

## **REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**April 28, 2021**

**8:30 A.M. NPT Office**

### **CALL REGULAR BOARD MEETING TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL at 8:30 am**

Dr. Chris Dougherty called the regular board meeting to order and roll call was taken with three board members present. Board members present were Jason Bauer, Scott Doerr, and Chris Dougherty. Also present were NPT Director, Kelly Suey, NPT Program Coordinator/Transition Specialist, Sabrina Jones, and NPT Business Manager, Deanna Tarter.

Others in attendance include: Michael Edwards, Anita Brown, Katie Hilgert, Casey Matheson, Ashley Yockey, Mara Atkins, Shelby Babbs, Brenda Patrick, Carla Mickey, Jennifer Norris, Lauren Assalley, and Kyle Anderson.

### **RECOGNITION OF VISITORS, PUBLIC COMMENT, AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Katie Hilgert spoke on behalf of why she is resigning from NPT Special Education Cooperative. While she is leaving for a great opportunity, it is simply not for a shorter drive because if she could have continued her work in the same schools she has, she would have never left. Her resignation comes with a heavy heart after serving Taylorville for 17 years. She doesn't like conflict and has never seen so much in all of her career. This has never been just a job, she cares about her students and colleagues tremendously. Katie has always made herself accessible in any capacity to help meet the needs for students and staff. She has received excellent performance ratings and comments from administrators she has worked with in Taylorville and provides quality evaluations and services for the students in her schools. However, despite the work she has done with great care in Taylorville, she has found her role intentionally and increasingly devalued and diminished. She has been excluded from district crisis responses, teams a school social worker would be a part of in any other setting or any other district including MTSS and district SEL teams and discussions. People have even been told not to talk to us or meet with us. Not only has teamwork not been encouraged, it has been actively discouraged. She has never been directed by anyone within NPT to not work collaboratively in Taylorville schools, or anywhere else for that matter. She has told Michael Edwards and principals this. No one has told her to do less than what she has done before. The principals she has served have tried to make teamwork possible whenever they can but the message is clear that she is an NPT employee, not Taylorville. The atmosphere feels divisive and she knows she is not alone in this feeling. She does not feel this way in Nokomis and she knows her colleagues in Pana don't either. It has been hurtful and it doesn't have to be this way. Katie took this opportunity to thank Kelly and everyone else for doing their best to provide positive leadership during this time which has been very difficult along with providing us with information, talking to us, and answering questions when they could. While we watched people talk about our jobs with no mention of us, NPT is not a place or a thing, it is us and everyone in here who have continued to provide services, even during a pandemic, holding meetings on



of \$35,000 from our current accounts to our new accounts. They also do not charge any fees for payroll and were willing to sit down with us during this process.

Motion by Doerr, seconded by Bauer to approve opening a new checking account with First National Bank as presented. Bauer - YEA, Doerr - YEA, Dougherty- Abstain. Motion passed.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Discuss the Transfer of location of the FACeS/CBI program from Taylorville CUSD #3 to a different location starting July 1, 2021**

Dr. Doerr commented that last month we discussed and removed one of the items from old business, but still need to discuss this item and get it settled this month or next so that the Cooperative can move forward. He has prepared a list of expectations for the NPT FACeS program for next year. Dr. Doerr went through the expectations that were put together. They are 5 days a week in-person learning unless approved by the NPT Board, NPT Administration will have free access to certified and non-certified staff and students for assessments and evaluations, NPT will have full jurisdiction of the curriculum and planning for the programs, Joint Member District Superintendents will have access to the program via communications with FACeS staff and classroom visits, in coordination with NPT Executive Director, Classroom and Program policy and procedures will be coordinated and approved by NPT Administration, FACeS staff will be available for regular meetings with NPT Administration for programming and planning purposes, and NPT Administrators will be the direct chain of command for the FACeS Staff. Dr. Doerr feels this is important to maintain the program in Taylorville's School District instead of moving the location, but he is prepared to move the location if he needs to. Mr. Bauer wanted to add an expectation that is not listed on the handout Dr. Doerr prepared that there is communication between the FACeS staff and families of all school districts. At times communication has not been good in terms of change of schedules, which he understands Covid has played a part, but there have been several instances where families in his district have been up in the air as to when, where, and how education will be delivered. They have had some situations with remote learning as well, where remote learning is not necessarily appropriate for the students that are being serviced in this program.

Dr. Dougherty said her major concern with these bullet points is that they are asking for administration and oversight supervision of staff that belongs to a different district from an outside entity and inherently that causes problems. Dr. Doerr commented that we will not evaluate the staff because that is the principals job, but evaluate our program. We need to have our administration have direct contact with the FACeS staff to make sure that the program is going well and that if we need to add or delete staff or curriculum, that the recommendation needs to come from this Board to the Taylorville Board before adding or deleting staff as needed for the number of students in the program and to make sure that the curriculum and the planning of the program is sufficient. That is the whole purpose of this Cooperative to begin with, it was to maintain programs and run it efficiently and that hasn't happened this year.



unfortunately these kids are high needs kids and need individualized curriculum in many cases and that hasn't happened for a variety of reasons, but we need to move forward and have to have a complete understanding of what this program is for.

