The regular council meeting of the Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative was held via GoToMeeting on October 22, 2020 for the purpose of considering business to come before the Council. Chair, Katherine Dawe, presided.

1. **Call to Order**

Katherine Dawe called the meeting to order at 1:02pm.

Members Present

- **Amsterdam**—Katherine Dawe; **Anderson**—Kristi Jacobs; **Big Sky**—Dustin Shipman;
- **Ennis**—Casey Klasna; **Gallatin Co. Supt.**—Matthew Henry; **Gallatin Gateway**—Theresa Keel; **Harrison**—Fred Hofman; **LaMotte**—LeeAnn Burke; **Monforton**—Darren Strauch; **West Yellowstone**—Brian Smith; **Willow Creek**—Bonnie Lower

Members Absent None

Visitors None

2. **Public Comments** None

Staff Present Michelle Halberg, Director and Joyce Schmidt, Clerk & Business Manager

StaffAbsent Riley Russell, Executive Assistant

3. **Consent Agenda**

Approval of

Motion to approve the minutes of September 24, 2020 as well as expenditures (#316953-#316978)

Minutes & Expenditures Motion: Theresa Keel Second: Matthew Henry - Passed Unanimously.

4. **New Business**

a.) **Director’s Report: (Informational)**

Michelle discussed her initial goal of providing 8 webinars to replace the full-day PIR day in August that could not occur due to COVID and how those webinars are being received. Some member school special ed teachers are participating consistently with the majority of Cooperative staff. She reviewed the GoalBook application for the board and continues to ask the special education teachers and related service providers to use all that this program has to offer in standards aligned goals, data collection and assessment of progress.

Michelle thanked the Board for building level support for staff early on and having monthly special education department meetings to get everyone together, project meeting dates, ensure close collaboration and monitoring of IEP progress for students who are learning in-person and remotely. She offered that she would be glad to meet with Special Education teachers in member schools this year to go through files as part of documentation compliance.

Michelle is working closely with Mr. Smith on Section 504 plans and shared how this collaboration has worked. It is important to be sure that you have the right people at the evaluation meetings, and accommodation plan meeting. Supervision of general education teachers to ensure the 504 accommodations are being implemented is essential.
Follow-up with developmental screenings in the Spring was recommended and could potentially pair well with Kindergarten Roundup for districts. Michelle will provide more information regarding Child Find results from this Fall. Kristy Seers, OPI AIM/Infinite Campus will do a small group training (virtual) for system administrators. Brian Smith asked who would attend the webinar? Typically, the system administrator role is assigned to the building Executive Assistant but can be the Principal or Superintendent. Cross training is recommended.

Michelle discussed the need to increase overall COVID-19 precautions across districts given the unique situation of having itinerant staff who travel between buildings. The need for this came to her attention as several staff mentioned that they were uncomfortable with the lax application of precautions. She surveyed the staff and found that there were some schools in which the majority of staff members felt this way. Board members requested that Michelle reach out to their district if there are specific concerns. Michelle expects the Co-op staff to maintain a higher level of precaution regardless of the buildings practice (masks, mask with shield, Plexi-glass dividers, washing hands and hand sanitizer, 6-ft physical distance when possible, Masks on when car-pooling, etc.) to minimize the risk of contracting the virus or spreading it. This is consistent with Michelle’s earlier recommendation for school psychologists to work remotely unless they needed to be in-person to test a student and the request to districts to hold meetings virtually if possible and appropriate (i.e. parent has access, and in consideration of the sensitivity of the information). When asked if the reduction of staff FTE is a result of these concerns, Michelle indicated that it was in part along with other personal COVID-19 impact concerns. Michelle asked the board members to take this concern seriously and assured them that this just came up in the past weeks and has not been an area of concern until the increase in positive cases in the schools and communities, quarantined students that they work with, and whole grade-level quarantines across multiple Co-op districts occurred. Michelle requested that district add Co-op staff to communication system when there is a positive case, close contact for staff and students or grades out due to quarantine. They are finding this out from students and district staff and increases their level of anxiety about what they “don’t know”. Some districts are already doing this through inclusion on emails that go out to parents. Dustin Shipman asked if he could communicate with Michelle directly and she can pass it along to her staff. Michelle agreed but continued to ask that the information go directly to staff if possible and include her in the email. Fred Hoffman explained what their district does, anything sent to parents also goes to Co-op Staff.

Appreciation was expressed to Michelle for being part of the SAM Executive Board. Michelle shared that the SAM Board and MPEC presented during MCEL and out of the presentation came further discussion about the need for relief funding. Kirk Miller further solicited the Delegate Assembly steering committee and finally sent a letter to the Governor’s office that listed the top ten areas of need. Michelle shared how proud she was to see that the top three areas of need included special education in general and funding to special education cooperatives specifically. This is important work and she expressed her gratitude to the board for allowing her work as MCASE President on the SAM board.

b.) Business Manager’s Report: (Informational)

Joyce has been working closely with Ken Bailey at OPI regarding the utilization of the ESSERS Related Service money. At this point the majority of the funds are earmarked for personnel such as increased special education teacher. Joyce shared the ESY Services by School Spreadsheet and Michelle added that the cost during 2020 summer was greater. The Co-op wanted there to be transparency of how and where money is being used and it is a good budgeting tool for next year.

c.) Personnel: Contract Amendments

i. Kate Silver-Heilman: (Motion/Discussion/Action)

Kate is currently at 1.0FTE but would like to reduce her FTE for the remainder of the year. It was recommended to keep her at 1.0FTE until the end of October then move to .8FTE for November and December and then move down to .6FTE from January until 3 pay.

Motion to amend Kate Silver-Heilman’s Contract for 2020-21.

Motion: Darren Strauch
Second: Theresa Keel -Passed Unanimously
ii. Hannah Miller: (Motion/Discussion/Action)
Currently at .2FTE and is requesting to be paid for the extra time she has been working. Recommended as she has an increasing caseload at Cottonwood and Gallatin-Gateway which would put her at a .23FTE from November through the June triple pay.

Motion to amend Hannah Miller’s Contract for 2020-21.

Motion: Casey Klasna
Second: Brian Smith -Passed Unanimously

6. Board Meeting Schedule & Future Agenda Items
   November 19th  Tentatively scheduled in person at the Gallatin Community Center
   *December 17th  Tentative
   January 21st
   February 18th
   *March 25th  Tentative
   April 15th
   May 20th
   June 17th

7. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn meeting at 2:25pm.

Motion: Darren Strauch
Second: Theresa Keel -Passed Unanimously.

Submitted by: _________________________________ Date: _______________________

Board Chair: _________________________________ Date: _______________________