

KEEC Winter Board Meeting: January 26, 2011

Meeting Location: Berry Hill Mansion in Frankfort, KY

Meeting Time: 11:00am EST

Members in Attendance: Elizabeth Schmitz, Merin Roseman, Shannon Graves, Horace Brown, Evelyn Morgan, Karen Reagor, Greg Higdon, Marc Norton, Amelia Stenger (conference call), Cheryl Messenger (conference call).

Absent Members: Tom Fitzgerald

Meeting Introduction

The meeting was called to order by E. Schmitz (chair and vice chair elections had not yet been made due to lack of a quorum). Board members were asked to review their contact information on file with the agency and to make changes as needed. Members were also asked to fill out expense vouchers to reimburse them for travel mileage. Newly elected board members include S. Graves, K. Reagor, and A. Stenger.

Staff Changes

E. Schmitz discussed staff changes and future plans for financially sustainable staffing for the agency. Michelle Nevel's last working day at KEEC was 1/25/2011 and her last employment day was 1/31/2011. KEEC can currently fund two full time staff positions. The agency has the ability to hire three, but because the agency cannot fund 3 full time staff positions, E. Schmitz plans on spending the next three months assessing whether herself and M. Roseman can take on the extra administrative burden created by M. Nevels leaving the agency. Depending on how well this arrangement works for the next three months, E. Schmitz suggested that M. Roseman be compensated for the extra workload she would be responsible for. While M. Roseman would be compensated for the extra workload, this would still be more financially efficient and sustainable than hiring a third staff person. Currently, an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant awarded through the Kentucky Department of Energy Development and Independence (DEDI) is covering 80% of M. Roseman's salary and fringe costs while the agency is picking up the other 20%. The grant period ends in April of 2012, at which point the agency would be responsible to covering 100% of M. Roseman's salary and fringe.

KEEC History and Funding Sources

Several legislative statements in regard to KEEC were included in each member's folder. These were presented as follows by E. Schmitz:

157.900 Statement of Legislative Purpose- Listed in Kentucky Acts Chapter 408

In 1990, professors at Kentucky state universities worked to have KEEC established in order to promote environmental education (EE) in the state. The statement was read for the members.

157.905 Definitions

The Kentucky statutes defining EE and environmental literacy were ready for all members.

157.910 Kentucky Environmental Education Council

This legislation states that KEEC is made up of a nine-member council. In paragraph 2, it states that the nine-member council will be composed of representatives from government, environmental interests, education, and industry. The appointment letter sent by Governor Beshear only divided people between industry, environment and education. However, Cheryl Messenger and Evelyn Morgan work for governmental entities and then therefore represent government.

This section also states that KEEC is legislatively mandated to hire an executive director, an environmental education specialist, and clerical staff to carry out agency functions and duties, but the agency is actually only funded to hire two full time staff positions at this time. E. Schmitz reiterated the current agency staffing changes and her intention to determine if herself and M. Roseman can take on the extra administrative burden and offer more job security to M. Roseman after the end of the stimulus funding grant.

157.915 Functions of Council

This statement outlines the responsibilities of KEEC, which include:

- Create and update a Master Plan every five years- This was last done in 2009. It is titled Land Legacy and Learning 2. A copy was included in member's binders and digital copies are available at www.keec.ky.gov.
- Establish an interagency subcommittee to advise the council on EE matters. This does not currently exist, but KEEC staff will look into restarting the subcommittee.
- To establish and help coordinate activities of regional EE centers- This task refers to the eight state universities that are members of the Kentucky University Partnerships for Environmental Education (KUPEE) and that house the eight Centers for Environmental Education. Some of the directors of the KUPEE universities helped establish NCATE accreditation for an EE program. Five of the KUPEE universities offer an EE educational degree endorsement.
- Establish competitive system for awarding grants to state university environmental education centers- This also refers to the KUPEE schools and Centers for EE. KEEC receives money from interest from the Pride fund (a fund created for the cleanup of abandoned landfills and dumps). This money is supposed to be awarded to the eight Centers for EE in order for the centers to further the objectives of the university section of the KEEC Master Plan. Funding has not been awarded to the university centers this year because the Pride fund interest has substantially decreased.
- To seek and receive private support for regional environmental education initiatives- The agency has not done this extensively in the past and has mostly relied on federal grant funding. KEEC staff will continue to work toward creating sponsorship opportunities for the agency's programs.
- To assist in the evaluation and integration of EE in existing school curricula- This statement was read but not discussed in detail.

