

Southern Region Council Meeting

October 8, 2020

Minutes

Members Present: Jen Simon, Suzanne Schedin, Lisa Stone, Michelle Martel, Amy Hanson, James Slobig, Karin Pillion, Carolyn Leite, Cathay Snyder, Lyn Bowler, Brenda Hobbs, Bea Martin, Lorri Hayes, Susan Harden

Chair Lisa Stone called the meeting to order at 5:10pm.

She called for Brian Hawkins, our guest speaker to begin. He explained his role in NEA-NH and what the Government Relations Committee does that he heads.

His focus tonight is on the state level where this year's legislature passed the largest increase in funding for education in years. They also created a funding commission to look at education funding models. That report is due on December 1st. The goal is to fix how we fund education and the levels of education. The governor will have to act to recommend the results of the report in the next state budget.

The governor and executive council will select a new state Dept. of Education Commissioner in the next term. We NEED a supportive governor and executive council to remove F. Edelblut from his position.

Rule changes are being implemented right now at the DOE. There is still a push for public money to be hijacked to private and charter schools.

Lorri chimed in that Republican operatives are going door to door in NH pushing their R agenda funded by the Trump campaign and Repub. Governor's Association. They are trying to retain NH as a "red" state.

Lisa added that there is no staff being paid at the DOE so who is rewriting policies? A nurses coordinator has been funded but not staffed. The governor ordered an executive emergency to allow remote learning to continue if districts choose to do so. Rule changes need to be made for distance learning which do not need to be permanent.

Again, Edelblut is up for renomination in the spring. If we don't change the governor, then the executive council is extremely important. Deb Pignatelli is running for executive council in southern region areas of Litchfield, Merrimack, Brookline/Hollis and Milford. Mindy Messner is the recommended candidate for the Pelham, Salem area, and in District 4 it would be Mark Mackenzie for Bedford. These positions are key to control court appointments as well.

In the state senate, the next legislative session will draw new maps for the next 10 years for redistricting or appoint a redistricting commission.

A voting guide will be coming out in The Educator any day now. There will be a printed version and an online version which is already posted. On the NEA Election Website there is a new tool. Type in your address and it will list all the recommended candidates from NEA-NH. There is also information on absentee ballots. They are easy and safe if you are concerned about health issues around the COVID virus.

We are still looking for volunteers. Emails will be going out to look for recruits. There are opportunities for remote or in-person volunteering such as Lit Drops or texting our members.

Apple Corp is our PAC (political action committee). No dues money can go to the PAC. Members can contribute online. One fundraiser going on now is the virtual 5K run/walk. There is a flyer online at NEANH.org. All money raised goes to candidates who support public schools.

Lisa summed up thanking Brian for his presentation, adding that the resources are great and members will like the election website.

Contact for Brian is: bHawkins@NHNEA.org
603-545-7305 (cell)

We may do member to member phone banks closer to the elections for state candidates, so be on the lookout for that.

Next speakers scheduled will be:

Megan Tuttle - NEA-NH President in November

Eric Owen Russell -Life/Wellness Coach in December

Continuing with the meeting, The September minutes were presented. A motion to pass was made by the secretary, seconded by Amy. Motion passed.

The treasurer, Karin Pillion presented our account as \$4,080.43. The only activity was .03 in interest gained for a final balance of \$4,080.46. Motion was made to accept by Karin, Jen Simon seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The executive committee agreed to enter into a contract with Eric Owen Russell for the December meeting. We can have up to 500 people on a Zoom meet. We need to promote his presentation to Southern Region members.

The Executive Board Meeting has not been held yet but will be coming up next week. No new news to report.

Uni-Serve Director's Report: Lorri announced a new hire for the South Central Uni-serve Director position - Ignacio Sanchez from New Mexico. He has roots in NH and has Mexican and Native American heritage that goes back generations. We are excited to welcome him and his family to NH.

Under the FFCRA, school nurses are not considered essential workers. Travel outside New England under the HHS requires a 14 quarantine when you return. A proposal from the NH Uni-Serve Association is for all NH schools to go remote between Thanksgiving and MLK day in anticipation of people traveling for the holidays.

Manchester and Nashua are now RED cities as COVID numbers are on the rise. There is a School/COVID Dashboard online from the DHHS

Some questions for us to consider: Are we creating a climate for parents (and teachers?) to not tell the truth regarding travel, temp checks, COVID tests, etc? What about people hosting out of NE travelers? Do they have to quarantine? Shouldn't siblings have to quarantine if their family members are quarantining?

Wrap-up: The Presidents' Meeting and then the Southern Council went well. There was good attendance at both. There was a mix-up with the links working though.

The \$10 dinner gift card was won by Jen Simon. Amy Hanson will use an online source to randomly pick the recipient at the next meeting.

Looking ahead January will possibly be Dr. Bettina Love on Racial Justice. We may need to move her to April though. February will be a para/teacher relationship presentation. March will be a 2 1/2 hour Suicide Prevention program which is now mandated for all education employees to have. May will be a membership presentation by Carolyn possibly using breakout rooms.

Motion to adjourn was made by Carolyn, seconded by Amy. Motion passed.
Goodnight everyone!

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Harden
Southern Region Council Secretary