

# Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes



**Dec. 8, 2020**

## **BOARD MEETING\***

Ms. Sheri Benson, president, called the meeting of the Heartland AEA Board of Directors to order at 4:31 p.m.

Board Members Present: Ms. Sheri Benson, Ms. Liz Brennan, Mr. Bruce Christensen, Mr. John Kinley, Dr. Steve Rose and Ms. Margie Schwenk. Ms. Margaret Borgen, Dr. Earl Bridgewater and Mr. Pete Evans joined the meeting immediately following roll call.

Administrative Staff Present: Ms. Nia Chiaramonte, Mr. Kevin Fangman, Ms. Sheila King, Dr. Jon Sheldahl, Mr. Kurt Subra, Ms. Jenny Ugolini and Dr. Kristi Upah.

## **Approval of Agenda**

A MOTION was made by Mr. Christensen and seconded by Dr. Rose to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Work Session Topics**

### **Overview of the Agency's New Website**

Ms. Julie McCarty and Ms. Courtney Croatt, Heartland AEA Communications Specialists, gave an overview of the Agency's new website that launched Dec. 1. The new site is more user friendly, has an improved search feature, has a responsive design that improves the way the site looks and functions on mobile devices and has improved web accessibility features for those who use screen readers to access websites. It also has improved functionality and enhanced features and graphics.

### **Accelerating Student Learning**

Ms. Wendy Robinson, Heartland AEA Director of Instructional Services, and Mr. Kevin Fangman, Heartland AEA Chief Academic Officer, discussed the impact of the pandemic on student achievement. Initial reports are showing that student scores have dropped. The context of the learning environment varies greatly from district to district. Some students attend in-person, some virtual and some transition back and forth between learning models. Ms. Robinson and Mr. Fangman discussed the work taking place with teachers and districts on maximizing instruction and routines and purposeful practice.

**The Board recessed from 5:35 – 5:45 p.m.**

## **Annual Meeting**

### **Approval of Minutes from Nov. 10 & 24, 2020**

A MOTION was made by Mr. Kinley and seconded by Mr. Christensen to approve the minutes from Nov. 10 & 24, 2020. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Public Forum and Correspondence**

There was no one present from the public to speak to the Board.

## **Election of a President of the Board**

Ms. Borgen shared that the nominating committee had reached out to board members to gauge interest in anyone wishing to serve as board president and vice president. She nominated Ms. Benson as board president and Mr. Evans as vice president for 2021.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Brennan and seconded by Dr. Rose to close the nomination for board president. The motion passed. A roll call vote was taken, and the nomination for Ms. Benson as president passed unanimously.

## **Election of a Vice President of the Board**

Mr. Kinley nominated Mr. Evans as board vice president for 2021.

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A MOTION was made by Ms. Brennan and seconded by Dr. Rose to close the nomination for vice president. The motion passed. A roll call vote was taken, and the nomination for Mr. Evans passed unanimously.

## **Administer Oaths of Office to Newly-Appointed President and Vice President**

The oath of office was administered to the newly-appointed board president and vice president.

## **Appointment of a Board Secretary and Treasurer; Administer Oaths of Office**

A MOTION was made by Mr. Kinley and seconded by Dr. Bridgewater to nominate Ms. Jenny Ugolini as board secretary and Mr. Kurt Subra as treasurer. Motion passed unanimously. Oaths of office were administered.

## **Selection of Regular Meeting Dates and Times**

A MOTION was made by Ms. Borgen and seconded by Dr. Rose to retain the current meeting schedule for the next year (the second Tuesday of the month as a regular board meeting date for 2021). Motion passed unanimously.

## **Committee Assignments and Appointments**

Board members reviewed their committee assignments and appointments for next year.

## **Appointment of Law Firm(s)**

A MOTION was made by Ms. Brennan and seconded by Dr. Rose to approve the appointment of Ahlers and Cooney, P.C. and Nyemaster Goode, P.C. as the Agency's legal counsel. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Conflict of Interest Statements**

Board members were mailed their conflict of interest statements to complete.

