

MINUTES
RHODE ISLAND HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
AUGUST 17, 2007

The 277th meeting of the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority was held on Friday, August 17, 2007 in the McKenna Conference Room of the Authority, 560 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island. Chairman McKenna called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

The following members were in attendance:

Dr. Robert J. McKenna, Chairman
Dr. Anthony J. Santoro, Vice Chairman
Dr. William Croasdale, Treasurer
Mr. John Howell, Secretary
Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier
The Honorable Frank T. Caprio, General Treasurer

Members Absent:

Mr. J. Michael Costello
Ms. Patricia Doyle
Mr. Solomon A. Solomon

Also Attending:

Mr. William H. Hurry, Jr., Executive Director, RIHEAA
Ms. Gail Mance-Rios, Deputy Director, RIHEAA
Mr. Marc Lacroix, Chief Financial Officer, RIHEAA
Mr. Joseph R. Palumbo, Esq., Legal Counsel, RIHEAA
Ms. Nancy Ann Dooley
Ms. Mary Ann Welch
Ms. Marisol Garcia
Mr. Greg Silva
Ms. Sue Zube
Ms. Paula Dominguez, House Education Policy Advisor
Ms. Meredith Holderbaum, Senate Fiscal Office
Mr. David Souto, NESLA
Mr. Chad Pastorius, NESLA

1) Approval of minutes.

On motion duly made by Dr. Croasdale and seconded by Dr. Santoro it was

VOTED: That the minutes of the June 1, 2007 Board of Directors meeting be approved and placed on file.

Voting in favor: Chairman McKenna, Dr. Croasdale, Dr. Santoro, Dr. Dann-Messier, and Mr. Howell. Voting against: None.

On motion duly made by Dr. Dann-Messier and seconded by Dr. Santoro it was

VOTED: That the minutes of the June 29, 2007 Special Meeting of the Board of Directors be approved and placed on file.

Voting in favor: Chairman McKenna, Dr. Croasdale, Dr. Santoro, Dr. Dann-Messier, and Mr. Howell. Voting against: None.

2) Chairman's Report: Chairman McKenna expressed appreciation to the Governor and the General Assembly for being appropriately aware of the essentiality of the authority's function.

The Chairman welcomed Dr. Santoro back after a brief absence due to surgery.

3) Executive Directors Report:

Mr. Hurry took this opportunity to also welcome back Dr. Santoro.

He reported that Mr. Solomon is in the hospital due to a leg injury.

a. Mr. Hurry reported that the Authority received the 2009 budget instructions and it is required that the budget request be prepared, again, with a 10% reduction. At the September meeting the Board will be asked to approve the Authority's budget request for the coming year.

With respect to the 2008 budget the Authority has taken the funds received from the legislature, as per the Board's

instructions, and made more awards to more students with fewer students on the waiting list than at this time last year.

Regarding the Federal budget issues both the House and Senate have passed versions of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act and the Budget Reconciliation Act.

Mr. Hurry reported that the Guarantor Caucus, which he is chairing, was able to have included in the House Bill the proposed financing model that the Caucus developed. A meeting of the thirty-six guarantors is scheduled for the end of October.

b. Mr. Hurry thanked Ms. Mance-Rios and staff for putting together a formal orientation for new Board members which took place a few weeks ago. The orientation went well. However, the issues of ethics, conflicts of interest and disclosure were not discussed due to timing. Therefore, Mr. Palumbo has put together materials for this meeting. Copies were distributed.

It is noted for the record that General Treasurer Caprio arrived at 9:35 a.m.

Mr. Palumbo commented that during the thirty years that he has served as legal counsel for the Authority, it has been a pleasure. Over the years, the members of the Board and all persons who have served on the Board, there has never been a scandal or a question involving the Authority. This being said Mr. Palumbo reviewed highlights of the State Code of Ethics (GLRI § 36-14-1, et seq.), the Separation of Powers, the State Ban on Gifts, and the State Open Meetings Law that Board members need to abide by.