- To monitor and report periodically on EE literacy in KY- This statement was read but not discussed in detail.
- Continuously assess EE trends on local state nation global basis- The last survey KEEC completed is included in the Land Legacy and Learning 2 document.
- To make recommendations and seek changes through regulations, legislation and other means to promote environmental literacy in Kentucky. KEEC is currently working with other state educational organizations and the Center for EE at Eastern Kentucky University on the Kentucky Environmental Literacy Plan (KELP) which is not legislative but policy related, in that it would attempt to ensure that all k-12 students were environmentally literate by the time they graduate high school. The plan also puts Kentucky in a position to apply for possibly grant funding opportunities.

224.10-250 Allocation of moneys collected as civil penalties.

This states the process by which KEEC receives funding from the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Board (KHLC). This item was discussed in detail along with ideas on how KEEC might procure more funding for agency work. H. Brown stated that the KHLC does not have bonding authority, so this is not a possibility to raise more funding. KEEC receives \$150,000 from the KHLC each year for agency operations and programs.

G. Higdon discussed the idea of opening this legislation in order to designate more money to KEEC, and that even though some may think it is risky to open legislation, the legislators already know that KEEC receives this funding, so he is not concerned that they would attempt to take it for other uses. G. Higdon asked if the HLCT could agree to give KEEC more funding without opening the legislation. H. Brown stated he has informally spoken to the KHLC board about this, but they seem to prefer using the money to purchase land for the board's conservation goals. G. Higdon stated that either H. Brown or KEEC could attempt to speak to Dr. Bill Martin (chair of the HLCT Board) about the possibility of increasing KEEC's funding because he had a hand in creating the agency and obviously supports its mission.

224.43-505 Kentucky pride fund- Distribution- Grants to eliminate illegal open dumps – Recycling and household hazardous waste grants program- Incentives and rewards- Implementation costs.

Money in the Kentucky Pride fund is collected from environmental remediation fees and distributed for various purposes. The interest (including unused debt services) on all money deposited in this fund (not to exceed 1 million dollars) is to be distributed to the KEEC for implementation of the University EE Center component of the EE Master Plan. At times, KEEC has received significant funding (hundreds of thousands of dollars) from this fund. Recently, this funding has decreased (roughly 40K this year). With eight EE centers, the funding was too limited to distribute. E. Schmitz referred to prior board minutes where the council discussed what to do with funding when funds were too low to distribute. In these minutes, the board agreed that the administrative burden to hand out grants from a \$40,000 pool of funding would be too great. KEEC told the KUPPEE Centers for EE they could apply for a joint project, but the Centers declined that offer. Since the council staff members were also engaged in many of the activities cited in the University EE Center portion of the Master Plan, the board agreed that KEEC could retain this money and that this was justified. M. Roseman and E. Morgan reiterated that the universities

often were not completing the tasks set out in this section of the Master Plan, and that before the MOA process was put into place, universities were doing projects that they chose and that were not necessarily within the scope of the Master Plan. Universities sometimes returned funding if it was not used as agreed in the MOA. E. Morgan stated that the MOAs were put in place as a formal agreement so that it would hold the universities accountable to their responsibilities. E. Schmitz has inquired with Clay Lamb, a legal expert in the Education Cabinet, to get her legal opinion on the ability of KEEC to retain this funding and on how the agency may use it other than for funding the universities, but she has not responded to date. E. Schmitz also stated that because the Pride fund is supposed to receive \$5 million every year, she is not sure why the interest is shrinking so much and we are receiving such a small portion. She stated she will look into this with staff at the Division of Waste Management to find out why the funds are decreasing so significantly. She will update us as she finds out. S. Graves suggested E. Schmitz speak to Tony Hatton (564-6716) about this situation.

Board Elections

Board elections were held mid-meeting due to late arrivals/no quorum at the beginning of the meeting. H. Brown and E. Morgan announced they would be willing to continue to serve as council chair and vice council chair, respectively. A vote was held and members unanimously reelected H. Brown as Council Chair and E. Morgan as Vice Chair.

KUPEE

K. Reagor requested an update of the current relationship between KEEC and KUPEE since none of the KUPEE centers are receiving funding from the council at this time. E. Schmitz stated that five of the eight universities are offering an EE endorsement, and that all eight are more or less active members of KUPEE meaning they meet quarterly to speak about opportunities for collaboration. E. Schmitz stated that Jan Eller (previous executive director of KEEC) that she felt that KEEC had helped establish the Centers and that now it was incumbent upon them to find their own funding. Unfortunately, the Center directors don't have much flexibility within the universities from their direct teaching/job duties for time to write grants that would support the Centers. KEEC does not receive reports from the Centers at this time, but E. Schmitz is invited to sit in on KUPEE's quarterly meetings. William Bennett is the chair of the group, and E. Schmitz is working with him on other projects. K. Reagor pointed out that there is no formal interaction with KEEC and KUPEE. E. Schmitz confirmed this by saying that because there is no funding given to the KUPEE centers, there are no active MOAs, and therefore no formal relationship.

