

**NORTHWESTERN ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING #1, FY14 AGENDA**

Open Meeting Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Date: Wednesday, September 18, 2013

Time: 4:34 p.m.

Location: Paddlewheel Inn, Oregon, IL

Type of meeting: Regular

Name of person taking the minutes: Jean Tritle, Board Secretary

Name of person(s) presiding: Laura Frankiewicz, Regional Director, led the meeting until the election of officers was held.

II. ROLL CALL

Members in attendance:

1. Kathy Countryman
2. Dennis Daly
3. Kimberly Moore
4. Mike Noble
5. Pamela Scanlan
6. Lisa Wiet
7. Sarah Willey
8. Tom Zelten

Members absent:

1. Drew Hoffman
2. Shelley Nacke
3. Karen Sanders

Also present:

1. Laura Frankiewicz, Regional Director
2. Jean Tritle, Board Secretary

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by: Daly

Motion: to approve the agenda as presented

Motion seconded by: Willey

The Chairperson asked for a voice vote.

Voice Vote: "Ayes" – all "Nays" – none

Action: Pass

IV. WELCOME TO NEW BOARD MEMBER

Frankiewicz welcomed Pamela Scanlan, who is returning to the Board as a School Board Member in Subregion III. Frankiewicz also mentioned that there are several possible candidates for the remaining vacant position in Subregion III.

V. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON FOR THE NIA EXECUTIVE BOARD

Motion made by: Wiet

Motion: to approve the nomination of Sarah Willey for the position of NIA Executive Board Chairperson for FY14

Motion seconded by: Zelten

The Chairperson asked for a voice vote.

Voice Vote: “Ayes” – all “Nays” – none

Action: Pass

VI. ELECTION OF SECRETARY FOR THE NIA EXECUTIVE BOARD

Motion made by: Zelten

Motion: to approve the nomination of Jean Tritle for the position of NIA Executive Board Secretary for FY14

Motion seconded by: Moore

The Chairperson asked for a voice vote.

Voice Vote: “Ayes” – all “Nays” – none

Action: Pass

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Reception of Guests & Visitors & Opportunity for Public Comment

There were none.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Open Session Minutes of FY13 Meeting #9 on August 28, 2013**
- B. Approval of Closed Session Minutes of FY13 Meeting #9 on August 28, 2013**
- C. Approval of Personnel Report**
- D. Approval of Accounts Payable for the Month of September 2013 (Handout)**

Motion made by: Daly

Motion: to approve the Consent Agenda as corrected

Motion seconded by: Noble

The Chairperson asked for a roll call:

“Ayes” – Daly, Moore, Noble Scanlan, Wiet, Willey, Zelten, Countryman

“Nays” – None

Action: Approved

IX. REGIONAL DIRECTOR’S REPORT

A. HLERK – The Extra Mile – September 2013 Edition

Frankiewicz reported that this edition covers the Concealed Carry Law and the reporting obligations for school district administrators, including the provision that, if a student is determined to be a clear and present danger, this must be reported to the police within 24 hours. There is immunity from civil or criminal liability for the administrator who makes the report. Noble added that HLERK is looking closely at this and will advise their clients on the exact reporting requirements.

Frankiewicz also reported that JCAR did accept a push back of the certified School Nurse bill until July 2016. The State is currently in the process of creating modules for Registered Nurses to complete in order to obtain their School Nurse certification.

Noble asked if the ISBE took action on the 70/30 directive, which states that a classroom cannot consist of more than 70% general education students and 30% special education students (those with an IEP). He felt that it would be best to get rid of this ruling, as there are better ways to monitor number of special education students mainstreamed into a classroom. Frankiewicz responded that the ISBE was meeting this week but it was not known if they took any action on 70/30 or special education class size.

B. NIA Staff Laptop Program Update

Frankiewicz informed the Board that the distribution of the leased laptop computers to all staff members had gone smoothly, with the majority of the computers being issued to the Therapy staff; some of the Hearing Impaired Program teachers and some itinerant teachers received one as well. Several minor glitches have presented themselves: some staff members have encountered challenges in accessing computer programs in the various schools due to the way the computers were configured, while others are having problems obtaining access to printers at their work sites. Our IT Manager is currently working on correcting this problem. Spare laptops have also been put in the Rockford and St. Charles offices to serve as spares or “hot swaps” in case someone’s computer breaks. Zelten commented that the school districts should be working with the NIA staff members, since they are in their building to serve their students.

X. ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of the Regional Director’s Target Goals for FY14

Motion made by: Daly

Motion: to approve the Regional Director’s Target Goals for FY14

Motion seconded by: Zelten

Frankiewicz stated that she had two goals for FY14. She is currently in the second year of her first goal, which is to work with a consultant on the NIA financial structure. Luke Glowiak had originally acted as her consultant; however he retired at the end of the past school year and moved to Florida. Frankiewicz will now be working with Cheryl Crates on the NIA Finances. Crates has a wealth of experience in this area. Frankiewicz plans to visit the all of the Directors of the member cooperatives to gain ideas about a viable fee structure for the NIA, with the end result being a structure that will enable the NIA to break even each fiscal year.

