



EXECUTIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

EDCO Collaborative

Thursday, September 19, 2019, 9:30 a.m.

36 Middlesex Turnpike, Bedford, MA 01730

In Attendance:

Nadine Ekstrom, Executive Director of EDCO Collaborative
Thomas Markham, Director of Human Resources
Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent of Schools – Arlington
Bella Wong, Superintendent of Schools – Lincoln-Sudbury
David King – Treasurer
Helen Charlupski, School Committee Member, Brookline (via conference call)

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 9:50 a.m.

1. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

2. **MINUTES**

Motion made by Kathleen Bodie to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2019 Executive Finance Committee Meeting. **Motion** was seconded by Bella Wong. The **Motion Passed** and the minutes were accepted. Helen Charlupski abstained from voting.

3. **BOARD REORGANIZATION POLICY**

a. Ms. Ekstrom discussed who the Committee was considering for the new Chair and Vice Chair positions. Ms. Charlupski suggested Becky McFall, the Superintendent of the Lincoln Public Schools, and Ms. Ekstrom suggested Peter Light, the Superintendent of the Acton-Boxborough Public Schools. Ms. Bodie will reach out to Peter Light to discuss the position. Ms. Ekstrom also suggested Amy Checkoway, School Committee Member in the Belmont Public Schools and Dede Galdston, Superintendent of the Watertown Public Schools.

4. **EDCO UPDATE**

a. Business Office Update

i. FY19 Close

- Mr. Markham reported that in FY19, EDCO struggled with enrollment which led to a drop in revenue.
- Mr. Markham stated that to reduce budget, EDCO had left vacant positions open, which included positions in the business office, facilities and a non-teaching position.

ii. FY19 Audit Schedule

- Mr. Markham told the Committee that the auditors will begin their audit on Monday, September 23, 2019.

iii. FY20 YTD

- Ms. Ekstrom stated that she would like Mr. Markham to do something different regarding the budget this fiscal year. She would like to show the negative balance of EDCO, and how EDCO progresses from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.
- EDCO is projecting a deficit of \$1,040,000 for FY20 based on planned spending without budget adjustments or increased enrollment.

FY20 YTD (cont'd)

- Mr. Markham pointed out that there were no losses against assets and that EDCO is struggling with revenue.
- Mr. Markham explained that grants and contracts are EDCO's "bread and butter", and he is remaining optimistic and working with Ms. Ekstrom to resolve the problem.
- Ms. Charlupski recommended that she would like the information of how EDCO is currently struggling to be included in the information which is being presented at the Board of Directors Meeting.
- Mr. Markham is remaining positive, as this is the second year in a row he is not recommending EDCO use any extra funds to pay bills. There is enough funding to cover all the billing for FY19.
- Ms. Ekstrom stated that if no new students enrolled from present until the end of September 2019, EDCO would be \$260,000 below what was expected.
- Ms. Ekstrom indicated that EDCO has not hired all the staff that would be needed for the school year.
- Ms. Wong noted that because of the many programs offered at EDCO, enrollment should increase during the school year. She also mentioned the Substance Abuse Program, and would like to enroll students who are not currently on an IEP and ask parents to cost-share. She was concerned about the cost of transportation, to which Ms. Ekstrom stated EDCO can provide transportation for students who are eligible for the program, and EDCO has the staff to cover this program. Ms. Wong spoke on the issue of "vaping" and how it is becoming more sophisticated as students are beginning to create different mixtures to vape, which is becoming a huge concern to school districts.

b. Construction Projects

i. Sped Programs

- Mr. Markham explained to the Committee how EDCO received a Workforce Skills Grant in the amount of \$298,000 to complete construction on the academic side of the building and to purchase equipment for vocational programs. As of today, construction is on track and will open on schedule. The Drafting area will be completed by November 1, 2019 and the Health area will be completed by December 1, 2019. After the building is signed off on, EDCO can begin to accept new students.

