY21. Gregory Martineau seconded the motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: James Cummings, Joseph Sawyer, Gregory Martineau, Ernest Houle, Brooke Clenchy, Maryellen Brunelle, Marco Rodrigues, Mary Jane Rickson, and Michael Bergeron voted unanimously (9-0) to approve freezing tuitions, consultation services and transportation fees for FY21.

Vote to approve FY21 Staff Salaries

Michael Bergeron motioned to freeze FY21 salaries yet to be determined with the option for the Board to consider revising salaries if possible by October 1, 2020. Ernie Houle seconded the motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: James Cummings, Joseph Sawyer, Gregory Martineau, Ernest Houle, Brooke Clenchy, Maryellen Brunelle, Marco Rodrigues, Mary Jane Rickson, and Michael Bergeron voted unanimously (9-0) to approve freezing FY21 salaries yet to be determined with the option for the Board to consider revising salaries if possible by October 1, 2020.

Adjournment

Maryellen Brunelle motioned to adjourn. Michael Bergeron seconded the motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: James Cummings, Joseph Sawyer, Gregory Martineau, Ernest Houle, Brooke Clenchy, Maryellen Brunelle, Marco Rodrigues, Mary Jane Rickson, and Michael Bergeron voted unanimously (9-0) to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

to approve freezing FY21 salaries yet to be determined with the option for the Board to consider revising salaries if possible by October 1, 2020 unanimously (9-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Cummins and Mark Graziano