Frankiewicz’s second goal for FY14 is to work with the NIA stakeholders on the creation of a mission statement and a statement of beliefs for our organization. The Supervisors and Coordinators will be meeting on September 19th with Nancy Locke, who has been acting as a mentor for Maureen Henry in the Hearing Impaired Program. Ms. Locke assisted Henry in developing a mission statement for the Hearing Impaired Program, which helped immensely in unifying the teachers this past school year. Frankiewicz stated she will ask the Board for their input as well.

The Chairperson asked for a roll call:

“Ayes” – Moore, Noble Scanlan, Wiet, Willey, Zelten, Countryman , Daly

“Nays” – None

Action: Approved

B. Approval of the Appointment of the NIA Executive Board Committees for FY14

Motion made by: Daly

Motion: to approve the Appointment of the NIA Executive Board Committees for FY14

Motion seconded by: Moore

Frankiewicz reported that Moore had been added to the Budget and Finance Committee and Noble to the Regional Director Evaluation Committee. Frankiewicz had spoken to Drew Hoffman and he would like the Evaluation Committee to meet at 4:00 p.m. on October 30, 2013, before the start of the regular Board meeting. He said that he is still interested in devising a new format for the Director's evaluation, as the Board discussed last year. The new format will make the Board members the main evaluators. Wiet agreed, stating that the feedback the committee receives from employees should only be used as a tool in the evaluation process.

The Chairperson asked for a roll call:

"Ayes" – Noble, Scanlan, Wiet, Willey, Zelten, Countryman , Daly, Moore

"Nays" – None

Action: Approved

C. Annual Establishment of Copy Rate for FY14

Motion made by: Noble

Motion: to approve the Copy Rate for FY14 to be Consistent with the State of Illinois Legislative Requirements

Motion seconded by: Daly

Frankiewicz explained that, per Illinois FOIA legislation, the first 50 pages of a document are free and the entity may charge 15 cents per page starting with page 51.

The Chairperson asked for a roll call:

"Ayes" – Scanlan, Wiet, Willey, Zelten, Countryman , Daly, Moore, Noble

"Nays" – None

Action: Approved

D. Approval of the NIA Complaint Managers for FY14

Motion made by: Noble

Motion: to approve Kathy Countryman, or her designee, and Carol Johnson as the NIA Complaint Managers for FY14

Motion seconded by: Daly

Frankiewicz explained that it was necessary to add the language of a designee to the Complaint Managers due to the fact that both Complaint Managers are female; we previously had a male and female acting in this role. Countryman could appoint a designee in the event that a male NIA employee has a complaint and would prefer speaking to another male.

The Chairperson asked for a voice vote.

Voice Vote: "Ayes" – all "Nays" – none

Action: Pass

E. Annual Appointment of NIA ADA/Section 504 Coordinator for FY14

Motion made by: Daly

Motion: to approve the Appointment of Carol Johnson as the NIA ADA/Section 504 Coordinator for FY14

Motion seconded by: Moore

There was no discussion.

The Chairperson asked for a voice vote.

Voice Vote: "Ayes" – all "Nays" – none

Action: Pass

F. Approval of FY4 Contracts (Handout)

Motion made by: Daly

Motion: to approve the FY14 Contracts

Motion seconded by: Zelten

Frankiewicz reported that there was a 4% increase in the cost for Administrative Services provided by the Sycamore School District.

In regards to the Lease Agreements, the owner of the building in which the NIA offices are housed in St. Charles has sold the building and the new owner has included CAM charges in the cost of the lease. The lease on the Rockford offices will come due in July, with the offices located on State Street coming due in February. The lease on the Sterling office will come due in 2015. The lease on the classrooms occupied by the Hearing Impaired Program in the Burlington School District will be due in June 2014. The NIA also leases space in Prairie Hill for an audio booth.

This year has seen a decrease on the reliance on contract agencies for therapy staff, due to the fact that we had many direct hires this year as a result of Mid-Valley's elimination of their therapy department. We bought out four agency contracts, two for which there was no charge as a result of negotiations made by Jill Tabone. There are still some open positions remaining that may be filled with agency staff if we cannot find direct hires to fill them. We have also eliminated the use of Speech/Language contracts through the agencies as many of the districts are hiring their own staff for these positions.

