

Newaygo County Area **PROMISE ZONE**

Ensuring Educational Opportunities for a Promising Tomorrow

Newaygo County Area Promise Zone Authority
4747 W. 48th Street
Fremont, MI 49412

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

Regular Meeting Minutes

Present: Steve Witter, Tom Boerger, Dawn Anderson, Cathy Obits (ex-officio), Carla Roberts (ex-officio), Dr. Lori Tubbergen Clark, Deanna Joppich, Rebecca Tuuk (virtually)

Absent: Holly Moon, Mark Guzniczak, Woody Bowman, Nate Sparks, Jack Hendon

Visitors: Corinne Toth, Amy Moore, Todd Jacobs, Dan Rinzema-Sybenga

Chairperson Clark called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

16-42 – Motion by Steve Witter, supported by Tom Boerger to approve the agenda for today's meeting. Roll call vote: Ayes—6 (Witter, Boerger, Anderson, Tubbergen Clark, Joppich, Tuuk); Nays—0. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

16-43 – Motion by Deanna Joppich, supported by Tom Boerger to approve the regular meeting minutes from February 14, 2017. Roll call vote: Ayes—6 (Witter, Boerger, Anderson, Tubbergen Clark, Joppich, Tuuk); Nays—0. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Clark noted that the Operations Committee has been very busy processing applications. Thank you to Cathy Obits for building a spreadsheet to track applicants. National college advisors in each local district have met with all high school seniors to present information on the PZ. One wrinkle in our process this year was one local district asked all high school seniors to complete an application, which threw off our projections and actuarial analysis. They did so so that if student plans change (for students who are intending to go to other universities), they will have the PZ application in place as a contingency. We have since talked with that district and shared with them that if this happens, a student could apply late and be considered through the appeals process.

REPORT FROM OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Cathy Obits shared the spreadsheet that calculates the amount of scholarships taking into consideration all other forms of financial assistance that each student will receive through other sources. As we have worked through this spreadsheet and setting it up, we have found that we will need some type of software platform in the future. There are some nuances that MCC cannot do for us that we need to be able to do in the future.

Another issue is home school students who have applied who did not register at the beginning of the year because they did not know this was going to be criteria for eligibility. The recommendation is to allow these few students to be grandfathered in this first year as long as they meet the other requirements (i.e., SAT, GPA, etc.). Is the group agreeable to this or do we need to add this as an action item? All agree this is fine.

The county GIS system is also able to verify student residency. Any property parcel numbers beginning with 62 are in our service area. If they do not begin with 62, they are not in our service area. There are some students who we need to review on an individual basis.

Ms. Tuuk asked how we are going to get the word out to home school families in the future to let them know they need to register. Dr. Clark noted there are a couple of outlets that we could use to share this information.

Ms. Obits noted that the Gerber Foundation allows their scholarship recipients to save their scholarships for later use; they do not need to be used in the first year. As long as students have coverage through other sources and PZ funds are not needed, the Gerber Foundation will continue this practice. If a student does not have other financial resources, however, the Foundation will require them to use their scholarship in the first year.

Dr. Clark has heard that some students chose not to apply for other scholarships since they have to write essays and just decided to let the PZ cover their costs. Has anyone heard this? Both Foundations noted they received the same number of applications this year as in past years, but Ms. Obits pointed out that since the PZ information went out so late, that may be why they had the same number; this may look different next year. Ms. Obits noted that on the back of the PZ application it points out that they must apply to local Foundations. Perhaps we need to add that to our checklist to verify that students have applied to local foundations. Yes.

**REPORT FROM
OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE
(continued)**

Dr. Clark noted that all members should be submitting "in-kind" contributions to the Promise Zone to Jack Hendon. For example, if you have made color copies for an event, or can quantify how much time employees have been working on PZ tasks, etc. Mr. Hendon will be evaluating the data in order to build a budget for our organization, including determining how much of an FTE would be needed to support the PZ.

Dr. Clark also talked about 2.5 as our minimum threshold for GPA. We set the GPA low because we wanted to make sure struggling students would be able to participate. In Muskegon, their GPA requirement is 3.5 so students are working hard to achieve this GPA to qualify. Which goal is best? We won't know how many qualify until the middle of June when final GPAs are known, but we are looking at somewhere between 120 and 140.

