

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
THE PROMISE ZONE AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

OFFICIAL

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
BOARD CHAMBERS/1331 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR STREET SE

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

Meeting called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Chair Tom DeJonge.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Bliss, Mr. Huizenga, Ms. Johnson, Mr. McComb, Dr. Roby, Ms. Sieger, and
Chair Tom DeJonge – 7.

Excused: Mr. Cuevas, Mr. Faber, Representative Grant, Ms. Weatherall Neal – 4.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Mr. DeJonge asked for approval of the agenda.

Motion by Ms. Sieger supported by Mr. McComb to approve the agenda as written.

Voice Vote: Carried.

Nays: 0.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approval of Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – June 8, 2023

There were no concerns expressed by the board of directors concerning minutes submitted.

Motion by Ms. Sieger, Supported by Mayor Bliss, to approve the June 8, 2023, board meeting minutes.

Voice Vote: Carried.

Nays: 0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Grand Rapids Community College Updates

GRCC Enrollment and Activities Update

Ms. Ashlee Mishler introduced Dr. Sheila Jones GRCC's new interim provost who will be working with the Promise Zone. Dr. Jones has been with the college since 2016 and previously served as an associate provost.

Ms. Mishler shared an update on fall 2023 enrollment. There are over 680 students enrolled with 283 returning and 366 new to the program. She shared her excitement for the enrollment increase over previous years. This year there are just over 29 percent of eligible Promise Zone students taking advantage of this opportunity. This is up by 25 percent from the class of 2022 fall enrollment count. She attributes this to the work of the success coordinators building relationships and walking students through the process. They have also reached out to students who are not accessing their Promise Zone scholarship and helping them with post-secondary needs.

Ms. Mishler highlighted the varied activities that took place over the summer to support the students. Student feedback influenced some of the events. Highlights included FAFSA workshops, a tutoring tour at GRCC, a career exploration workshop for all Promise Zone students including those not enrolled. Office hours were held during the summer to provide access to students to meet with success coordinators. They held prep meeting where 60 incoming Promise Zone students were given presentations around student success, a campus tour, and assistance at the bookstore. Additionally, the Promise Zone staff have participated in community events over the summer.

Chair DeJonge inquired about data concerning other Promise Zone enrollment numbers.

The Promise Zone staff have begun connecting with the class of 2024 and working with middle schools as well and ramping up by attending various events as school is back in session. The kickoff for the mentoring program will be taking place on Friday. They have 17 interested in the

program with several mentors supporting this. Ms. Mishler invited the board of directors to serve in the capacity if they would like.

Promise Zone Annual Report

Ms. Mishler provided data in this report reflects fall 2022 and winter 2023 student data. Effective this report and moving forward the data will include the previous summer semester. The summer 2022 semester was in the last report. This is due to the economic year and timing of when grades are posted. It was nearly impossible to put this in the report, so this is the reason for the change. Promise Zone had 31 graduates in total and 2 completed a job training program. There are 1- more that are expected to graduate over the summer with anticipation of 41 in total.

Ms. Mishler highlighted there were 581 students enrolled between fall and winter which is more than the projection of the development plan. Of the class of 2022 graduates, 27 percent enrolled at GRCC between the fall and winter semesters. Of them there were 12 students with FAFSA waivers and 9 with residency waivers. There were 15 enrolled in a job training programming with 13 graduating and 1 on track to graduate.

Of the enrollments, 77.82 percent of the enrolled fall semester students remained enrolled in the winter semester. This is a significant jump in retention. They are hoping to see gains looking forward as the success coordinators are doing reach outs, early check ins, and connecting with students and trying to do pertinent programming earlier, offering supports, and providing resources.

There was also a slight increase in the fall and winter cumulative grade point averages in 2022 with .24 and during fall .01 in the winter semester.

Promise Zone Position Updates

Ms. Mishler reported there are currently two vacant Success Coordinator positions. Interviews are underway.

Residency Clarification

Ms. Ashlee Mishler provided the requirement to be an eligible student for the Grand Rapids Promise Zone is to attend and graduate from an eligible school and reside in the Grand Rapids Public Schools service area. Unfortunately, there have been few instances where a student resides in Grand Rapids and attends an eligible school but on a technicality the address is not a GRPS service area. There are a few pockets in the city – Knapp’s corner, northwest side, and bordering Kentwood on the southeast side. This affects not only GRPS students but also other eligible Promise Zone schools.

