



Newaygo County Area Promise Zone Authority Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, May 9, 2023
NC RESA Educational Services Center Board Room

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Present: Blake Prewitt (chairperson), Scott Rumsey, Becky Tuuk, Holly Moon, Tim Rossler, Pat Brown, Dawn Anderson, Dick Dunning, Don VanSingel, Scott Swinehart (arrived at 11:56 a.m.)

Absent: Jack Hendon, Kathy Pope

Visitors: Melissa Miller, Chelsea Reynhout, Loretta Towne (recorder), Luci Moore, Brian Stuck, Michele Schlafer, Leslie Nelson, Jody Zerlaut

Chairperson Blake Prewitt called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m.

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion by Moon, supported by Brown, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Tuuk, supported by Rumsey, to approve the February 7, 2023, Meeting Minutes as presented. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Public Participation:

Blake welcomed everyone. Chelsea shared a few student testimonials about their positive interactions with the Promise Zone and success coaching staff. Holly introduced our guests from Gerber Life/Western & Southern – Luci Moore (Vice President of Operations), Brian Stuck (Vice President of Human Resources) and Michele Schlafer (Vice President of Independent Distributions). Holly thanked them for their continued support of the Promise Zone. Luci shared a few words about how they appreciate the opportunities the Promise Zone offers local students and the impact it is having. Gerber Life/Western & Southern is happy to partner with the Promise Zone and presented a check for \$25,000.

Blake welcomed our guests from Muskegon Community College (MCC). Jody Zerlaut (Director of Financial Aid) introduced Leslie Nelson (Associate Director of Financial Aid) who will be our new contact for students and parents at MCC in the Financial Aid office.

Scott Rumsey presented the following report on behalf of the Operations Subcommittee:

- The financial statement, ending March 31, was shared and reviewed. Nothing out of the ordinary.
- The 2022 audit report was reviewed, we have received an unqualified opinion.
- Don asked about our bank insurance coverage being less than our current balance and wondered if we should diversify. Scott Rumsey shared some information from Jack regarding regional banks and recent concerns. Much of what is happening is from the federal reserve responding to the economy and covid relief. There is not as much concern at our local banks. Choice One has been serving Michigan for 125 years and has strong experience. Our risk at Choice One is low. We could possibly consider looking at Choice One's sweep accounts, these accounts would not exceed our insurance coverage. The Board expressed confidence in Jack as our Treasurer and support to pursuing this option.

- Our tuition rate at MCC will increase for next school year. Our rate will be \$200.00 per contact hour which is a 2.56% increase from the current year rate of \$195.00. Per our MOU with MCC this rate is subject to an annual increase not to exceed 3%.
- To help make the Early College Program cost neutral for local school districts and to support continued enrollment in the Early College Program, the Newaygo County Area Promise Zone Authority has agreed to pay up to \$2,100 per Early College thirteenth year student completer. This year there are 12 completers.

Scott Swinehart joined the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

- Two student appeals were received for the summer semester; one for an Early College student that has 2 remaining classes to finish and another student needing a few extra credits to complete and then transfer to GVSU in the fall.
- Our 2023 scholarship application remains open online until June 2 with a \$50 late fee. As of this morning, we have received 161 applications. Our renewal application for returning students will open online on June 1. Staff are working to help communicate as best as possible to help students meet these deadlines.
- Katherine Mater has been hired as our new full-time Success Coach. Katherine is currently serving as the coordinator for the Headway Coalition at NCRESA. She will be a great addition to our team.
- Discussion was opened about lowering our GPA requirement for the Class of 2024. H&S Companies is working on a revised budget to look at lowering the GPA to 2.75 and 2.50. Don shared support for lowering the GPA. Blake shared that a lower GPA requirement will help impoverished students more, the addition of our full-time success coach will be very helpful to these students. Lowering the GPA will mean more scholars and will give us leverage when renegotiating our MOU with MCC in 2025. Holly shared that a lower GPA would help more students see college as an opportunity. Holly also mentioned that the Fundraising Committee can work to be more of a Marketing Committee and help to spread the message. Becky shared that a lower GPA requirement will also help to attract more apprenticeship/trade bound students. Scott Swinehart added that as we work more with the skilled trades pathway, we can connect with the Career Tech Center to help students have a clearer path. Blake mentioned the struggles with hiring College Advisers/Career Specialists for each district, he is working with the districts to help hire and fund these positions; funding is the main challenge. Dick wondered what might cause the tax capture to decrease; not much would cause a decrease, even during the last recession funds were still received without a decrease. In summary, at our next meeting we plan to vote on lowering the GPA requirement to begin with the Class of 2024.

