

MINUTES

Land of Sky P20 Council: Joint Executive Committee & Steering Committee

June 16, 2023: 10-11 AM

Present:

Jack Cecil, Dr. Mike Dempsey, Dr. John Gossett, Dr. Gene Loflin, Emily Nicholson (Staff), Nathan Ramsey, Dr. William Sederburg, Deb Tibbetts, Melissa Zenz (Staff)

Minutes:

- Mrs. Nicholson opened the meeting and began sharing her screen with the agenda showing.
- She began with the first agenda item, which was to provide an update on staff's work on grants. In conjunction with a grant writer from Dogwood Health Trust (DHT), Mrs. Nicholson submitted an application for a \$200,000 grant with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) the previous Monday. If awarded, the grant funds will be used for both programmatic and operational needs.
- Mrs. Nicholson asked the committee to share grant opportunities with her, as the grant writer from DHT is available to provide her services to P20 for one more grant application. She asked whether they had any current recommendations for such opportunities. Dr. Loflin commented that Mrs. Nicholson's audio was echoing. Mrs. Nicholson switched her audio to her computer, and Dr. Dempsey said that was better. Mrs. Nicholson welcomed Mr. Cecil, who had just joined the meeting.
- Mrs. Nicholson informed the team that she had submitted a pre-application for DHT's cycle 2 grant cycle for \$200,000 and would be notified in July whether P20 will be invited to submit a full application. Grant funds will be awarded on October 20th. Dr. Dempsey asked what those grant funds would cover, and Mrs. Nicholson replied that it was TBD, though it would likely be mostly for operations.
- Mrs. Nicholson stated that the meeting that she and Mr. Ramsey had with DHT had gone very well. Mr. Cecil asked with whom they had spoken, and Mrs. Nicholson replied it had been with Sarah and Cory Blankenship.
- Mrs. Nicholson moved on to the agenda item for the July Council meeting and gave a quick overview of the logistics. She reminded the team that she tries to rotate the meetings each quarter among the four counties. She noted that the meeting should include both existing and new P20 members and that the main agenda for that meeting will be to focus on PR needs and planning.
- Mrs. Nicholson moved on to agenda item II(d) and explained her motivation for advocating for new member organizations from the early education and employer sectors is to balance the very strong representation on the Council for K-12 and higher education. She asked Ms. Tibbetts for her thoughts, and Ms. Tibbetts voiced her full agreement. Ms. Tibbetts recommended adding early



education organizations from the other P20 member counties and explained that each Smart Start is unique to its community's needs.

- Ms. Tibbetts asked the rest of the committee for their thoughts on new member organizations. Dr. Loflin expressed his agreement. Mrs. Nicholson commented on the engagement challenges with Madison County representatives. Ms. Tibbetts suggested Lynn Bowles, who is the ED for Madison County's Smart Start, and said she would send Ms. Bowles' email address to Mrs. Nicholson. Ms. Tibbetts remarked that additional members from early childhood could provide subject-matter expertise when she and Ms. Barry cannot attend P20 meetings. Mrs. Nicholson concurred with the value of and need for subject-matter expertise for early childhood.
- Mrs. Nicholson stressed the need to advocate for recruiting additional employers as members, in part due to several having left the Council. Mr. Cecil gave the example of Mr. Meguiar, who had represented Thermo Fisher Scientific. Mr. Ramsey noted that the representative for Meritor had left as well. Mrs. Nicholson identified the need to correct the weak representation from this sector. Dr. Dempsey asked whether Pratt & Whitney had been approached, and Mrs. Nicholson stated she had not. Mr. Cecil and Mr. Ramsey discussed who would be the most appropriate contact at Pratt & Whitney, and Mr. Cecil said he will ask Ben (Teague) about it. Mrs. Nicholson recommended someone from the HR department, and Mr. Ramsey suggested Cataldo Perrone.
- Mrs. Nicholson informed the team that she has not been able to engage successfully with the new Madison County manager. She stated that Norris (Gentry) has been an enthusiastic supporter.
- Mrs. Nicholson moved on to agenda item II(c) and informed the team that the transitions for the new designees are going well, in part because Mrs. Nicholson has worked with so many of them on past P20 activities. She explained her vision for the Council to evolve into two groups: one for initial members, including this team, and one for current delegates. The original team and original collaborative, who are mostly VIPs in the region, will become Trustees, and the new Council members, who are mostly "worker bees," will become Delegates. She asked for input, and Mr. Cecil expressed his approval, noting the benefit of increasing the contacts and stating that he liked the idea of offering more people the opportunity to serve. Dr. Dempsey concurred.
- Mrs. Nicholson shared a specific example of Kit Cramer delegating her spot on the Council to Samantha Cole.
- Mrs. Nicholson moved on to the agenda item for the next steps for the advocacy toolkit and policy priorities. She reminded the team that she is still waiting for signatures from John Mitchell and Jaime Laughter, who expect to obtain their boards' approvals sometime this month. She solicited feedback from the team.
- Dr. Sederburg joined the meeting. He shared about a brief email exchange he had had with Mrs. Nicholson, and he suggested that the team ask for a meeting with all of their legislators for the four-county region and the members of this Executive Committee. Mr. Cecil recommended waiting

two weeks until budget negotiations were finished. Dr. Sederburg said he didn't see the need to wait, and Mr. Cecil reiterated his suggestion to wait until budget talks were over. Mr. Ramsey said he

didn't think meeting now would lead to any additional funding for P20's priorities that had not already been allocated in the budget. Mrs. Nicholson agreed with Dr. Sederburg about not waiting. Mr. Ramsey recommended that Mrs. Nicholson meet with Zach Wallace at the Asheville Chamber of Commerce because he is the de facto legislative liaison for the WNC region. Mr. Ramsey further recommended the potential for collaboration between the WNC Chambers of Commerce advocacy and P20's advocacy, and Mrs. Nicholson agreed while also indicating that the timing was a little too late because P20's policy brief was not completed early enough in the legislative session to be addressed in the current budget. Mrs. Nicholson said she will schedule a meeting with Zach and keep this team informed about that meeting to discuss his perspectives and recommendations for a timeline and format of advocacy with the legislators.

- Ms. Tibbetts voiced her strong approval of advocating for WNC's needs with legislators.
- Mrs. Nicholson asked Mr. Ramsey whether there were any contacts at any of the other Chambers who might want to be involved in the advocacy efforts. Mr. Ramsey replied that the economic development entities were already engaged with P20, and he further stated his optimism about the success of P20's advocacy efforts because the organization represents four counties unified in their policy priorities rather than just a single county. Mr. Ramsey also suggested that Mrs. Nicholson leverage Greg (Lowe's) contacts for legislative advocacy.
- Ms. Tibbetts asked whether the team should connect with their local Chambers of Commerce to inform them about P20's advocacy efforts, and Mrs. Nicholson indicated it would be a good idea. Ms. Tibbetts said she will send the policy brief to the new director at the Transylvania County Chamber and will cc Mrs. Nicholson and Mr. Ramsey in order to introduce them to the director.
- Mrs. Nicholson asked whether there were any other items to discuss. Mr. Cecil thanked Mrs. Nicholson for the email update she had sent with the advocacy toolkit and shared that he had received several positive comments from JMBE about how professional and organized the document had been.
- Meeting adjourned at 10:41.

Next Meeting Date: TBD