

Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes



March 12, 2024

BOARD MEETING

Ms. Margaret Borgen, president, called the meeting of the Heartland AEA Board of Directors to order at 4:01 p.m.

Board members present: Ms. Margaret Borgen, Ms. Liz Brennan, Mr. Pete Evans, Mr. John Kinley, Ms. Tiara Mays-Sims, Mr. Alex Piedras and Ms. Margie Schwenk. *Absent:* Ms. Kelly Simmons. Dr. Steve Rose joined the meeting at 4:03 p.m.

Administrative Staff Present: Mr. Kevin Fangman, Dr. Susie Meade, Mr. Kurt Subra, Ms. Jenny Ugolini and Dr. Cindy Yelick.

Approval of Agenda

A MOTION was made by Mr. Kinley and seconded by Mr. Piedras to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from Feb. 13 & 27, 2024

A MOTION was made by Mr. Kinley and seconded by Ms. Schwenk to approve the minutes from Feb. 13 and 27, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum and Correspondence

No one was present from the public to speak at the public forum.

Discussion Items

Legislative Update

Dr. Cindy Yelick, Heartland AEA Chief Administrator, provided a legislative update on versions of both the House and Senate bills. She discussed the pros and cons of each bill including changes to the makeup and authority of the AEA boards of directors. She noted that the Heartland AEA board consists of a former superintendent, former curriculum director, members from higher education and parents of children with disabilities. Staff continue to advocate and attend legislative forums. It's anticipated that the Senate bill could be up for debate as early as next week.

Chief Administrator's Update of Recent Activities

Dr. Yelick provided updates on recent events and activities.

- **Heartland AEA Board Advisory Council Meeting** - The Council met on Feb. 29 and reviewed district profiles of service and impact of loss of service reports. The Board Advisory Council could be eliminated as part of the Governor's recommendation to reduce various boards and commissions.
- **Heartland Administrators' Association Meeting** - The March 5 agenda featured speakers from ESSDACK INspired Leadership. The April 2 agenda will feature Supt. Clark Wicks from Perry CSD and members of the Heartland AEA crisis response team.
- **Regional Superintendent Visits** - Dr. Yelick visited Guthrie Center last week. There was a lot of conversation about teacher pay, SSA and the impact on hiring and retaining teachers.
- **Support for Staff** - Dr. Yelick continues to hold weekly Zoom meetings with staff. They are well attended. She provides a legislative update, and staff have time for Q&A. They are valuable to staff during this time of uncertainty.

Negotiations - Certified Union

Mr. Kevin Fangman, Heartland AEA Chief Human Resources Officer, shared the agreement that was reached with the Heartland Education Association. If the Board approves the agreement, contracts will be issued on March 15. Certified staff will have 21 days to sign and return their contracts.

Insurance Renewals

Mr. Kurt Subra, Heartland AEA Chief Financial Officer, discussed the Delta Dental and Voya Life Insurance renewal agreements. They are standard renewals for this year.

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Construction Update and Change Orders

Mr. Subra provided an update on the Johnston Regional Education Center Phase II remodel. Overall, the project has gone well. Substantial completion by the end of April is expected with full completion by the end of May.

Action Items

Negotiations - Certified Union

A MOTION was made by Mr. Kinley and seconded by Mr. Evans to approve the tentative agreement with the Heartland Education Association as proposed. Motion passed unanimously. (3.5% increase in the base salary {3.35% with TSS}, which includes a step increase with the remainder going to base salaries.)

Insurance Renewals

A MOTION was made by Mr. Evans and seconded by Ms. Brennan to approve the Delta Dental and Voya Life Insurance renewals as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Construction Change Orders

No action at this time. Report only.

Consent Agenda

A MOTION was made by Mr. Kinley and seconded by Mr. Evans to pull the resignation of Nicole Taylor from the personnel report as a separate motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Schwenk reviewed the Agency's financial reports. She reported that the Agency is on a similar budget track to last year. She discussed the one-time COVID funds and noted everything else is in good shape. A MOTION was made by Mr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Piedras to approve the consent agenda including payment of warrant numbers 420544 through 420692, electronic warrant numbers 47433 through 47881, the personnel report and addendum (with the noted exception of N. Taylor as a separate motion) and the Northwest AEA and Heartland AEA 2023-24 Teacher of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (TDHH) Sharing Agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Fangman noted the resignation of N. Taylor effective March 15, 2024, and recommends the Board deny the request. Her vacancy will create a hardship in backfilling the services the position provides. She is resigning to take a job elsewhere.

A MOTION was made by Dr. Rose and seconded by Mr. Kinley to act on the recommendation made by Mr. Fangman regarding the situation. The motion passed 7 ayes (Borgen, Brennan, Evans, Kinley, Piedras, Rose and Schwenk), one nay (Mays-Sims) and one absent (Simmons).

Chief Administrator Comments

- Dr. Yelick noted that the Agency may encounter more releases from contracts given the legislative situation and as employees need to make decisions for themselves and their families. She expects the Board will have to wrestle with more of these conversations.
- March 26 Planning meeting - There will be an action item related to Classified staff compensation for 2024-25 as part of the next planning meeting, requiring a quorum.
- Staff are telling great stories and continue to make a difference for children, families and educators even in this time of uncertainty. The Agency continues to message that AEA staff are focused on improving the learning and well-being of children.
- There has been a phenomenal outpouring from parents and advocates for Iowa's AEAs. If board members know someone who has advocated, continue to thank them. For staff who have been advocating, it's time to differentiate the message. Thank legislators for their work and continue to voice concerns about the significant changes that may be made to the system.

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Board Member Comments

- Dr. Rose noted the numerous articles in the *Des Moines Register* and encouraged other board members to subscribe to the newspaper so they can stay informed.

Adjournment

A MOTION was made by Ms. Schwenk and seconded by Dr. Rose to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:08 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) 473-6644, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Handwritten signature of Margaret A. Borgen in black ink.

Ms. Margaret Borgen
Board President

Handwritten signature of Jenny Ugolini in blue ink.

Ms. Jenny Ugolini
Board Secretary