

Kids' Corps, Inc.
Policy Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 26, 2021

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Members Present: | Members Absent: |
| Rhonda Drake, Vice President | Caitlyn Thompson |
| Tasi Sablan | Kaya Avilla, excused |
| Shawna Bailey | Brittany Pickens, President |
| Jessica Teague-Beach | |
| Noreen White | |
| | |
| Staff Present: | |
| Dirk Shumaker, Executive Director | |
| Ronnie Brown, FCES | |

Greetings and Welcomes extended: Due to Covid-19, meeting was held virtually. Quorum present.

While waiting for members to join, Ronnie asked Trivia questions about KCI of the group. Meeting called to order at 6:25 pm, Rhonda Drake, VP presiding, quorum present. Brittany was able to join the last 15-20 minutes of the meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding moving May meeting to May 17th, to accommodate submission of grants and planning in a timely manner. Rhonda, Tasi, Shawna, Jessica and Noreen all agreed that 17th of May would be fine. May meeting will be Monday, May 17th at 6pm. Ronnie will notify and remind members.

Minutes: Minutes were reviewed, no discussion at this time. Shawna motioned to approve, Jessica seconded. Motion approved.

New Hires: New hire list was reviewed. Dirk asked the members why we would be hiring so many new assistant teachers at this time (close to end of program year)? Members responded that with the early Head Start expansion grant being approved, we would need more staff. Dirk explained that not all the staff being hired now would go into the new classrooms but KCI would need to cover the staff placement of those moving over from other classrooms into the new ones. Need 17 new staff. Shawna motioned to accept the new hires, Tasi seconded. Motion approved.

Financials: Dirk reviewed fuel card expenditures. We do have an ongoing problem with gas siphoning from our buses. Other gas purchases were for van to pick up and deliver lunchtime meals to centers and deliver restaurant meals to families that were unable to pick up. Dirk also explained that with extra COVID-19 one time only funding, KCI will have a surplus of \$381,000 that will need to be spent by end of October 2021, no carry over. Dirk presented a list of items that KCI will be able to complete from the deferred maintenance and IT update projects. Discussion ensued about the projects. List includes but not limited to: playground updates, building upgrades, kitchen and food prep person, security and classroom cameras, Microsoft 365, phone system upgrade, server location, other IT upgrades, etc. Members were all excited about upgrades.

Executive Directors Report: Dirk reported that there will be one extra class running for the summer at East center along with the two full day classes already in progress there. This class will be for children needing to keep the learning process going for success in Kindergarten next year. On May 24th, they plan to increase the full day classrooms from 8 children to ten children and then up to twelve children for the full day classes. Slow increase being mindful of the covid exposures. Dirk also talked about the EHS expansion, adding the kitchen space (not a hot cooking kitchen) for snack and lunch preparation and eventually using it to prep for all the centers.

State Grant Application: The state Legislature has not yet passed a FY 22 budget. All indications are that Head Start will be funded at a status quo level this year. There has been no discussion about cuts or changes to grantee funding. Assuming flat funding, we expect to apply for about \$440,000 from the State. We can use the state funding the same as federal Head Start funds. Open discussion, parent asked about the education funding she was hearing on the news about Anchorage School District funding. Dirk explained that it wouldn't affect KCI since we had different funding sources. Noreen motioned to submit for State Grant funding, Jessica seconded. Motion approved.

Wage Scale Change: Dirk explained that this wage scale change is the first of several changes being looked at. Management wants to create a wage range that includes experience in addition to education. This is especially important for program support and maintenance positions where degrees or certificates aren't available or relevant. The positions considered for wage restructuring are the Admin Assistant, Facilities Transportation Specialist, Program Support Associate and Janitor. Dirk stated these positions, unlike others at KCI, don't have the opportunity for pay increases tied to increased educational credentialing. However, these staff do important work and need raises just like any other position. Discussion ensued. Good conversations around comparisons, loyalty, taking care of all staff, shows they are valued. Shawna motioned to approve the Wage Scale Changes, Tasi seconded. Motion approved.

Community Assessment: Dirk provided four basic questions for members to think about and respond to.

1. Qualities of Anchorage as a positive place for families and children?

Lots of excellent parks and trails, a lot of community get-togethers like Thread "Book in the Park", Alaska Parks and Kids - "Facebook, pick a park, meet and play", summer music in the park, school sports, fishing and camping (great outdoor activities for summer). Winter sports, trick or treat town, trunk or treats, haunted trail, city of lights. During school months, Loussac Library has more group reading times for preschoolers. Anchorage has a better relationship with the police. More comfort zones for playing outside and in yards. Anchorage is more diverse so don't have as much racism in your face here. More respect for the police. More diverse in the high schools, know how to co-exist with each other.

2. Major challenges that HS families face?

Pandemic shut so much of state down, no kids week. Although policing behavior is less of a problem here than communities outside the state, it is still a concern. Anchorage is diverse but racism is always present. No affordable housing, can't get a decent job to pay the bills and live without having to find other resources or take a second job. Too expensive to live here. Can't just drive for vacation or to see family. Isolated from family in lower forty eight. If family stays together, no resources to help them, staying together keeps them from getting the resources. Just too expensive.

3. What changes or improvement in Anchorage would make it easier for families to meet challenges?

Lower rents. Property values are too high- can't afford to buy own home, reduce values to make it easier for families to purchase. Change the system so that working parents can get/make a decent living. Change policies so that working families can still get assistance when needed. (No support for working families). Increase wage scale so people are compensated for the work they do. If families can work and pay their bills like everyone else, less frustration and anger.

4. What changes in KCI program services would you recommend to better serve families and children?

I am thankful for the program. Continue to do what you do! Be there for each other. Help raise our children when we have to work, go to school. KCI gives us a sense of community. How do we get the word out about KCI, talking about it isn't enough. Make the people that affect policy understand what Head Start does for the people living it. Do more advocacy to the policy makers so they understand what families are experiencing.

FES Updates

Ronnie reminded parents about the Kindergarten Transition zoom meeting on Thursday, April 29th and will send zoom link out so they can attend if desire and share with families that might have a child going to kindergarten next year, whether in Head Start or not. Good information for everyone.

Good discussion was wrapped up and reminder for the May meeting is on May 17th. Ronnie will send out reminders.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm .

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

Ronnie Brown, FES