Dr. Dann-Messier thanked Mr. Hurry and the staff for the Board development. She expressed her appreciation for the time and effort that was put forth to provide a very worthwhile orientation.

c. Ms. Mance-Rios reported that last week the Rhode Island School Counselors Association held their summer institute. It is a week long series of meetings and sessions in which school counselors attend professional development meetings. A trainer from Bridges and XAP provided three different sessions for the counselors. The counselors are very interested in the web portal.

Ms. Mance-Rios took this opportunity to thank Mr. Greg Silva and Ms. Marisol Garcia for their assistance.

She reported that the search committee is interviewing for a Program Planner. There is a good pool of candidates. Because it will be a difficult decision, and at the suggestion of Dr. Croasdale, Ms. Mance-Rios asked that members of the Board participate in the second round of interviews. The committee will be bringing back four or five strong candidates. Mr. Howell volunteered and the General Treasurer stated that Peter (?) from his office would be interested.

Ms. Mance-Rios also mentioned that the information (welcome letters and introductory packets) will be sent out to the schools. Meetings are also scheduled with RIDE elementary and secondary school people. She attended a meeting of the Data Quality Campaign hosted by the Office of Higher Education. They would like to be able to use the portal to help track the students through the process.

Mr. Hurry noted that the Authority has been a sponsor of Jump Start which is a financial literacy group. A commission was created by the legislature to study the status of financial literacy in Rhode Island schools. There is an opportunity for the Authority to sponsor this research. It is a \$15,000 to \$20,000 project. The General Treasurer mentioned that he has been active with Jump Start since it's inception in Rhode Island and he would support sponsorship.

After further discussion on motion duly made by Dr. Croasdale and seconded by Dr. Dann-Messier, it was

VOTED: To authorize the Authority to support the Jump Start Financial Literacy research project to the extent of \$20,000.

Voting in favor: Chairman McKenna, Dr. Santoro, Dr. Croasdale, Dr. Dann-Messier, General Treasurer Caprio, and Mr. Howell. Voting against: none.

e. Mr. Hurry reported that the Authority's 2007-08 Affirmative Action Plan was approved and copies will be made available upon request.

f. Regarding the RIHEAA 30th anniversary event, Ms. Garcia expressed appreciation to Mr. Howell, Ms. Doyle and

Mr. Khamsyvoravong for their assistance in putting together the proposal.

She explained that the event will bring together state officials in education, community leaders, and guidance counselors to address the theme: Together We Can Deliver College Access to All Rhode Island Students. Key-Note speakers will be brought in. There will also be a celebration awards ceremony to recognize an individual and/or organization that has shown exceptional leadership on behalf of higher education and the advancement of educational opportunity. It was suggested that the award be named in honor of Senator Pell. The proposed budget is \$25,000.

9.a Action Item: On motion duly made by Dr. Santoro and seconded by Dr. Croasdale, it was

VOTED: To accept the report, adopt the budget of \$25,000 and to authorize the committee to fine tune the 30th Anniversary celebration.

General Treasurer Caprio stated that this is a positive way to celebrate the occasion.

Voting in favor: Chairman McKenna, Dr. Santoro, Dr. Croasdale, Dr. Dann-Messier, General Treasurer Caprio, and Mr. Howell. Voting against: none.

4) Mr. Hurry noted that the audit is nearly completed and there will need to be a meeting of the finance committee.

b. Mr. Lacroix reported that we are in receipt of a draft of the Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual from O'Connor & Drew. After an internal review of the draft copies will be provided to the audit committee.

Mr. Lacroix noted that at the next Board meeting, the report for Budget versus Actual for the full year will be reviewed, the audited financial statements and the FY 08 Revised and FY 09 initial budget submittals will require Board approval. The deadline for all submissions is September 30.

10) There were no communications.

11) The next meeting is scheduled for September 21.

There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion duly made by Dr. Croasdale and seconded by Mr. Howell, it was

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Voting in favor: Chairman McKenna, Dr. Croasdale, Dr. Santoro, Dr. Dann-Messier, Mr. Howell, and General Treasurer Caprio Voting against: none.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Mr. John Howell
Secretary