



Kentucky Environmental Education Council (KEEC)
Fall Quarterly Meeting
October 28, 2015

Meeting Location: Berry Hill Mansion, Frankfort, KY

Meeting Time: October 28, 1:00 p.m. Eastern

Council Members in Attendance: Chair Horace Brown, Lona Brewer, Karin Ceralde, Gordon Garner, Billie Hardin, Marcus Norton, Karen Reagor, Greg Higdon

Absent Members: Vice Chair Cheryl Messenger

Staff in Attendance: Elizabeth Schmitz, Wesley Bullock

Others in Attendance: Ryan Green, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet; Billy Bennett, Eastern Kentucky University

Meeting Introduction

The meeting was called to order by H. Brown at 1:10 PM. A quorum of Council members was present. Introductions were made around the table.

Confirmation of Public Notice

E. Schmitz confirmed that the meeting was publicized on the agency website and through a press release as required by Kentucky Open Meetings Law.

Minutes Review

⇒ At 1:12 PM, L. Brewer moved to approve the July minutes. K. Reagor seconded. All were in favor; none were opposed. The motion passed.

Budget

E. Schmitz discussed actual and projected expenditures and revenue for Fiscal Year 2015 and Fiscal Year 2016. R. Green discussed the agency's biennium budget request, which will be submitted by the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet by the end of October.

G. Higdon entered at 1:20 PM.

R. Green said that Council members could meet with cabinet budget staff to answer budget questions and set budget priorities during the next biennial budget process. R. Green noted that April-June of 2017 would be the time to understand and influence the budget process. He said that the starting point would be a workgroup that would develop a legislative strategy for supporting the agency budget; he could advise the group periodically.

Motion

⇒ At 2:10 PM, B. Hardin moved to form a workgroup to pursue solutions to the funding of the agency. K. Ceralde seconded the motion. All were in favor; none were opposed. The motion passed.

Membership of the workgroup is open to all Council Members who desire to join.

G. Higdon exited at 2:13 PM.

E. Schmitz asked for clarification to confirm that she is not allowed to advocate for particular positions with the legislature, but may educate. R. Green confirmed and noted that any communications to the legislature should be coordinated by the cabinet legislative liaison. E. Schmitz and G. Garner noted that Council members can advocate for the Council's programs and funding because they do not have the same restrictions as agency staff. R. Green noted that Council members should still coordinate with the cabinet for legislative outreach initiatives. Any legislative outreach would only happen outside of a legislative session.

Environmental Education Master Plan Executive Summary

E. Schmitz reviewed a draft of the executive summary, noting the reduced text and added graphics in response to comments from the Council. Council members discussed where to find more current research on the efficacy of EE, and suggested that newer research replace the research cited in the draft presented during the meeting.

Legislative Initiatives

At the Council's request, KEEC staff members are developing a legislative outreach packet for Council members.

The Council decided to form a separate working group to review and interpret statutes related to the Council—following a statutes overview to be presented to the Council during the January 2016 meeting—and to complete its work before the budget work group meets.

Program Updates

E. Schmitz reported on the number of "Let's Go Outside" license plate applications and asked for support from Council Members and their friends.

E. Schmitz provided an update on implementation of the Kentucky Environmental Literacy Plan (KELP), including that she attended environmental literacy sessions at the North American Association for Environmental Education Conference. E. Schmitz announced that the Kentucky Association for Environmental Education received a grant to support implementation of the KELP through working groups and mini-grant funding for eight pilot schools.

E. Schmitz announced that Stephen Pruitt has been hired as the new Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). He coordinated the development of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in his previous position with Achieve, Inc. She noted that the direction of KDE is to focus on the three dimensions of the NGSS and KEEC is working to demonstrate how EE supports those dimensions.

E Schmitz stated that K. Ceralde and Christine Duke (KDE) helped revise the Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools (KGHS) Project Form to simplify it and align it to standards. She said that the reduced paperwork and stronger alignment to the new standards should improve teacher engagement in the program, as would the fact that we no longer require project approval in advance. She noted that in the process of revising the program structure online, W. Bullock streamlined the KGHS website, and expanded the resource offerings on the KEEC website.

K. Ceralde exited at 3:20 PM.

E. Schmitz mentioned that, to cut costs, the agency may need to change the contract process for the Professional Environmental Educator Certification course to offer contracts to individual instructors rather than a single contracting organization.

Partnerships

E. Schmitz has worked on updating Capitol Education Center resources, helping with creation of new exhibits, media, and signage. She will receive reimbursement for this work. The Council discussed potential partnerships with the National Wildlife Federation and with the Organic Association of Kentucky.

B. Hardin exited at 4:00 PM.

E. Schmitz reminded Council Members that KEEC was formerly the state coordinator for Project WET (Water Education for Teachers), but then turned it over to the Division of Water (DOW), with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between KEEC and DOW that said DOW would keep us apprised of changes to the program. DOW may be subcontracting with KAEE to manage Project WET using 319 funds. The Council requested to review the MOU.

Motion to Adjourn

⇒ At 4:10 PM, K. Reagor moved to adjourn the meeting. G. Garner seconded. All were in favor; none were opposed. The motion passed.