G. Higdon pointed out that it is KEEC's fiduciary duty to work with the universities, but that the KUPEE universities were unwilling to work on the objectives of the University section of the Master Plan and some had backed out of MOA's by not completing the work. G. Higdon stated that he is not sure what the council is required to do with KUPEE statutorily. H. Brown suggested working with other universities in the state to expand the work of the University section of the Master Plan. Bellarmine and Berea were suggested as universities who might be interested in working with KEEC. E. Schmitz noted that M. Roseman had suggested dropping the "nonformal" part of the EE Certification KEEC holds each year making it more open to formal educators/teachers. E. Schmitz noted she has spoken to Terry Wilson

(Director of the Center for EE at Western Kentucky University) and that he indicated he has worked with a pre-service teacher who took the KEEC EE Certification course and that he was able to offer 3 hours of university credit for taking the course. S. Graves asked if there was a clear mission for the KUPEE universities/Centers for EE and if the steps in the University section of the Master Plan specified the objectives that the universities were to follow if they received funding from KEEC. E. Schmitz confirmed this and pointed out that the Master Plan is developed by a statewide group of stakeholders, including the universities.

A. Stenger asked if there were any private universities involved with KEEC. E. Schmitz responded that KUPEE only includes the eight state universities (designated by legislation), but that we could work with private universities on other projects. For example, Campbellsville University is working on creating and EE endorsement. E. Schmitz and M. Roseman pointed out that when awarding funding, the council is actually giving funding to the EE Centers, which were only set up at the eight state universities, and this is what is supposed to be funded the Pride fund interest. The legislation does not mention private universities in any way as entities that could receive this funding. G. Higdon pointed out that the state universities were chosen because they were best positioned (as public institutions) for the consistent dissemination of programs, content, and standards, but this has not worked in the past. E. Schmitz stated that it might be time to reach out to the private universities as partners for projects. E. Schmitz stated that KEEC is currently working with the center for EE at Eastern Kentucky University on the KELP, which will help ensure that all Kentucky students are environmentally literate by the time they graduate, and that the agency could also make EE Certification Course more open/accessible to teachers which would further the KEEC/Master Plan goals of providing EE teacher preparation. The discussion was tabled due to meeting time limitations.

Previous Meeting Board Minutes

E. Schmitz asked how much detail members would like to see in the meeting minutes. The members agreed to a medium level of detail. E. Schmitz also noted KEEC would look into software that would transcribe minutes from the meeting recording device. There were no amendments requested for the minutes. G. Higdon asked for an update on KEEC writing an article for the magazine The Goods. M. Roseman stated that this had not yet been done, but she would check on the publishing dates and request to run an article in the April edition. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Quarterly Budget

E. Schmitz reported on the budget. The balance forward from the previous fiscal year was \$365,706.00. KEEC did receive the \$150,000.00 from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). KEEC also received \$40,859 in Pride fund interest. The total revenue and carry forward amount for the agency is \$444,657.00. The total expenditures for fiscal year thus far are \$184,962.00. The bulk of agency expenditures covered employee salary and fringe, and also J. Eller's comp-time cash out when she retired from the agency. Other expenditures include a contract with Kentucky Interactive to create a new database and user system for the Kentucky Green & Healthy Schools program and the contract with Eastern Kentucky University for work on the KELP.

G. Higdon asked if the budget looked reasonable for the year. E. Schmitz stated that she felt confident

in the budget; as long as someone does not tell KEEC that they must return the Pride fund interest that has been put into the KEEC account. This is a concern because it is not being distributed to the KUPEE universities, and E. Schmitz stated KEEC staff would look into this issue further. K. Reagor asked why the agency would have to give back the Pride fund interest. E. Schmitz stated that it is a question of if the agency can use the funds, and what it can use the funds for, if it is not being distributed to the universities. E. Schmitz will need to check with the Education Cabinet lawyer (Clay Lamb). E. Schmitz stated that the agency can accept sponsorships, but must check with Clay to find out the details of how sponsorships can be arranged. Sponsorships are possible as long as KEEC does not have a contract or does not regulate the sponsoring entity. E. Schmitz also stated that the agency has arranged for M. Roseman to conduct significant travel and to purchase items such as software and computer equipment through the DEDI stimulus funding grant. The budget was unanimously approved.