Dr. Dougherty responded that every time Taylorville had a learning plan, snow day, or an adjustment she sent either a text or email to all three of them and she received zero response from all three of them the entire year. Mrs. Suey asked what she meant by zero. Dr. Dougherty responded on updates on learning plans and other areas. She added that you brought the circus over in Taylorville's cafeteria and had an uprising. Dr. Doerr questioned that he brought the circus over and she responded yes. Mr. Bauer commented that must have been done from the Taylorville school district because we never asked anyone to go to your school district, he thinks that was her constitutes in Taylorville's school district. Dr. Dougherty commented that no, she believes it was an in-person and out of person placement for students and they perceived what they wanted to believe and she understands that is their perspective, but Taylorville did not schedule or lead that meeting. Dr. Doerr responded that we called a special board meeting because we had concerns at the beginning of the year and we didn't invite anyone to that meeting except us. Anyone can come to those meetings because they are open to the public.

Dr. Dougherty stated the true inequity is the size of the districts and the needs that are present and it is not working so there needs to be a different solution. Mrs. Suey asked if she was hearing that we want a motion for Taylorville to have a motion to not have the program and to move it somewhere else. Dr. Dougherty responded that you make the motion how you want it, it is not on paper set up to operate in anyone's best interest. Dr. Doerr said that he does not understand her comment. Dr. Dougherty responded that the inequities of the program and how they want it run are not set up in anyone's best interest. Dr. Doerr asked her to please explain what she meant. Dr. Dougherty said to read through the list and given the number of kids that he is sending in, and what you are wanting to control and what you want to lead and what outcomes you want for students. Dr. Doerr said yes, what he wants for all students, Nokomis, Pana and Taylorville students because it is this cooperative's program. Dr. Dougherty said to make your motion. Dr. Doerr recommended to Mrs. Suey that he thinks it is best to keep this motion on the table for the regular May meeting so we can figure out our next steps.

## **REPORTS**

### **Director's Report**

Mrs. Suey gave updates regarding the DLM assessment. The testing window is open and will remain open until May 10th. The teachers are working hard to make sure the students get tested. We currently have about 4 students completed with testing and the remaining are in progress. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Suey have completed some CPI trainings that were scheduled for each district. Taylorville Jr High and High School is scheduled before the end of the school year. She also attended a Train the Trainer Institute-Maximizing the Effectiveness of Paraprofessionals Who Work With Students with Special Needs. This was a very beneficial training that will allow her to provide professional development to the paraprofessionals in the coming years. She feels they are some of the most important people in our districts and they do



## **Business Manager Report**

Dee Tarter updated the board with the status of where NPT is in becoming our own fiscal agent. She discussed where they are in the process for this month. NPT has been approved as an employer with TRS and hopes to get some training scheduled soon, created a DUNS number, received a TCC number for W2s and 1099s, and received an ORI number for background checks. We have been in contact with IMRF and they are mailing us paperwork to take to their board in May to have us approved as an employer, working with Bushue HR for Health, Dental, Vision, Life, Property, Workman's Comp, and Liability Insurances, registered with the State of Illinois as an employer, setting up our own bank account, and complete setting up background checks. Mr. Bauer asked if we are going to put out a publication about bids for the insurances and wanted to know which publications. Mrs. Suey responded with yes they are giving us a timeline and it should be posted in the Breeze Courier and the Pana Palladium. Mr. Bauer asked when this might be published and Dee responded with June and it will be approved in the July board meeting. Dee also added that once she does receive the timeline from Bushue HR, she will provide it to the Superintendents. Now that a bank account has been approved we can set up an EFTPS account, apply for a SAM number, and create a GATA account. Once we get insurance set up we can apply for TCC number for Affordable Care Act. Dee also has training with SDS scheduled in June and hopes to have training with TRS and IMRF soon as well.

Mrs. Tarter commented that since the amended budget has been approved, she will be sending the legal and ESY assessments as soon as we get the numbers completed for that program. She would rather give a refund at the of June for all of the assessments. Dr. Dougherty asked with all the things listed here that Taylorville has carried for the co-op up until this point of you moving forward independently, she asked if we had the correct proration of workman's comp and all of those matters that have been prorated out to the cost of the co-op. Dee responded she doesn't know. Dr. Dougherty said it is payroll costs because we have managed your payroll for the last two years. Dee responded with I don't know and it's probably something Wendy needs to take lead on.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

The meeting did not move into a closed session.

## **MOVE TO ADJOURN AT 9:07 am.**

Motion by Doerr, and seconded by Bauer to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed by voice vote.

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Dr. Chris Dougherty, President

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Dr. Scott Doerr, Secretary