

Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes



Feb. 11, 2025

BOARD MEETING

Ms. Tiara Mays-Sims, board vice president, called the Heartland AEA Board of Directors meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Board Members Present: Ms. Liz Brennan, Mr. Pete Evans, Mr. John Kinley, Ms. Tiara Mays-Sims, Dr. Steve Rose, Ms. Margie Schwenk and Ms. Heather Sievers. Mr. Alex Piedras joined the meeting immediately following roll call. Ms. Margaret Borgen joined at 4:11 p.m.

Administrative Staff Present: Mr. Kevin Fangman, Dr. Susie Meade, Dr. Kristi Upham, Ms. Jenny Ugolini, Mr. Brian Whalen and Dr. Cindy Yelick.

Board members welcomed Ms. Heather Sievers who was elected to the Director District 1 seat during a special convention on Jan. 20 and replaced Ms. Kelly Simmons, who resigned from the Board. Ms. Sievers was sworn in as a new member in January.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes from Jan. 14 and 28, 2025

A MOTION was made by Mr. Evans and seconded by Dr. Rose to approve the minutes from Jan. 14 and 28, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum and Correspondence

No one from the public was present to speak to the Board.

AEA Task Force Update

Dr. Cindy Yelick, Heartland AEA Chief Administrator, reviewed the AEA Task Force reports that were submitted last week at the Task Force's request. Many of the reports were the third iteration of the same information the AEA's have been asked to provide. The Iowa Department of Education was also tasked with providing reports to the AEA Task Force. The Task Force has not yet announced its second meeting date.

Legislative Update

Ms. Kate Walton, lobbyist with Eide & Walton, shared a legislative update with board members. She discussed the results of the November 2024 election and the makeup of the Iowa House and Senate. She provided a brief update on current educational issues including Supplemental State Aid (SSA) and proposed bills from the Governor including banning cell phones during instructional time, social media training for middle school and high schoolers and early childhood programs.

The Board recessed for dinner from 4:57 to 5:33 p.m.

Discussion Items

Amended 2024-25 Budget and Proposed 2025-26 Budget

Mr. Brian Whalen, Heartland AEA Director of Business Services, reviewed the Agency's amended 2024-25 Budget and discussed the proposed 2025-26 budget. He discussed changes to the budget due to HF2612 and the impact of the reductions on state aid. He doesn't anticipate any restoration of funds to the AEA's. He anticipates a budget deficit of \$3.9M that unassigned balances will be used to cover. He's hopeful it won't be that large once SSA and

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settlements are set. The director of the Iowa Department of Education will approve the budget before it goes to the Iowa State Board of Education on March 20 for final approval.

Annual Progress Report

Dr. Susie Meade, Heartland AEA Chief Academic Officer, shared the Agency's Annual Progress Report.

Board Policy 406 - Resignation - First Reading

Mr. Kevin Fangman, Heartland AEA Chief Human Resources Officer, discussed the changes recommended to Board Policy 406 - Resignation. The policy changes will apply differently depending on the position and case-by-case situation. The Board can revoke the changes in the future, as it's not coming forward as a long-term staffing plan and does not need to be a permanent change. Mr. Fangman confirmed that the language changes were discussed with legal counsel.

Staff Handbook Revisions

Mr. Fangman shared recommended Staff Handbook changes to sections regarding transfer and assignment, employment contracts, letters of assignment and the employment-at-will disclaimer. The changes were shared with the Heartland Education Association (HEA) prior to being brought forward to the Board.

Employment Contracts and Notification Language

Mr. Fangman shared language changes to employment contracts for Certified staff and employment notifications for Classified staff. The language was updated to align with the Staff Handbook revisions.

Sharing Agreements

Dr. Yelick shared that the Agency would be entering into sharing agreements with other AEA's. The Board will note that in the coming months, those agreements will be on the Board's agenda, requiring formal approval. She discussed the request that was made this week by the Grant Wood AEA Board of Directors to enter a sharing agreement for a shared chief administrator due to the retirement of their chief administrator, John Speer. They would like to enter a sharing agreement with Dr. Meade to contract for half of her position as chief administrator of Grant Wood AEA. Grant Wood AEA would cover half of her salary, mileage and expenses. Board members shared their concerns regarding capacity, length of contract, etc. More details will be brought back at the March meeting for consideration.

