Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2023

9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Zoom

Present: M. Cecilia Brock, Joe Campbell, Kelli Johnson, Maureen O’Connor, Mary Ellen Darling and Pat Rajala.

Staff: Kathy Houghton, Mary Abousaid and Kitty Hotles-Sampson.

9:30 a.m. Brock called the meeting to order and noted there is a quorum of board members.

Brock asked if there were any comments about the consent agenda. There were no comments. Brock asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda, which included the March 16, 2023 meeting agenda, Dec. 15, 2022 board meeting minutes, board financial report and summary report. Motion made by Campbell and seconded by Darling. All voted in favor. Motion approved without objections or abstentions.

Houghton showed a PowerPoint presentation about the proposed 2023-2024 LNY Budget. She discussed the three, five-year NYS contracts, which total $926,402 in revenue for LNY. Houghton said LNY has had a contract for the Western RAEN for more than 20 years. The Western RAEN contract is $257,894 per year. LNY also has a $207,058 annual contract to operate the Capital North RAEN. LNY will reapply for RAEN contracts from the NYS Education Department when they are rebid. The current RAEN contracts end September 30, 2024. The $450,000 per year Adult Literacy Education STAC contract runs through June 30, 2025. Houghton said Mary Abousaid does a great job tracking contract costs, which helps LNY with cash flow. Houghton said she has to do a detailed quarterly report for the STAC and RAENs stating what each one accomplished, how many tutors were trained, how many trainings were held, etc. Campbell noted WIOA is treated as a contract and if a program says it will serve 50 students, the state Education Department wants to know why that program is not serving that many students. Covid magnified student enrollment problems. If enrollment was down pre-Covid, “Covid put that on steroids,” according to Campbell. Rajala said her program has exceeded its ALE contract enrollment by one-third this fiscal year. Downstate is doing OK with enrollment numbers, Rajala said. Low student enrollment is a problem for some Upstate programs.

LNY has $5,500 budgeted for business activity income re: I2O online training and the Janice Cuddahee Fund. Houghton said we only budget in what we know we will get for income. LNY is doing a Google ads campaign to promote I2O. Texas wants to use I2O for a five-year WIOA grant. Literacy Delaware is also a solid customer for I2O. Houghton has been talking to other literacy organizations in Arkansas and Massachusetts re: I2O. Eighty Janice Cuddahee Fund “seats” are available to literacy organizations who apply for grants to obtain access to I2O. JCF grants awarded to agencies are I2O sales for LNY. The budget also includes $5,950 in income from miscellaneous activities such as individual/SEFA donations, board donations, interest and credit card rewards.

Budget expenses include $568,786 for employee salaries, benefits and payroll taxes. The budget include a 3 percent salary increase for each staff member. Thanks to a referral to a different insurance company from Rajala, life insurance benefits for employees remains at $25,000. Purchased services for rent, utilities, phone, online costs, tax preparation and subscriptions/dues totals $74,927. totals $9,000 and This includes $9,000 for equipment leases and maintenance for copiers and office maintenance.

Purchased/contract services total $124,897 and includes payments to trainers, certified teachers delivering State Education Department required workshops. It also includes contracts/agreements such as $15,000 for the annual conference at the White Eagle Conference Center and $36,000 for Think60, which supports the I2O online learning platform. It also covers providing Northstar Digital Literacy costs for ALE-funded programs.

Other budgeted expenses include $5,000 for office supplies, $90,008 for event costs such as meeting support, training materials and site costs; $31,000 for travel; $1,200 for the Janice Cuddahee Fund expenses; $7,000 for depreciation and $23,525 for indirect expenses such as insurance, professional employer organization costs, federal unemployment, Network for Good fees, marketing expenses, etc.

Rajala made a motion to approve the LNY budget; seconded by Johnson. All voted in favor. Motion approved without objections or abstentions.

Brock mentioned the LNY Diversity Policy was unanimously approved via an email vote on January 4, 2023.

Houghton said she would like to build the LNY board so it has a dozen members. Currently there are eight board members and two are leaving at the end of the current fiscal year. Eberle contacted a couple of potential board members. Houghton is talking to a lawyer in the Buffalo area. Currently there are no board members from Western NY. The best way to build the board is for board members to approach people about joining the board. LNY has a great letter to send to potential board members and a robust website. LNY is growing and does good work.

Houghton announced Rajala is retiring July 31 after a 40-plus years working in the adult literacy education field. Board members congratulated her for her dedication, leadership and many accomplishments.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.