Eau Claire Public Education Foundation Minutes
July 30, 2019
WIPFLI Office

Vice Chair Jim McDougall called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Trustees Present: Jenny Fesenmaier, Kimberly Hill, Heather Market-Sullivan, Jim McDougall, Jennifer McHugh, David Morley, Becky Noland, Flo Sheridan, Dustin Wiesner

Absent: Grant Beardsley, Ned Donnellan, Mike Emberson, Jeff Jones, Blenda Yun

Ex-Officio present: Mary Ann Hardebeck and Lori Bica (arrived at 12:16 p.m.)

Staff present: Sarah French. Recording Secretary: Meta Miske.

Introduction of new member Wayne Willie and new Recording Secretary Meta Miske.

Review of minutes from April 30, 2019. Motion to approve by Jen McHugh, seconded by Flo Sheridan. Carried by unanimous voice vote.

Financial Report

Dustin Wiesner shared the Financial Report for the quarter noting a substantial donation for the STEM scholarship which resulted in a significant difference in the asset statement.

Flo Sheridan asked about bank fees. Dustin Wiener said those are monthly fees charged to the checking accounts. He indicated that some funds are in money market accounts which have fees associated with them. Becky Noland noted that the Community Foundation is being audited and as a result the Eau Claire Public Schools Foundation is as well, and it's very reassuring that the money has been verified by an outside source and matches the numbers the Board sees each quarter.

David Morley moved, second by Wayne Willie, to approve the Financial Report as presented. Carried by unanimous voice vote.

Dustin Wiesner shared that during the Finance Committee meeting, the committee decided to put together a checklist of the benefits of giving to a foundation. They'll assemble the list to share with the District and others to explain why giving to the ECPSF is beneficial. Sarah French shared samples of the Community Foundation's checklist with the Board. Heather Market-Sullivan said it's a great idea because it might help those who don't understand how foundations work. Dustin Wiesner said early results of the survey feedback they've received indicates that not a lot of people know what the Foundation does, so the checklist might help educate them. Jen McHugh suggested using both sides of the paper for the checklist and maybe include FAQ's so questions can be answered in a positive manner.

Allocations Committee Report

Kim Hill said each year they allocate $10,000 for grants for special projects for teachers. Teachers submit their application in the fall and shortly thereafter the grants are awarded. The Allocation Committee recommends the same allocation this year and the only change in the proposal is for $4,500 come from

Funds for the Future since enough returns were received to allow for that. The remainder will come from Greatest Needs, and there will be an additional $2,000 after the grant cycle for additional needs.

Jim McDougal asked if there's been consideration of increasing the amount available in grants this year. Sarah French said this year there is only $4,600 in the Funds for the Future account to give so they have decided to use the $4,500 of that and pull the remaining $5,500 from their greatest needs fund. Dustin Wiesner shared that they've reviewed the historical returns and determined the grant amount based on that. Sarah French said they can increase the grant amount next year through a fundraising goal. This is the first year we are using funds from returns.

Kim Hill suggests they look at how many grants they cannot fund this year and then set a goal accordingly to better be able to fund grants in the future. She also recommends reminding teachers of the additional $2,000 in additional greatest needs grants to keep it on their mind. Kim said they see the same requests from the Greatest Needs grants each year which is usually for Odyssey of the Mind when going to the national convention and haven't fundraised enough, so they ask for a grant for additional funds.

Lori Bica shared that as she goes out in the schools, she thinks the issue is that many teachers aren't even aware of the grant availability, not that it isn't on their minds. Jim McDougall said the goal is to get awareness to the community to increase donations and awareness to the schools to increase usage of the grants. Kim Hill said there has been more grant applications each year, but they tend to be from people who knew someone who received a grant the year before, so the awareness of grants is moving slowly by word of mouth. She recommends the Allocation Committee add an agenda item about getting the word out.

Wayne Willie asked what the advertising process is. Sarah French the grant cycle is shared in District Update which is e-mailed to staff each Friday during the school year, Facebook, the website, and Sarah presents at a principal meeting in September so the principals can encourage staff to apply for grants.

Heather Market-Sullivan asked if there is still a message at the staff kick-off. Dr. Hardebeck indicated that there won't be an all-staff kickoff this year but there will be a welcome back video that will advertise the Foundation. Kim Hill shared that the time of year makes a difference and perhaps teachers are too busy with their new students at the beginning of the year to take the time to apply, or perhaps aren't even aware yet what their needs will be. She suggested a review of the timing of the grant cycle. Jenny Fesenmaier said perhaps the timing could be closer to the Golden Apple awards.

Kim Hill asked the Board accepts the recommendation to keep the grant allocation at $10,000 with $4,500 from Funds for the Future, $5,500 from Greatest Needs, and an extra $2,000 from Greatest Needs in reserve once the $10,000 has been reached.

Jenny Fesenmaier moved, second by Flo Sheridan, to approve the Allocation Committee's recommendation as presented. Carried by unanimous voice vote.

Development Committee Report

Jim McDougall stated there was nothing to add beyond what was shared in the packet. No questions were asked by the Board.