ii. Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents new offices

- Ms. Charlupski asked what the MASS was paying to rent in the building. Mr. Markham stated it was the same that LABB and Masscue pay and it offsets our costs which is \$5,000 a month.
- Ms. Ekstrom stated that the MASS Staff was moving in to their new offices on September 30, 2019. EDCO was having a Welcome Breakfast for EDCO and MASS staff on September 30th at 9:00 a.m. in the cafeteria as well.

c. Personnel

i. New Personnel as of 9/1/19

- Ms. Ekstrom made reference to the attachment on the agenda to the 20 new staff hired by EDCO for school year 2019–2020. Several staff members had departed EDCO this past year to accept positions elsewhere due their salary increasing between \$8,000 - \$14,000. Ms. Bodie mentioned that EDCO isn't unionized, and salary can be restructured in the future.
- At this time Ms. Ekstrom introduced Ann Knapp, the Special Education Administrator to the Committee. Ms. Knapp stated she will be starting roundtable meetings for Out of District Coordinators in the very near future.
- Ms. Ekstrom informed the Committee that she is very pleased with Will Verbits as the Director of Programs, and it is working very well having one director in charge of all the programs.
- Ms. Ekstrom stated that the Paraprofessional Training series started in Palmer this week to discuss strategies and planning. Two other districts are interested in joining.

ii. Vacancies

- Ms. Ekstrom submitted to the Board a list of vacancies for the FY20 school year.
- EDCO would like to hire a deaf and hard of hearing teacher on a part-time basis to work in-house in several districts.
- Ms. Ekstrom stated that Courtney Dunne and herself are working on a different philosophy to show the significance of enrolling in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program. They would like to show what skills are offered in this program.

d. Programs

i. Enrollment

- Below are the number of enrolled students comparing FY19 to FY20

PROGRAM	FY19	FY20
Partners	9	9
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	13	13
North Crossing Academy	24	14
45 Day Program	2	4

- Ms. Ekstrom explained to the Board that it has been a very challenging year so far for North Shore Crossing Academy. Mr. Will Verbits is being very clear and structured on student enrollment. Ms. Wong also commented that there has really been no growth with Partners enrollment.

ii. New Program Updates

- Ms. Ekstrom stated that Russell Johnson from the Department of Education will be conducting 15 virtual training meetings beginning in January, 2020 at EDCO for \$750 per meeting.

e. Coming up at EDCO Collaborative

- EDCO Collaborative will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary and will be held on November 22, 2019 at the State House in Boston from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.
- Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Jeffrey Riley and Russell Johnson from the Department of Education will be at EDCO in October for a Special Education Regional Meeting.

5. COMMBUYS/GRANTS

- Mr. Markham spoke regarding James Amara. Mr. Amara received 5 out of 7 grants he applied for on EDCO's behalf. One of the grants was in the amount of \$298,000.

6. DESE UPDATE

- Russell Johnson, Nina Marchese and Christine Romancewicz had a meeting with Nadine Ekstrom to discuss work program approvals, program quality control, and the history of EDCO Collaborative. They also went on a tour of the special education programs in the EDCO building.

7. BOD AGENDA

- There will be a Board of Directors Meeting on Thursday, September 26, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. at EDCO Collaborative.
- Ms. Ekstrom and Mr. Markham will work together to revise the FY20 updates.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Ms. Ekstrom and Mr. Markham will meet to discuss the salary scale.
- Ms. Charlupski spoke of future speakers. She suggested Alice Peisch as a possibility as a future speaker. She will have the Western Massachusetts Superintendents try to reach out to her and find out if there is any interest. Ms. Ekstrom suggested Tom Scott, the Director from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, as a speaker. Ms. Bodie would like it noted on the agenda for the next Board of Directors meeting, if anyone would be interested in being a future speaker.

9. OTHER

- Ms. Bodie mentioned that she would like to inquire if Amy Checkoway of the Belmont School Committee would be interested in serving on the Executive Finance Committee.

Ms. Bodie made a Motion to adjourn the meeting and the Motion was seconded by Ms. Wong. Meeting was adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Carol Megna
Executive Administrative Assistant
September 29, 2019