

**Mid-Columbia Children's Council, Inc.**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Location: via Zoom Videoconferencing**  
November 7, 2023

Board Members: Daniel Blevins (Interim Board Chair) Cheryl Park  
Shannon O'Brien Shawna Pruitt (Policy Council Chair)  
Kim Granville Taylor

Absent Maria Diaz

Staff & Guests: Freddy Gonzalez Ronda Hull  
Joe Schmier Jennifer Bouman-Steagall, Attorney  
Julia Garcia-Ramirez

Minutes by: Noelle Hanson

I. Call to Order

Discussion: Daniel called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., quorum established.

II. Approval of Agenda

Discussion: Reviewed Agenda

Action: Shawna moved to approve the September 5, 2023; Agenda as presented.  
Seconded by Cheryl.  
Motion approved unanimously.

III. Introductions

Discussion: n/a

IV. Updates and Public Comments

Discussion: Cheryl Park said that Tad Connor would be available for specific tasks, if needed.

V. Consent Items  
a. Meeting Minutes for 10.03.2023

Discussion: Will correct Barb's, last name listed under Discussion Items.

Action Kim moved to approve Meeting Minutes for October 3, 2023, with correction as noted.  
Seconded by Shawna.  
Motion approved unanimously.

VI. Directors Report / Informational  
• Director's Report

1. **Grant Renewals Update:**

We have had questions from funders regarding applications already sent. There have been some clarifying questions regarding applications sent and budget rounding.

---

Federal funds begin on December 1, 2023, and state funders which are already in effect since July.

Notice of Award still pending for Federal funds.

**2. Preschool Promise:**

Enrollment focus has been on more comprehensive services, OPK, ECEAP, Head Start. We had planned for 2 PSP classrooms. We had a month to open and were not able due to lack of staff and classroom in Hood River and only 2 children in Petersburg. We chose to relinquish PSP slots. May be able to open an additional ECEAP to make up for the loss. This is not going to impact site staff. Impact will be on Central Office staff who were hired with PSP funds. Will communicate later when staff have been identified.

**3. CLASS® Review:** (Classroom Assessment Scoring System®) Review was in October with area identified as Negative Climate. Specific classroom observed staff who need further training with difficult, special needs behaviors. This was not unexpected as we have a lot of new staff who have not received further training. Ongoing training and support is being provided to new staff members. Otherwise, reviewers were very supportive and complimentary. The report will be sent to us next month (December) and will be included in next Board meeting following receipt. This is a measurable assessment.

**4. Underenrollment Plan:** Working to be fully enrolled and staffed. We are making progress, but we do not anticipate being able to meet the February deadline for our corrective action. We are not receiving employment applications in certain communities nor do people want to drive to them. With the shortage of teachers, we could move to a one teacher and two aid model rather than the two teacher and one aid. We do not need to have a Lead Teacher, Teacher, and Teacher's Aide. Having two qualified teachers in each classroom exceeds regulations. We will report back once we have a plan on how to work out this plan. We want to continue having 3 staff in the classroom to maintain quality. Our agency created Lead Teacher position title, replacing Teacher and Associate Teacher concept. We are considering going back to this previous model. The majority of Head Start agencies in Oregon use this model. We do not want to reduce staff in the classroom. That would greatly affect our CLASS® scores and quality.

Cheryl asked if we are tracking trends of employee feedback when resigning, to determine if leaving for life events, wages, family reasons, or whatever. This information is databased from information generated from KRONOS and available for reporting and tracking.

**5. Informational Items:**

- In-Kind Forms
- Board member attendance tracking
- MCCC November 2023 Newsletter (Eng & Span)

---

VII.	Old Business
	a. Vote: MCCC Health & Safety Handbook

---

Discussion: n/a

---

Action: Shannon moved to approve the MCCC Health & Safety Handbook, as presented. Shawna seconded motion.