Holly Moon presented the following report on behalf of the Fundraising Subcommittee:

- The fundraising total year-to-date for 2023 is \$7,700; with \$250 for our year-end mailing, \$100 from FACF gifts, \$3,700 for Sponsor-A-Scholar and \$3,650 unsolicited.
- Gratitude was again expressed to Gerber Life Insurance for their gift and appreciation for their open conversations about giving.
- Melissa has received a verbal commitment from Gerber Products for a gift and potential 5-year plan.
- Holly and Kathy had coffee with John Buckley, President of Gerber Federal Credit Union, and he is looking to make a corporate gift from his 2024 budget.
- Dick has helped to secure a gift from Newaygo County and their ARPA funds. Dick has worked with County Commissioner, Bryan Kolk and it looks like we will receive \$250,000 to our endowment fund at the Fremont Area Community Foundation. Final approval is still pending.
- Holly has presented to Rotary and the Lions Club and will be presenting to the Retired Teachers Association in June.
- Newaygo Insurance Agency has shown support with a banner they display at their office on M-37, and an article was in the Time Indicator and on Near North Now.
- Melissa and Blake are working with a marketing company to possibly have a promotional video produced and are also looking into other signs and marketing materials.
- Holly shared a friendly reminder that all Board members are welcome to help fundraise.
- Melissa shared about the Let's Glow Newaygo County event, an ultra-marathon 24-hour event happening on June 17, 2023. The Promise Zone is the charity partner of the event. The event will take

place in Fremont at Luce Mill Farm. It is a family friendly event. The Promise Zone will be able to have a booth at the event and will also need 10-16 volunteers at multiple times (early birds and night owls). If available to volunteer, please contact Melissa or Loretta. Becky suggested asking Promise Scholas also.

Becky Tuuk presented the following report on behalf of the Promise Success Initiatives Subcommittee:

- Chelsea has been busy.
- The week prior to exams, she was at MCC offering goodie bags to students with encouragement and cheer. The week of exams, there was a “grab & go” table at NCRESA with snacks and supplies, 50 students participated in the two events.
- Chelsea has also been connecting with potential Promise Scholars at the local high schools.
- A “summer outlook” postcard has been mailed to all current Scholars with reminders about renewing, scheduling with Chelsea (she is available during the summer), orientation and a survey for those not returning next year.
- An email and social media posts went out with a reminder about FAFSA and the priority deadline of May 1.

Melissa Miller presented the following report on behalf of the Marketing and Communications Subcommittee:

- Our social media activity continues on Facebook and Instagram.
- We are working with MCC to increase their visibility at NCRESA with signage.
- The NCRESA sign on 48th Street will have MCC and the Promise Zone added.

Action Items:

Early College Completers: Motion by VanSingel, supported by Anderson, to approve payment in the amount up to \$25,200 for 12 Early College completers. Ayes – 10, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

MCC Winter Tuition: Motion by Anderson, supported by Rossler, to approve payment for the MCC Winter semester tuition in the amount up to \$160,000. Ayes – 10, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

MSU Spring Tuition: Motion by Moon, supported by Tuuk, to approve payment of \$679 for the MSU Spring semester tuition. Ayes – 10, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

MSU Supplemental Invoice: Motion by VanSingel, supported by Dunning, to approve payment of \$84 for the MSU supplemental tuition invoice. Ayes – 10, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Information from Promise Zone Board Members:

Blake shared PowerPoint slides about board governance. He asked all board members to review the slides and come to our next meeting with their ideas on what model we are currently operating in and what model they would want our board to be operating in.

Dick asked, from the Fundraising Committee meeting, if any conversations have happened with United Way about promoting the Promise Zone on their “Welcome to Newaygo County” signs. Blake will meet on Thursday with the United Way Board and will bring it up.

Adjournment:

Motion by Moon, supported by Rossler, to adjourn. Ayes – 10, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.



Blake Prewitt, Chairperson