

CREC
Council Meeting
03/15/2023
11:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
In-Person and ZOOM Meeting (Link in Calendar Invite)

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Bobbie Hughes-Granato
Dilip Desai
Tyron Harris
John Vecchitto
Kim Oliver
Leonard Lockhart
Meg Scata
Miriam Underwood
Rhea Klein
Deborah Rodriguez

CREC ATTENDEES

Greg Florio
Sandy Cruz-Serrano
Tim Sullivan
Carlos Figueroa
Heather Tartaglia
Jeff Ivory
Mason Thrall
Amy Karwan
Aura Alvarado
Deb Borrero

I. CALL TO ORDER and APPROVAL of MINUTES

2/15/2023 Council Meeting @ 11:31 am

A. 2/15/23 Council Meeting

MOTION: A Motion to approve the February 15, 2023 minutes was made by Meg Scata and seconded by Bobbie Hughes-Granato and passed unanimously.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

III. PRESENTATIONS to COUNCIL

Dr. Greg Florio shared the CREC Budget 101 presentation, and explained how the CREC budget is developed. The presentation included a simple list of all programs. He highlighted that the early childhood programs are growing and includes Head Start. Budgets are based on a simple formula where we estimate what we think we will receive in terms of fees, tuition, and grants, and other sources of revenue to support that program. We then build a budget based on those revenues. The rule of thumb is that you cannot spend more than what you bring in. He then went over the different line items in the budget.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Meg Scata reported on behalf of the policy committee. A list of policies that were reviewed by the committee will be presented for a first reading approval. The only new policy is the remote learning policy, which resulted from legislation in the last legislative session based on a study done through the Department of Education and districts. They determined that we should have some form of remote learning. The rest are either changes to legislative resources, or to language that has been upgraded or deleted. The policy committee will continue to review more policies. The Council does not have to approve regulations because that is how the policy is implemented.

Meg also attended the Finance and Audit committee meeting and complemented Jeff Ivory on the great job of going through the programs and explaining the budget.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. 2023-2024 Continued Programs

1. Connecticut SDE Addendum Agreement for Child Nutrition (Attachment A)
2. Strive (Attachment B)
4. Regional Fingerprinting Service (Attachment C)
6. CREC Wide Area Network (Attachment D)
7. Internal Sheff Development (Attachment E)
8. Audit Required Budget Authorizations (Attachment F)
9. Head Start/Early Head Start Program (Attachment G)

MOTION - A motion was made by Leonard Lockhart seconded by John Vecchitto and passed unanimously to approve Attachments A-G.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Florio reported that CREC has contracted our audit firm, CLA, to do a review of the business services operations. This has been done in other areas, and since CREC has grown tremendously going from 1,000 employees to 2,500 employees, we needed to take a hard look at some of the operations that we have in place to see if there is a way that we can be more effective, provide better support to our programs, and provide better services. Sandy and Jeff will review the report that CLA submits and we will be looking at probably making some significant changes in that department to better support the agency.

The annual meeting of the CREC Council will be held in-person on May 17, 2023 and Dr. Florio encouraged everyone to attend and receive a token of our appreciation. We are hoping to get a good turnout for the annual meeting.

Bobbie Hughes-Granato asked if one of the council meetings could be held at a magnet school. The recommendation will be considered.

VII. COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT

None.

VIII. DELIBERATED ACTION

Policy (Attachment H)

A. The following policies/regulations were approved by the Policy Committee on 2/15/2023 as a *first* reading (Items 1-7):

B. The following policies are presented by the Policy Committee for a *second* reading (Items 1-12):

MOTION - A motion was made by Leonard Lockhart and seconded by Miriam Underwood and passed unanimously to approve Attachment H.

DISCUSSION: John Vecchitto asked for clarification about Grad Requirements Policy 6146, and how it works through the system, the mastery based examination that is worth one credit and goes toward the 25 credits. Tim Sullivan explained that it is the capstone project where the students do their independent project to get the credit.

IX. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Deb Borrero gave the legislative update. She thanked everyone who attended the legislative forum last month. We are nearing the end of the public hearing process, and the Appropriations Committee is meeting with their subcommittees to determine final budget recommendations. Our focus is really on advocating for the funding for House Bill 5003, which is the major magnet-funding bill to be included in the Appropriations budget. Deb encouraged council members to collaboratively write letters of support for the bill to their local legislators, especially those who are on the Appropriations subcommittee. Once the appropriations budget comes out, which will be at the end of April, we will then focus our lobbying efforts on asking the Governor to support the appropriations budget. Deb will send sample letters to the council and they should reach out to her if help is needed.

X. REPORTS

A. 2023 – 2024 Financial Report (Attachment I)

As of our last council meeting the 2022-23 total approved budgets was \$396.8 million dollars of which \$2.9 million was for school construction projects. Leaving a balance of \$391.9 million in the budget. As of today's council approval of the consent agenda, the new total is the same because what was approved today is for the budget of 2023-24. Currently, we are waiting for SDE to pay for RSCO transportation monies they owe us for a total of \$7.5 million dollars plus an additional \$25 million that will pay for the bill through June, and another \$2.1 million for pre-k student's tuition. Tim explained the pre-k tuition, which has about 1,000 students.

B. 2023 – 2024 Leadership Budget (Attachment J)

The leadership budget will be adopted in May. Feel free to reach out to Greg, Jeff or Sandy if you have questions. This budget represents the administrative and operation cost of the 2023-2024 budget for leadership that is \$9.1 million dollars for an increase of about \$590,000 from the current year or 6.9%. It covers the executive director's office, finance and operations, grants, communications and human resources. It all represents 2.3% of the total agency budget of close to \$400 million dollars with approximately 2,600 employees.

XI. COUNCIL COMMENTS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Motion made by John Vecchitto seconded by Leonard Lockhart and passed unanimously to adjourn the council meeting at 12:00 pm.

REMINDER – CREC's ANNUAL MEETING IS MAY 17, 2023