## **Discussion Items**

### **Chief Administrator's Report and Recent Activities**

- **COVID-19 Update** – Dr. Jon Sheldahl, Heartland AEA Chief Administrator, provided an update on the COVID-19 pandemic and impact on staffing. The FFCRA expires Dec. 31, 2021 but could be extended as part of the federal government's stimulus package, should it be passed. The Agency continues to monitor employee positivity rates and quarantines and the impact those are having on personal leave balances. The Board shared that it would be agreeable to allowing some extra flexibility with leave.
- **Pending Contract with the New York Leadership Academy (NYCLA)** – The Agency received a contract from NYCLA to provide social justice and equity training. The work will include an equity audit and a multi-year professional learning plan for agency leaders and staff.
- **Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) Annual Convention** – Several Heartland AEA staff members facilitated learning sessions during the annual AESA convention. The sessions were recorded, and they will be shared as part of an upcoming board work session.
- **Iowa Association of Area Education Agencies (IAAEA) Executive Board Meeting** – Dr. Bridgewater attended the meeting in November. He shared highlights from the meeting that included approval of the budget, an update on the food program and rebates and the proposal for filling the IAAEA Executive Director position. Dr. Cindy Yelick, Great Prairie AEA Chief Administrator, will act as interim IAAEA Systems Facilitator through next fall, with additional duties being back-filled by the other AEA chief administrators. A decision on how to move forward with the vacancy will be determined next October.

## **Review Jan. 12 Board Agenda**

Board members reviewed the Jan. 12, 2020 meeting agenda.

## **Summer Board Retreat**

This item was tabled. It will be brought back for further discussion in the spring.



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## Action Items

### Acceptance of Audit Results as Presented on Nov. 10

A MOTION was made by Dr. Bridgewater and seconded by Mr. Evans to accept the audit results as presented at the Nov. 10 Board meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

## Consent Agenda

Ms. Borgen reviewed the financial statements and indicated that the Agency is financially stable and comparable to other years. A MOTION was made by Dr. Rose and seconded by Mr. Christensen to approve the consent agenda including payment of warrant numbers 412143 through 412318 and electronic warrant numbers 31689 through 32018. Motion passed unanimously.

- Personnel Report and Early Notification Incentive – Twenty-two employees applied for the early notification incentive: 20 from the Certified Union and two from the Certified Non-Union (management)
- Transportation Agreement – West Des Moines CSD
- Flexible Benefits Plan Amendments
- Health Reimbursement Arrangement Amendments

## Chief Administrator Comments

- Board members received a book from Dr. Jamie Vollmer as part of the *Schools Cannot Do It Alone* Network.


## Board Comments

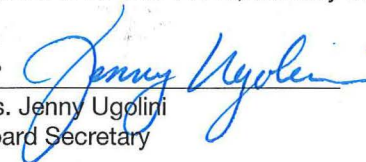
- Ms. Brennan shared feedback from the Iowa Association of School Boards' AEA Networking Session. Participants discussed effective advocacy and the importance that all board members reach out to new legislators before the start of the session. The AEAs need to be more intentional in reaching out to their local school boards, and the chief administrator evaluation process varies greatly across the AEAs.
- Dr. Bridgewater expressed thanks to the Board and to Heartland AEA staff for their work during this unprecedented time. Board members agreed to share his message with all staff in the next staff newsletter.

## Adjournment

A MOTION was made by Dr. Rose and seconded by Dr. Bridgewater to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Reports and documents and the full text of motions, resolutions or policies considered by the Board at this meeting are on file in the Board Secretary's office, (515) 270-9030 ext. 14441, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

  
Ms. Sheri Benson  
Board President

  
Ms. Jenny Ugolini  
Board Secretary

\*Iowa Code 21.8 - Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and current directives from the state and federal government restricting the size of public gatherings, the emergency meeting of the Heartland AEA Board will be held electronically.

Iowa Code 21.4 (2a.) - Under Iowa Code 21.4 (2a) "good cause," it may be impossible to post the agenda at our regional offices due to facility closures. The agenda is posted on the front doors of Heartland AEA's main office located at 6500 Corporate Drive, Johnston and on the Agency's website.