In order to change GRPS service area to encompass city of Grand Rapids, this would need to be an update in the Development Plan. The tax capture is not city of Grand Rapids but GRPS service area. Ms. Mishler is requesting what the will of the board is in terms of making a change or leaving as is.

Board members discussed they would like to see all student receive this scholarship but understand that there may be a precedent matter and was requested perhaps a legal opinion be sought. Ms. Mishler had reached out to the Treasury and was advised the board could do this if they desire.

At this time, this is a topic of discussion. Chair DeJonge requested the board act at the December GR Promise Zone meeting if they would like to change the development plan to indicate city of Grand Rapids versus GRPS service area. The tax capture would remain the same – Mr. Huizenga requests a letter from the Treasury.

GRCC Communication

Ms. Amy Soper, associate communications director at GRCC joined Ms. Ashlee Mishler at the presentation table. She provided their effort is to reach all students and parents in the Promise Zone. They are using several mediums to reach families and what makes the most sense to promote and get the message out about the Promise Zone. They are also doing targeted digital advertising, billboards, social media, and website. Ms. Soper was asked about language barriers and will look into this outreach as well.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Disbursements

Ms. Rhonda Kribs, chief financial officer at Grand Rapids Public Schools presented the data concerning disbursements for June – August 2023.

Disbursements were presented as follows:

Paid Expenses 6/1/2023 through 8/31/2023

Grand Rapids Community College Tuition/Fees	\$ 110,275.71
Barnes & Noble -- GRCC Bookstore	18,276.54
Reagan Marketing	6,593.75
PNC Bank Fees	367.66
Grand Rapids Public Schools	4,200.00
Gallagher Risk Management	1,011.00
Grand Rapids Community College/Success Coordinators/Peer Mentor/Other	402,818.13
Total	\$ <u>543,542.79</u>

Motion by Mayor Bliss, Supported by Ms. Johnson, to approve the GRPS Accounting MOU.

Voice Vote: Carried.

Nays: 0.

Ms. Kribs added that she is working with Plante Moran on the Promise Zone's annual budget audit and expects to bring this forward at the December meeting.

Marketing Memo of Understanding

The Grand Rapids Community College Marketing Memo of Understanding was presented within the packet. This is a for a one-year term.

Motion by Mayor Bliss, Supported by Ms. Sieger, to approve the Marketing Memo of Understanding.

Voice Vote: Carried.

Nays: 0.

Increase of Credit Hour Limit

Ms. Mishler provided this is a recommendation for the board to consider expanding the 60-credit limit to 72 credit hours to accommodate certain programming and/or supports that students may need to support their associate degree. Protections are in place to draw on any eligible federal and Pell grant assistance first before using Promise Zone funds. There are other Promise Zones that exceed the 60 credits and two with the 72 credits threshold.

Motion by Mayor Bliss, Supported by Dr. Roby, to approve the Increase of Credit Hour Limit.

Voice Vote: Carried.

Nays: 0.

Board Officer Elections

Chair DeJonge provided he was appointed Chair at the June 2023 board of directors meeting and this is outstanding official business to appoint remaining officer positions.

The following Officer positions were affirmed:

Vice Chair

Motion by Dr. Roby, Supported by Ms. Sieger to appoint Representative Kristian Grant to Vice Chair Voice Vote: Carried.

Voice Vote: Carried.

Nays: 0.

Secretary

Motion by Ms. Bliss, Supported by Mr. McComb to appoint Mr. J.C. Huizenga to Secretary.

Voice Vote: Carried.

Nays: 0.

Treasurer

Motion by Ms. Johnson, Supported by Dr. Roby to appoint Mayor Bliss to Treasurer.

Voice Vote: Carried.

Nays: 0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Johnson expressed her appreciation in seeing the increases reported and extra dollars dedicated to marketing to continue this trajectory.

Mr. McComb thanked everyone for their work.

Mr. Huizenga shares the same sentiments.

Dr. Roby excited for this school year and growing more opportunities for young people.

Ms. Sieger thanked the staff for all their work.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Mr. DeJonge adjourned the meeting at 3:23 p.m.

Secretary

Respectfully submitted by
Ms. Julie Anderson
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
of Grand Rapids Public Schools