Noble noted that there is a disparity in the price of the square footage being charged for each office location and wondered if there would be a way to consolidate the offices. Frankiewicz answered that there are already 50 staff members in the Rockford office located on State Street and the St. Charles office is the same; there is no room at the Administration center to bring staff to Sycamore. The office located in Rockford Board of Education building and the St. Charles offices also have an audio booth, which would be expensive to move. She mentioned that Carol Johnson will be retiring soon; at that point she will speak to the Rockford School, District about directly hiring their own Hearing supervisor, thus possibly eliminating the need for office space in their building. The Marengo office space is paid with grant funds. Willey commented that one would think the School Districts who rent the NIA space would give us a break on the rent price, as that would help to keep the overall cost of services provided by the NIA to their districts down. Frankiewicz stated that we have reduced the amount of office space required in the Sycamore office now that ILNET is gone. She will also be looking to move the State Street office in Rockford as it is currently located in a dangerous neighborhood.

Noble asked if jobs can be combined to reduce the amount of staff needed in each office in order to reduce the amount of square footage needed in each location. Frankiewicz answered that we have recently downsized the secretarial staff, but it is hard to further combine positions as each secretary works with different school districts and different therapists in each region. Zelten commented that this would also be difficult to do because the NIA is spread over 10 counties. He recommended looking at where the greatest costs are being borne in order to see if there are ways to improve staff efficiency. Moore added that, if the NIA needs to stay in St. Charles, we should look for a place in that area that would have a cheaper rent. Willey suggested that hard data be taken to the school districts that lease space to the NIA to show them the disparity in the charge per square foot and to reiterate that the more they charge us the higher their fees for services will be. Frankiewicz noted that the cost of the rent for the classrooms in the Hearing Impaired Program is figured into the tuition costs. Zelten stated that the School Code has a Facility Formula, which is used to determine rents and other expenses, adding that there is an issue if the Districts in the west are paying for expenses incurred in Districts located in the east.

The Chairperson asked for a roll call:

“Ayes” – Scanlan, Wiet, Willey, Zelten, Countryman , Daly, Moore, Noble

“Nays” – None

Action: **Approved**

G. Approval of Revised Early Retirement Option (ERO) Requirements

Motion made by: **Daly**

Motion: **to approve the FY14 Contracts**

Motion seconded by: Moore

Frankiewicz explained that the revision in the ERO language is a result of the changes made by the Legislators to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) ERO. Employers must now certify TRS employees who wish to retire under the ERO. The employer is also now allowed to determine the criteria for and number of those employees permitted to do so, unless it is defined by a collective bargaining agreement. Frankiewicz is recommending that the language in the NIA Policy be changed to require that an employee have 10 or more years of continuous full-time service to the NIA in order to retire under the ERO, adding that we should not pay an ERO penalty for an employee who has only been with the NIA for a few years. The employee may also not receive the 6% increase for the three years prior to their retirement if they wish to participate in the ERO. She also recommended limiting the number of employees who can choose the ERO option to 10% of the eligible employees in any given year. We would keep the post-retirement severance bonus for Coordinators.

Three items that need to be addressed regarding the revision of the NIA Policy:

1. Certificated language was left in the Rules and Regulations because the term “licensed” is confusing as it applies to other positions as well. Zelten commented that only TRS staff are licensed through the ISBE; the therapists are licensed through the IDPH. The TRS ERO only applies to teachers, so this should not be an issue.
2. Continuous service needs to be defined so that, if a teacher is RIF’ed and recalled, this not constitute a break in service.
3. “Full-time” needs to be defined. Frankiewicz said that she had spoken with the Coordinators and Supervisors about this, as some certified employees are not able to work a full-time schedule due to the number of service days purchased by the member

districts each year. For example, Diane Finn has never been a full-time Coordinator and she would be penalized under the ERO language because of this. Kathy Reuter is in the same situation. Noble commented that the School Code defines full-time as 180 days. Zelten recommended designating the numbers of days we recognize as full-time as the same number recognized by TRS, which is 174. Willey and Countryman agreed.

Willey stated the Board has three options at this point: vote to approve the revisions as presented; vote to approve as presented and revise at a later date; or vote down the revisions as presented. The consensus of the Board was to vote down the revisions, amend them to include the TRS definition of full-time, and vote on this change in October.

The Chairperson asked for a roll call:

“Ayes” – None

“Nays” – Wiet, Willey, Zelten, Countryman , Daly, Moore, Noble, Scanlan

Action: Failed

VIII. Chairperson’s Comments and Other Business

Willey thanked the Board for their confidence in re-electing her as Chairperson.

Frankiewicz asked the Board members for feedback on the venue for the September meeting each year. She explained that we had to pay a rental fee for the room in the Paddlewheel Inn and ended up having to set the room up ourselves. Also, fewer of the Board members are staying for the annual dinner after the meeting. She wondered if the best option would be to meet in Byron as we do the rest of the year and have dinner there. Another option would be to hold the September meeting in Sycamore and have dinner there. The Board members indicated they were open to alternatives. Willey added that she would not want to stop having the annual dinner, as it is a recruiting tool when finding new Board members.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – The Chairperson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by: Daly

Motion: to Adjourn

Motion seconded by: Zelten

The Chairperson asked for a voice vote.

Voice Vote: “Ayes” – all “Nays” – none

Action: Pass

The meeting adjourned at 5:48 p.m.