STEAMBOAT SPRINGS EDUCATION FUND BOARD GRANT COMMISSION MEETING April 16, 2014; 6:00 PM Human Service Center Upstairs Board Room

Grant Commission members present included Chairman Stuart Handloff, Dean Massey, Kevin Lind, Tina Kyprios, Beth Wilhelm, Mark Clark and Susan Heckel. Also present were Brad Meeks (SSSD Superintendent), Marty Lamansky (SSSD), Scott Mader (Soroco Superintendent), Tim Miles (SSSD and South Routt Director of Technology) and Jim Early (Hayden Director of Technology).

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Stuart Handloff called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**Commission Member Reports:**

Dean reported that the Education Fund Board (EFB) had approved both Susan and Mark as members of the Grant Commission (GC). He stated that actual tax revenues were 4% higher than expected. Dean stated that the EFB had voted to maintain the $500,000 reserve fund and include the $45,000 in additional revenues in the funds available for grants.

Dean stated that in its discussion of first readings, the EFB had generally agreed that using a fixed percentage increase over the previous year in the total allocations to districts was not an adequate rationale for funding decisions. Mark added that there had been a general consensus on the EFB that the priorities for grant funding were (in this order): teachers, technology and infrastructure. Dean noted that opinions regarding infrastructure varied. Some members had noted that the lack of infrastructure, because it is necessary for technology to work, has a direct impact on students. In response to a question from Stuart, Dean said that the EFB had not discussed the use of reserves for the testing facility.

**Minutes:**

**MOTION - Approval of Meeting Minutes from Grant Commission**

* **Meeting of March 19, 2014**

*Tina moved to approve the meeting minutes listed above as written. Kevin seconded;* ***the motion carried unanimously.***

**First Reading Discussions:**

Stuart reviewed the revision to the available funds. The total grant funding available is now $2,854,830. He noted that the prioritized budgets requests, based on the arbitrary target of $150,000 each for Hayden and Soroco and the revised tech budget from SSSD equals $2,914,830, for a difference of $60,000. The total amount already approved for Community Group Grants and Administrative Expenses equals $105,000. The Innovation Grants and Grant Writer allocations equal $130,000. The remaining funding available for allocation to the three districts is $2,619,830.

There was a brief discussion of the weighted scoring system submitted by Mark as possible tool to use in the future. Mark noted that its usefulness would depend on establishing criteria for weighting and scoring.

Stuart noted the ongoing issue of whether technology requests should be evaluated on a line-by-line basis, or whether a lump sum for technology should be allocated, allowing the districts to decide their priorities. Dean stated that the EFB had confirmed that decisions should be based on the mission statement. He said that there was no consideration given to awarding a number and letting the districts decide. Beth offered that it makes no sense to micro-manage each purchase. Stuart agreed, but stated that effort should be made to evaluate where the money is to be spent, and going through the line items was as place to start.

Hayden

Dean reviewed his proposal to cut the administrative phones and installation costs from Hayden’s “self-prioritized” budget. He noted that Hayden should be commended for its 10%annual reduction in staff requests and for its sequential replacement schedule for computers. He said that his proposed amount of $134, 589 is approximately 10% above last year’s allocation to Hayden. Kevin stated that this proposal is consistent with the discussions at first reading. Jim Early said that the Hayden district will fund its entire summer construction budget, with the balance to come from capital reserves. On behalf of the Hayden School District, he thanked the GC for its consideration.

Soroco

Dean reported that the EFB had expressed support for the ½-time science teacher, using the same rationale as the GC. The EFB would also like to see a move toward a staggered replacement schedule for technology. Dean said that with this in mind he proposed cutting the number of requested desktops and laptops with peripherals, but adding back some of the laptops for students, as well as some ipads. In response to a question from Mark, Tim acknowledged that there is a risk that the existing laptops will fail. Dean suggested that the district could determine replacements based on teacher usage and potential cost savings that may arise when the purchases are being made.

Dean noted that the Soroco district is cutting its overall budget for teachers, and offered funding 75% of the requested ½-time position, would allow the district to make adjustments in its staffing to meet the expanded demand for science offerings. He stated that with these changes his proposed allocation to Soroco would be $136,385. Stuart noted that this number represents an increase of less than 10% over last year.

Beth stated her support for granting full funding for the ½-time science teacher. Kevin, Mark and Stuart agreed. Beth stated that in her proposal she had cut the video camera and fiber connection along with some computers and laptops, noting that she was uncomfortable micro-managing which computers need replacement. Kevin asked how closely Tim must stick to the line item allocations. Dean offered that Tim could make requests for changes without going through the first and second reading process. Mark proposed coming up with a lump sum for devices, to be refined later. Stuart said that that is not the direction received from the EFB. Susan expressed concern with the unintentional consequences of making particular cuts, but noted that these grants are only part of the overall funding, and other sources could fill in the gaps. Beth reviewed her proposed line item amounts. Her proposed allocation to Soroco totaled $129,770. Regarding Beth’s proposal, Stuart expressed concern with cutting Soroco’s allocation compared to last year. He proposed adding the ipads back in for a total of $141,140.

Dean added that the supply of student laptops at the high school needs to be increased. With the addition of $11,000 for laptops the total would be $152,770. Tim requested more flexibility in the technology category. Tina proposed reducing the teacher laptops by $10,000 for a total of $142,770 to Soroco.

Scott Mader agreed with the need for the ½-time science teacher, but stated that the district is cutting a middle school teacher, an elementary teacher and two high school paraprofessionals. He expressed concern that the GC is then adding a ½-time position back in. Tina offered that it is acceptable for the GC to disagree with the administration, noting that the mandate of the EFB/GC is different, and was determined by the taxpayers. The GC agreed on the allocation of $142,770 to Soroco.

SSSD

Tim clarified the difference between the requested and the breakout columns of the spreadsheet. The correct request is for $2,380, 332. Brad noted that the difference between this number and the remaining available funding of $2,342,471 after the total proposed allocations are taken out was less than $40,000. Brad proposed reducing the staff request from $100,000 to $65,000.

Dean said that the EFB had discussed the instructional coaches and the G & T and had reached consensus that these are valuable items. There was a detailed discussion of technology. He described the complaints about technology that he and Kristi had received in the course of a meeting with teachers. Dean acknowledged that data rather than anecdotal evidence was needed, but stated that the EFB wants to ensure that the technology it funds actually works. Dean proposed the implementation of some analysis and accountability measures. Brad suggested a walk-through of the facilities, but agreed that service and maintenance staff is needed. There was a discussion of potential sources of problems with technology.

Stuart noted that SSSD had requested that any cuts come from the technology portion of the request. He suggested that the GC accept the recommendation to reduce tech staff by $35,000, leaving the allocation to Steamboat at $2,345,332. The total recommended allocation would be $2,861 over the available funds.

**MOTION**

*Mark moved to approve on the second reading grant funding of the following amounts:*

*Hayden: $ 134,589*

*Soroco: $ 142,770*

*SSSD: $2,345,332*

*Community Groups: $ 75,000*

*Collaborative Grants: $ 130,000*

*Adminstrative Expenses:$ 30,000*

*Kevin seconded the motion.*

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**Other Business:**

Dean noted that the improvement in the grant allocation process was due in a large part to the efforts of Barb Parnell, who recently resigned from the GC. Stuart added that she had also worked really hard on the implementation of accountability measures. The GC expressed its gratitude.

Kathy Wichelhaus, a potential GC member, introduced herself.

**Adjourn:**

The Education Fund Board’s Grant Commission meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.