



ARROWHEAD ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AGENCY

702 3RD AVENUE SOUTH

VIRGINIA, MINNESOTA 55792-2797

ARROWHEAD HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL MINUTES

April 9, 2025

PRESENT:

Alecia Varani	EHS East Range-Quad 1
Ashley Minkkinen	Proctor
Juhi Perkin	EHS Lake & Hermantown
Rob Hietala	AEOA Board Representative
Sara Flack	Chisholm
Shay Marcelus	Virginia II
Staisee Riggins	Quad II & PSHB
Tayea Wheeler	Hibbing I
Carla Current	EHS Home Base/Program Manager
Ileigh Gorham	Mental Health & Disabilities Manager
Jerry Crittenden	Community Relations Manager
Connie Derickson	Program Manager
Kristine Norberg	Health Manager
Meghan Winsor	Mental Health & Disabilities Manager
Nicole Larsen	Family Support Specialist
Chris DeGroot	Head Start Assistant Director
Gabe Johnson	Head Start Director
Tracy Sandnas	Head Start Finance Supervisor

SITES NOT REPRESENTED OR EXCUSED:

Babbitt-Open
Eveleth-Gilbert-Absent
CHIC EHS & Northern Tier-Absent
EHS Hibbing & Northern Tier-Absent
Ely-Excused
Hermantown-Absent
Hibbing I-Absent
Hibbing II-Excused
Hibbing III-Excused
Hibbing IV-Open
EHS Hibbing & Northern Tier-Absent
EHS Lake & Hermantown-Excused
Mt Iron Buhl-Absent
EHS West Range-Absent
Quad II-PSHB/PC Rep to the AEOA Board-Absent

Two Harbors-Absent
Virginia I-Excused
Virginia III-Excused
West Range-Excused

The Policy Council meeting was held on April 9, 2025, at AEOA in the Basement Conference room and via Zoom.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Alecia Varani, Secretary, called the Arrowhead Head Start Policy Council Meeting to order at 9:43 a.m. on Wednesday, April 9, 2025.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Roll call was taken showing 8 members present. A quorum was established.
- III. **CORRECTION/APPROVAL OF February 12,2025 POLICY COUNCIL MINUTES: Rob Hietala moved to accept February 12, 2025, minutes, supported by Sara Flack. Motion carried unanimously.**
- IV. **CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:** None.
- V. **CORRESPONDENCE:** We received our Notice of Award for our federal grant. We have received .50 of our funding.
- VI. **REPORTS:**
 - A. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** It is with a heavy heart and great sadness to share we have lost our Program Manager Mike Hager. He passed unexpectedly on the morning of 4/7/25. He will be greatly missed.

Gabe reported that our Head Start Program Specialist in Chicago has been working with our program to review and edit both our grant renewal and Change of Scope Request. The current federal grant year ends March 31st.

On April 1st, the Region V Head Start office was closed. Half of the regional offices around the country were closed. Currently we have not been reassigned to another office. This affects program reporting, program support, fiscal support, training, and grant approvals.

The Minnesota Head Start Association continues to meet with program directors to work on federal changes.

Our state grant application will be out soon.

Our Head Start program received notice that we will be awarded a MN Multipurpose Community Facility Projects Grant. We are waiting to hear about additional information to finalize the grant.

We had our Focus Area 1 review the week of March 10th. We will get the results within 30 days. **Sara Flack moved to accept the Director’s Report, supported by Rob Hietala. Motion carried unanimously.**

B. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Tracy Sandnas presented the financial statements.

FY 2024 FEDERAL HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$3,145,880.00 for the period from April 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$688,720.19; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$3,040,864.33; YTD Encumbrance is \$0.00, and the Balance is \$105,015.67 Spending on this grant is on target with our planned expenditures and projections.

FY 2024 FEDERAL EARLY HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$1,370,066.00 for the period from April 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$236,520.23; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$1,373,731.46; YTD Encumbrance is \$0.00, and the Balance is (\$3,665.46). Spending on this grant is on target with our planned expenditures and projections.

FY 2024 MN HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$787,180.00 for the period from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$144,755.27; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$566,344.59; YTD Encumbrance is \$0.00, and the Balance is \$220,835.41. Spending on this grant is on target with our planned expenditures and projections.

The January & February credit card report was presented. **Shay Marcelus moved to accept the Financial Reports, supported by Ashley Minkkinen. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT: Jerry Crittenden reported on the enrollment report. We were at 96% and we will be full for April. Slot letters are being mailed to families letting them know they have a spot for this fall. We are recruiting for fall. Some sites are doing better than others. Jerry will be presenting the recruitment report. The Parent conference was in April at Cragun’s resort in Brainerd. Parents could pick from many topics. Chris DeGroote and Connie Derickson attended the Head Start Heroes for parent achievement awards. Tina

Smith gave a virtual presentation. **Staisee Riggins moved to accept Community Relations report, supported by Sara Flack. Motion carried unanimously.**

- D. **AEOA BOARD MEETING February 19, 2025:** Gabe reported that AEOA departments have been experiencing changes and challenges due to our new government. The Housing department has lost 40% of its funding and has laid off staff to accommodate. The selection process for a new AEOA Executive Director has started. **Staisee Riggins moved to accept AEOA Board report, supported by Sara Flack. Motion carried unanimously.**

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **FAMILY OUTCOMES REPORTS:** Jerry Crittenden shared Kelly Garrity’s report with Policy Council members. Each comparison period has had a positive increase from the previous period.
- B. **FEDERAL MONITORING REVIEW 3/10-3/13/25:** Gabe reported that we provided all the information that was requested. It takes 30 days to get the results of our review.
- C. **DEED AND MN MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY FACILITY PROJECTS GRANT:** Gabe reported that we got a little over ½ million dollars to get the construction completed on the new infant and toddler center. We are still waiting for the approval of the change of scope to continue with our project.
- D. **CHANGE OF SCOPE APPLICATION:** Gabe shared that we are still waiting for approval.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **NEW HIRES:** None.
- B. **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:** Please visit aeoa.org to read the full policies.

Policy	First	Second	Motion Passed
Program Standards of Conduct	Sara Flack	Ashley Minkkinen	Approved

- C. **FY 2025/2026 STATE GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION:** Our state grant application is due May 2, 2025. Our grant covers a 2-year period. **Sara Flack moved to accept submitting the 2025/2026 State Grant Application, supported by Staisee Riggins. Motion carried unanimously.**

- D. **TRANSPORTATION WAIVERS 2025/2026:** Gabe reported that we must submit for a transportation waiver for Ely, Babbitt and Two Harbors. We need approval to not provide transportation at these sites. **Sara Flack moved to accept submitting the 2025/2026 Transportation Waiver, supported by Staisee Riggins. Motion carried unanimously.**

- E. **COST OF LIVING INCREASE:** The agency approved a 2.5% COLA this year. Head Start is operating on flat funding for 2025-2026. We did not get additional funding to cover it.

- F. **PROGRAM BUDGET REDUCTIONS:** Our 2025-2026 State funding will get an 11% decrease in funding. We did not receive any Pathway 1 Scholarships this year due to uncertainties in the state with covering renewal applications.

- G. **POLICY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE (NEXT MTG WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2025).**

- IX. **PARENT & COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:** The Hibbing and Chisholm family event has been cancelled due to the loss of our Program Manager Mike Hager.

- X. **MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION:** None.

- XI. **ADJOURNMENT: Rob Hietala moved to adjourn the meeting, supported by Sara Flack. Motion carried unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Sandnas, Finance Supervisor Arrowhead Head Start

Gabe Johnson, Director Arrowhead Head Start