2025-26 Agency Holiday Calendar

Dr. Yelick shared the Agency holiday calendar for 2025-26. The calendar notes the official holidays in which offices are closed.

Action Items

Amended 2024-25 Budget and Proposed 2025-26 Budget

A MOTION was made by Dr. Rose and seconded by Ms. Brennan to approve the Amended 2024-25 Budget and the Proposed 2025-26 Budget to be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Annual Progress Report

A MOTION was made by Mr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Piedras to approve the Annual Progress Report. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff Handbook Revisions

A MOTION was made by Mr. Evans and seconded by Ms. Sievers to approve the Staff Handbook revisions as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

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2025-26 Agency Holiday Calendar

A MOTION was made by Ms. Brennan and seconded by Ms. Sievers to approve the Agency's 2025-26 holiday calendar. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Policy 406 Resignation

A MOTION was made by Dr. Rose and seconded by Mr. Piedras to approve the updates to Board Policy 406. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Evans reviewed the financial statements. He stated that everything is in clear order and that it's apparent the reduction in force is a reduction in funds and impacts revenues and expenses. He noted there are funds to replenish some aging hardware. A MOTION was made by Dr. Rose and seconded by Ms. Sievers to approve the consent agenda including payment of warrant numbers 422095 through 422204 and electronic warrant numbers 51844 through 52279. The motion passed unanimously.

- Personnel Report (Addendum only, no additional report)
- Purchase Orders
 - *Convergeone, Inc.* - \$54,104.49
- Van Meter CSD and Heartland AEA Order of Service Agreement
- Woodward-Granger CSD and Heartland AEA 2024-25 Service Agreement
- Lynnville-Sully CSD and Heartland AEA 2025-26 Service Agreement
- Perry CSD and Heartland AEA 2025-26 Service Agreement
- Second Amendment to Lease Agreement Between PLP, Inc. and Heartland AEA (Knoxville Office)

Chief Administrator Comments

- Dr. Yelick shared that Service for Fee teams are interviewing staff members who applied for internal positions. Last week over 22 interviews were held. They will wrap up in the next week so staffing decisions can be finalized.
- Dr. Yelick and Dr. Meade are currently holding District Service Planning (DSP) meetings with districts. They are discussing their priorities and the services they want to purchase next year, i.e., digital resources, staff time and consulting services. The meetings have been good, and it's been interesting to see what districts are prioritizing.

Board Member Comments

- Dr. Rose shared his concerns regarding the capacity of administration and sharing positions with other AEAs. He'd like to have further discussion on how the Agency is supporting administrators and employees due to reductions.

A motion was made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Evans to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

EXEMPT SESSION

Exempt Session – Negotiations - Section 20.17(3) of the Iowa Code

A MOTION was made by Mr. Evans and seconded by Ms. Brennan to enter an exempt session as provided in Section 20.17(3) of the Iowa Code to discuss the 2025-26 negotiation session.

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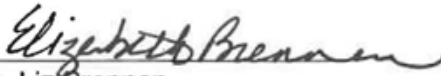
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A roll call vote was taken. The Board of Directors entered into an exempt session at 6:55 p.m.

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|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|-----|
| • Ms. Margaret Borgen | Aye | • Mr. Alex Piedras | Aye |
| • Ms. Liz Brennan | Aye | • Dr. Steve Rose | Aye |
| • Mr. Pete Evans | Aye | • Ms. Margie Schwenk | Aye |
| • Mr. John Kinley | Absent | • Ms. Heather Sievers | Aye |
| • Ms. Tiara Mays-Sims | Aye | | |

The Board of Directors exited the exempt session at 7:21 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. – 4:00 p.m.


Ms. Liz Brennan
Board President


Ms. Jenny Ugolini
Board Secretary