Marketing Committee Report

Heather Market-Sullivan said a sub-committee started looking at a second fundraising event in April at the Pablo Center. They've decided to hold off on any planning until the MOU with the District has been finalized.

Jim McDougall asked if they'd talked about newsletters at their meeting and Sarah French indicated they had.

Kim Hill asked about the event at the Pablo Center since a committee had already begun planning. She said the date has been reserved and there are two band directors who have committed. Kim asked if the event is on hold or being cancelled. Sarah French said she's communicated with Pablo Center and the band directors, so they are no longer on hold for that date and the concept of the event is on hold. Discussion occurred regarding whether the Board must move to postpone the event since the approved a motion to hold the event in April; it was confirmed that the original motion must be overridden by a new motion.

Jenny Fesenmaier made a motion to postpone the event from its scheduled April date. Wayne Willie seconded.

Sarah French stated that the notification of postponement to the Pablo and band directors happened last May.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Personnel Committee

Review of what happened at the last meeting. Jenny Fesenmaier said they will discuss the goals for Sarah French at the retreat as a Board rather than the Personnel Committee alone setting her goals. Jim McDougall said they'd like to see Sarah French speaking at more events in the community to get the word out so they will work to find events for her to speak at.

Kim Hill said it sounds like important things will be addressed at the retreat and asked if there's a process for those who cannot attend to share input. Jim McDougall asked if it would be beneficial to have another time to recap the retreat for a small group afterwards who couldn't attend.

Kim Hill also asked if they can establish a set date for the retreat just as the Board meetings are held on a schedule so that members can plan. Sarah French agreed that is a good idea. The date of this year's retreat is the afternoon of August 22.

Jenny Fesenmaier asked why the retreat is in the summer since folks are busy with kids and traveling. Jim McDougall said the retreats started two years ago and occurred in the summer since that's when people happened to be available, but they can review the time of year to hold the retreat. Wayne Willie said as a new member it makes sense him to have new members join and then have the retreat shortly thereafter to get everyone together. Jenny Fesenmaier said those with children may have activities and final preparation for the school year so perhaps having the retreat after Labor Day could be a better option.

Kim Hill said a retreat is so important for the foundational work of the Board and the continuous work the Board does and catching up is hard for those who miss it. Heather Market-Sullivan said she cannot attend the retreat and would like to be able to give input.

Executive Committee Report

Jim McDougall stated there was nothing to add beyond what was shared in the packet. No questions were asked by the Board.

Superintendent Update

Dr. Hardebeck shared a referendum update. She said it's been three years since the referendum passed and the District will have 69 of 70 projects completed by the end of October; the final project is the replacement of windows in May at Sam Davey which were delayed due to the contractor's schedule. Not only did the District address deferred maintenance, but we've addressed technology upgrades and maintenance as well as staff compensation to recruit and maintain high quality staff.

When the referendum passed, it brought the District to about $50/pupil short of the state per-pupil spending average. The District is now spending $243/pupil less than the state per-pupil average. The referendum helped but didn't solve all the problems. The District is working through the budget process now and continued to struggle with being so far below the state average. However, it's a significant accomplishment that all the referendum projects have been or will be completed on time and within budget.

Jim McDougall asked if boosting the per-pupil spending impacted the state funding. Dr. Hardebeck said no, the referendum changed the District's revenue cap but didn't impact funding. We are limited to the revenue cap and the revenue comes only from state funding and property taxes. When state funding increases, property taxes decrease; the District doesn't receive additional funds beyond the cap with an increase.

Dustin Wiesner asked since the ECASD is the 8th largest district in the state, how do the top seven school districts rank in terms of per-pupil spending. Dr. Hardebeck said the best example is La Crosse who is close to us. La Crosse was spending much more per-pupil than ECASD when the caps were implemented and as a result they've had and spent approximately $250M more than ECASD and are about half our size. She said that the amount spent per-pupil should not be based on a zip code. Dustin Wiesner clarified by asking if smaller districts spend more because they must. Becky Noland said Dr. Hardebeck is correct that the formulas put in place when the revenue caps were implemented hurt the districts who had been fiscally responsible. Eau Claire had a low base to start with so the small increases that have been permitted didn't help much compared to the districts who had a larger base to start with.

Jen McHugh said the District did a great PR job getting the referendum message out there. Dr. Hardebeck said the ECASD and the vendors and contractors have also done a very good job with quality and timeliness of the work to get everything done.

Jim McDougall asked what major factors are driving the funding gap up. Dr. Hardebeck said she thinks that because so many districts have had to pass referendums the numbers have been skewed. La Crosse is again a good example because they've passed four or five referendums in the last 25 years which has significantly increased their cap. Special Education costs are also huge for school districts depending on the population. Transportation is also a significant cost but fortunately Student Transit has tied their costs to the revenue limit to help the District. The financial needs increase 2-2.5% each year, but the revenue cap doesn't increase at the same rate.

Wayne Willie asked about what PR has been done since the referendum project completions. Dr. Hardebeck said there has many news articles, press releases, clips on the local tv news, and ribbon cuttings. The ribbon cuttings were intentional to help get through the other PR noise.