Dawn Anderson, Co-Chair of the Marketing and Communications Committee, reported that realtor signs are very noticeable and realtors are willing to use them, advertising that a house is part of the Promise Zone. CTC students are printing the signs for the PZ. Ms. Obits noted that at Holton's award ceremony, they gave each student a sign for their yard, just an idea for future marketing. Ms. Anderson added that awards ceremonies have begun. We also held many informational meetings, which were very successful. The committee has also worked on thank you letters that are ready to go for small donations.

**REPORT FROM
MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS
COMMITTEE**

Steve Witter, Chair of the Fundraising Committee, report that to date we have about \$658,000 raised. Of that, \$600,000 is for scholarships and \$58,000 for the endowment fund. Some additional monies have been received and set aside for potential endowment, but there are restrictions on those funds. All money raised includes gifts from foundations, organizations, and individuals; we continue to seek donations from all sources. Currently we have 75% participation amongst PZ board members. Each member should expect to be a financial participant, but the decision on the gift amount would be an individual decision. The committee would like to be able to say we have 100% board participation prior to the start of school in August.

**REPORT FROM
FUNDRAISING
COMMITTEE**

The Fundraising Committee continues to meet monthly. Presentations have been made on every level: corporate, foundations, organizations, individuals, etc. One local church is going to hold a special event to promote the PZ and there is a book club that is going to be considering participation. These are just a couple of examples.

While our initial goal this year was \$1.5 million, we may need to adjust that if the need is greater. There are things the committee needs to tweak/adjust. The committee is currently in the process of creating a gift form. This would be for one-time donations, not the pledge form which is intended to be used for long-term giving. Payroll deductions are happening in our local districts.

Recognition has come up at the committee level. We have to acknowledge philanthropy. Is there anything we are going to do besides a letter? What are we going to do for significant gifts? Press releases for gifts over a specific amount or recognition in marketing materials, based on the amount given? Should we invite donors to participate in community events? Should there be an annual report to acknowledge donors? Just some things to consider.

There has also been discussion on where donations should be made. All should go to the Foundation regardless of size, with the exception of school organization's payroll deduction which will flow through the NC RESA business office. For payroll deductions, receipting and thank you notes will be handled through the NC RESA business office. All other receipts/thank you notes will go through the Fremont Area Community Foundation.

**REPORT FROM
FUNDRAISING
COMMITTEE
(continued)**

Dr. Clark noted that students want a venue to thank the Board. The question is, "how do we create a venue/event? Dr. Clark was thinking about perhaps a presence on a FB page to allow them access to give their thanks. Todd Jacobs from the FACH mentioned the idea of requiring a thank you note from students to the Board as part of the process. Mr. Witter noted he would rather receive an unsolicited thank you than a forced thank you.

Dr. Clark asked if there was a way we could use others who do not serve on the board, but are willing to help. Have we tapped into these resources? Yes, we have several others helping on the fundraising committee.

Rebecca Tuuk, Chair of the Promise Success Committee, noted the committee has been thinking of ways to communicate with families earlier in a student's educational career, (elementary), helping them to set goals earlier and talked about sending letters to different age groups/families. We will be working with MCC to learn early which students are starting to slide so we can mentor them to maintain satisfactory academic progress and keep their participation in the Promise Zone.

**REPORT FROM
PROMISE SUCCESS
COMMITTEE**

Cathy Obits noted that seven appeals have been considered. Mr. Jacobs asked if remedial classes would be covered. Dr. Clark noted the law says we have to allow students a tuition-free path to an Associate's degree, it does not limit students to a specific number of credit hours. We may need to check into this, however. We need to be careful because our decisions will be precedent setting.


**REPORT FROM
APPEALS
COMMITTEE**

Dr. Clark shared that Woody Bowman received the Bridge Builder award from the Chamber of Commerce and Steve Witter recently celebrated a milestone birthday. Dr. Clark also shared that on November 6 and 7 there will be a Promise Zone Conference in Kalamazoo if anyone is interested in attending. Our next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 8, 2017.

**INFORMATION FROM
BOARD MEMBERS**

16-44 – Motion by Steve Witter, supported by Deanna Joppich to adjourn the Newaygo County Area Promise Zone Authority regular meeting at 12:39 p.m. Ayes—6; Nays—0. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT



Dr. Lori Tubbergen Clark, Chairperson