	Motion approved unanimously.
VII.	New Business – Action Items: a. Financials – August 2023
Discussion:	Daniel gave an explanation about the Financials from the Finance Committee Meeting from the previous week. Daniel attests accounting numbers are greatly improving from previous year. Detailed notes are annotated well on the Financial Reports.
Action:	Shannon moved to approve the August 2023; Financials as presented. Shawna seconded motion. Motion approved unanimously.
	b. Personnel Report – September 2023
Discussion:	<p>Joe Schmier, HR Director, reviewed the Personnel Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two new cooks have been hired, which is very important for MCCC.</li> <li>• We have had four resignations. When asked about the resignations, two Teacher Aide's resigned due to having babies after their FMLA ended. The other two resigned were due to disciplinary actions they had, due to not following required Performance Standards, before they had consequences.</li> <li>• Jobs are currently posted on our website, Indeed and soon to be on LinkedIn. We are also researching utilizing Kronos applications to post to databases.</li> <li>• Freddy spoke at pre-service about how he started at MCCC as a parent volunteer and grew from within the company.</li> <li>• Importance of growing staff internally has been Ronda's focus.</li> <li>• Our Training Administration is working on professional development and supporting Child Development Associate (CDA) training for any staff interested. Also, meeting monthly with Columbia Gorge Community College (CGCC) and have developed a flyer on how to aid students into the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program. CGCC also came to our pre-service to talk about furthering education and available funds.</li> <li>• As part of our 5-year goals, is our Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) which begins in January 2024.</li> <li>• Career development at local high schools during their job fairs</li> <li>• Grant funds are available at CGCC to attend school for free to get their ECE.</li> <li>• When we onboard new staff, we have a Professional Development navigator from CGCC talk to staff about continuing or beginning education. They are part of our MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) which is our partnership of supporting each other.</li> <li>• We have college students do their student practicums with us.</li> </ul>
	<p>Kim moved to approve the Personnel Report – September 2023, as presented. Cheryl seconded motion. Motion approved unanimously.</p>
	c. Stipend to incentivize employees to work at other centers
Discussion:	Joe presented regarding a travel stipend to incentivize staff to travel to other sites, so we do not close classrooms. This is a developing concept and plan we are

---

proposing to have approved to have \$30 per day to travel to whichever site needs help or something like that.

- This would be for Lead Teachers, Teachers, and Teachers Aides.
- Joe and Freddy presented the cost of what this entails.
- This would be reported monthly at Board meetings
- Will have data collection on whether this incentive is useful or not.
- Will have data collection on what objection that make it non-desirable to have this type of flexibility.
- Will have a staff survey to collect information on what's preventing them accepting working from alternate locations and what would make it more appealing.
- We are also looking into having stipend for Spanish speaking staff, who pass a competency test.
- We're hoping that several staff will volunteer for this project. If no volunteers, we may need to make decisions for certain positions to travel, including stipend. We want staff to voluntarily participate, however, we're required to open additional classrooms no later than February to be as fully enrolled as possible. We don't want to lose positions /jobs for employees.

### Scenarios:

1. Our rural community of Tygh Valley hasn't had a teacher apply for over a year.
  2. We have a Preschool Promise funded teacher in The Dalles not assigned to specific classroom because PSP funding ended 10/31/2023. We could open classroom in Hood River if she accepts stipend and mileage reimbursement.
  3. In addition to the pilot stipend, employees will receive mileage for driving to temporary work site. Per policy, after 6 months it would become a permanent site. The stipend would still be in effect, but they would not receive mileage.
- We aren't changing policy. This will be a trial period to learn from and develop a program from it. We will create language around it, so people know this is for a modified, interim period to make it the most effective and attractive as possible.
  - This pilot is so that we can incentivize staff, open classrooms, and not have to lay off staff, if not fully enrolled by February 1, 2024.
  - Stipend will be for this school year, ending in July 2024. If the plan works, we will implement it into our policy. Or, if we need to keep it going as pilot program, we will communicate with Board re: approval.
  - \$30 per day was based on traveling approx. 20-30 miles.
  - We are seeking approval to collect data and would like to implement our plan prior to the next Board meeting.

---

Action: Would like this to have this reworded as a Pilot Program 2023-2024 and send it out for email vote.

### Discussion Items

- a. Board Recruitment

---

Discussion: We need to recruit additional Board members. We can have one Board member absent to not make quorum.  
Cheryl will reach out to an attorney she knows who Elke had previously reached out to.  
Cheryl will talk to Tad about recruiting attorneys.  
We will work on additional recruitment of attorneys, experienced finance professionals and teachers, which are part of our Performance Standards.

---

Discussion Items

b. Executive Session per ORS § ORS 192.660(i)

---

Discussion: Executive session began at 6:56 pm.

---

Action: Executive session ended at 7:12 pm.

---

X. Adjourn

---

Cheryl motioned to adjourn the November 7, 2023, Board meeting.  
Kim seconded motion  
Meeting adjourned at 7:13 pm.

---

Next meeting on: December 5, 2023

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83805442068?pwd=mnVZoR0TGenaYE0rYNo7flBb3Jxl8G.1>