Executive Director Update

Sarah French said it's been another busy quarter. She's been making visits to donors and working on the Memorandum of Understanding draft with some of the founding members and Executive Committee. The end of year was this past quarter she did grant follow up with the schools. There is a sustainability project in the works at the high schools since there are donors who want to give solar panels. Rock the River Front was held and as a result RCU is donating $5,000. Sarah said the event gave them great publicity. She's also working with the anonymous donor group who wanted to donate to the Memorial High School athletic facilities to try keep that donation alive and possibly give those funds to the Foundation in a new fund. Sarah is hoping to be able to vote on that new fund at the August retreat.

Sarah was excited to share that ECPSF is one of the three charities for the summer meeting of 100+ Women Who Care. She said the group is similar to the Eau Claire Community Foundation's Women's Giving Circle. They meet quarterly and each quarter three charities present. The group then votes to give money to one group. Each woman writes $100 check to the selected organization so it's a guaranteed $10,000 (or more) to the organization who gets the vote. Even if they don't get the vote, it's a great way to get the word out to a new group of donors. Sarah is working hard on her presentation for the event.

Sarah is hoping to get Jim McDougall, Blenda Yun, and Dustin Wiesner in front of the School Board for a presentation. She said it is best practice for foundations present to their school board on a regular basis. Sarah will be at the principals meeting in September to spread the word about using money from their pass-through funds, grants, and Golden Apple awards. The fall will be busy communicating with donors to donate before the end of the tax year, and she'll continue to work with the Ulrich Estate and the Memorial High School athletic complex donors.

Kim Hill asked if all the money from last year's grant cycle was used. Sarah said yes, all the money was used, and the goals accomplished.

Other Business

Flynn Endowment Fund – Flynn has great supporters and partnerships, so they have a large amount of money in the Foundation available to the school. Principal Adam Keeton has asked to move some money to an endowment fund so it can continue to grow and will provide Flynn with an annual grant.

Kim Hill asked if that means the money wouldn't be accessible for Flynn to use as needed. Sarah French said yes, $20,000 would be in an endowment and cannot be spent freely, but it would generate an annual grant for the school to spend. Kim Hill said when she was principal at Flynn, they received $9,000 each year for a few years from a donor to meet the immediate needs of students. Kim felt conflicted because she knows the intent was that the money be used immediately to meet the needs of children, although she couldn't be sure the money in the foundation now was the same money from that donor

Dr. Hardebeck asked what the $9,000 each year was used for. Kim said she'd pay for cabs for families to come to conferences, purchase TracFones, gas cards, clothing, all those day to day items that families needed. Jen McHugh asked what amount will be generated annually from the endowment. Sarah French said the plan is 4% which is $800/year. Jen McHugh asked if Flynn has more money to use. Sarah French said yes, there will be approximately $3,000 left in Flynn's pass-through.

Jim McDougal said the Board can't determine if this conflicts with the intent of the donation and unsure if it's the Foundations role to ensure all donations meet the intent of the donor unless specified in an agreement. Kim Hill said she tries to make it clear to donors that once a donation is made, the donor gives up control regarding usage of the funds. Becky Noland said one of the benefits of donating to the Foundation is that donors can specify how a donation is to be used and receive an update.

Jim McDougall said pages 20-25 of the agenda packet are the body of the agreement for Flynn to create the endowment.

Becky Noland moved, Jen McHugh seconded, to create the endowment fund for Flynn Elementary. Yes: Jenny Fesenmaier, Heather Market-Sullivan, Jim McDougall, Jennifer McHugh, David Morley, Becky Noland, Flo Sheridan, Dustin Wiesner. Abstain: Kim Hill.

Motion carried.

JRLC (Jeanne Richie Learning Center) Fund – The JRLC fund has been amended. It was created as an agency fund but that type of fund doesn't really apply so they have amended the paperwork to convert the fund to a field of interest quasi endowed fund.

Jenny Fesenmaier moved, Wayne Willie seconded, to approve the amendment.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Interfund Grant Transfers – This process is to transfer proceeds from an event to the fund they belong to. The two transfers needing to occur are from the Night to Fight event – moving funds to Prairie Ridge's Fight Against Hunger Fund and the Golden Apple Awards to the Golden Apple Award endowment. The Golden Apple Award proceeds are several years' worth because proceeds have never been moved, but there will be an interfund movement each year after the event moving forward.

Motion by Flo Sheridan, seconded by Jenny Fesenmaier, to approve the interfund grant transfers.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Quarterly Grant Disbursement – this disbursement gives money back to the schools for teachers and principals to spend.

Becky Noland moved, David Morley seconded, to accept grant disbursements as listed.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Wrap Up

Upcoming important dates are August 22 for the retreat and October 29 for the next Board of Trustees meeting. Sarah French is finalizing the location of the retreat and will let everyone know the details.

Jenny Fesenmaier moved, second by Flo Sheridan, to adjourn.

Carried by unanimous voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 1:16 p.m.

Submitted by Meta Miske