Project WET

Project WET (PWET) is on hiatus until M. Roseman and E. Schmitz decide how M. Nevels' tasks will be divided. The facilitator and educator workshops are up this year as opposed to previous years, especially in western KY where C. Messenger and Jeanine Huss have been working on the program through separate grant funding. The PWET steering committee meeting and the latest workshop was cancelled and due to lack of workshop participant interest and M. Nevels leaving the agency. E. Schmitz and M. Roseman will look into continuing the Steering Committee. A small amount of the KEEC budget is allocated to carry out PWET administrative and coordination activities. J. Eller has expressed interest in phasing out PWET for the agency, but E. Schmitz stated that she would like to keep it because it lends the agency credibility to coordinate a national program correlated to national learning standards. K. Reagor said this is true, but it is important that this is not seen as the only national project that the council supports.

E. Morgan stated she would like to see KEEC or KAEE have one person responsible for all of the major projects. She stated it would be to have KEEC be the umbrella for all of the projects. Project Learning Tree (PLT) was dropped by the Division of Forestry, but the program now has 501c3 status. PLT still functions in the state and an MOA was signed by the 501c3 and National project wet so that it can't technically be dropped or done away with. G. Higdon stated PLT was dropped because of funding, and not because of any deficiency in PLT helping expand environmental education as it relates to trees/forests. M. Roseman asked if it would be good to look into KEEC picking up other projects/ PLT as well, in thinking strategically for how the agency would like to continue working with pre-service teachers at the universities. E. Morgan said that sounded like a perfect avenue for working with pre-service teachers. K. Reagor agreed. S. Graves suggested tabling the discussion until a later date due to time limitations.

KY Green & Healthy Schools

KEEC staff has worked hard to expand the program and has been able to accomplish a great deal thanks to the DEDI stimulus funding grant. M. Roseman has begun publishing a quarterly newsletter which was included in members' binders. We now have a KGHS Facebook page, which was changed from a group so that it would be a better for update information, making announcements, and increase program

visibility on the internet. Members were encouraged to “like” the page so members would receive updates in their Facebook newsfeeds. Exploring sponsorships has been put on hold until KEEC staff receives legal clarification from Clay Lamb and our current grant managers for the DEDI grant. KEEC staff is working on creating a 1.5 minute video for promotional purposes with creative services. Filming will take place at the Summit and feature student’s projects and the recognition/awards component of the program. H. Brown requested the newsletter be sent to school boards, especially in Shelby Co. M. Roseman said that she would do this.

G. Higdon pointed out that KGHS is a very successful program and that it is now equal to or cheaper in cost to build an energy efficient building, and that this will save the state and school districts money. He suggested exploring ways to mandate schools participate in KGHS. E. Schmitz and M. Roseman pointed out that the program is voluntary and that this ensures the teachers who do participate are enthusiastic and will work with the program over the long-term. K. Reagor also pointed out that mandating schools participate in KGHS would most likely be an unfunded mandate.

E. Schmitz pointed out that program has grown a great deal and that we have over 1% of schools in KY enrolled in the program. M. Roseman stated that 167 schools have enrolled thus far. In April of 2009, there were 82 schools enrolled. Extra funding available to schools for energy efficiency projects through the DEDI grant has greatly helped increase school and student participation. DEDI grant funding will also purchase a new computer and software including InDesign and GIS to help manage the program. An energy material lending library will also be created to help students explore energy use at their schools and help them decide projects to implement at their schools. Energy grants given out to date were listed in member’s binders. All members were invited to attend the KGHS Summit on May 18 and received a schedule of the day in their binders.

Branding

Members were shown new drafts of the KGHS brochure and KGHS and KEEC logos. The KGHS logo will focus more on the student inquiry and outdoor and built environment themes of the program with a focus on the learning process of the program. The logo will be targeted to teachers and principals. We will be seeking feedback from teachers, other education staff, and public for the KGHS logo drafts. The KGHS Brochure is being modernized with program photos. The KEEC logo was modernized to be less dark and include more clean/crisp lines. Work will continue on all three branding efforts and board members will be updated.

Meeting Close

E. Schmitz requested that the next board meeting be held from 11:00am-2:00pm with a working lunch. All board members agreed. H. Brown closed the meeting as Council Chair.