

GATEWAY SPECIAL RECREATION ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

JANUARY 12, 2017

- I. **Call to Order:** President Cindy Szkolka called the Gateway Special Recreation Association Board of Director's Meeting to order at 3:00pm on January 12, 2017 at the Oakbrook Family Recreation Center, 1450 Forest Gate Road in Oakbrook, Illinois. A Quorum was present.

Roll Call: Board Members present: Jim Pacanowski, Burr Ridge; Cindy Szkolka, Elmhurst; Heather Bereckis, Hinsdale; Karen Spandikow, Oakbrook; Matt Russian, Pleasant Dale; Jim Berg, Westchester; John Fenske, Willowbrook; Scott Nadeau, York Center

Absent: Sharon Peterson, Countryside

Staff Present: Ray Graham Staff: Superintendent Ryan Cortez, Denise Rau, Mike Baig

Visitors: None

- II. **Open Forum:** Superintendent Cortez informed the board that she will be having a baby in March so preparations for her upcoming absence are taking place. Mike Baig, longtime Gateway employee, will be attending meetings in her place. The topic of who will be undertaking the process of website management in Ms. Cortez's absence will be under new business at next month's meeting.

While signing an outgoing check to Hinsdale immediately prior to the meeting, Matt Russian asked a question regarding the administrative charge that was also listed on the fuel bill. Heather Bereckis informed the board that the Village of Hinsdale adds an administrative charge to each bill, \$0.07 per gallon, in order for the bill to be created and sent out for payment.

- III. **Board Member Comments:** Matt Russian revisited the topic that was briefly discussed at last month's meeting concerning a family who expressed some frustration with the new combined winter/spring registration. He mentioned a letter that he received from the family earlier that day reiterating their feelings. Superintendent Cortez asked the board if any other districts had heard anything similar from any families from their respective district. None were reported. Ms. Cortez added that she had a wonderful discussion with another family from Burr Ridge who expressed some concerns regarding the new registration and that they brought numerous ideas/suggestions to the discussion and that was quite helpful for staff. She noted that of the 89 registrations that they had already received, these were the only two instances of any families bringing forth an issue with the changes. She also noted that Gateway offers more weeks of programming than any other SRA's in the area. Other SRA's may offer two registrations for winter/spring and divide them up how they feel is appropriate, however, they also have a much larger full-time staff which is able to handle the extra duties that come along with the additional programs. An idea was suggested to offer three registration options next year, with one for the

full winter/spring session, one for just winter, and one for just spring. Ms. Cortez said that is definitely an option although that would present possible issues with programming and staffing. Discussion continued among the board noting that Gateway, as well as all of our participating agencies, always try to do what's best for programs overall and that it is sometimes difficult to tailor to individual preferences. It was also suggested that if winter and spring programs are offered as separate offerings, maybe an incentive can be offered to participants who submit registrations considerably ahead of the regular spring registration deadline in order for staff to have additional time to appropriately prepare for the individual and staffing needs of the program. Superintendent Cortez added that an overwhelming majority of participants in the Tuesday Traveler program that was referenced typically register for both the winter and spring sessions so the combination of the two sessions appeared to be a positive change, especially considering the constant staffing issues that Gateway experiences. Gateway staff thought they might hear some concerns regarding the cost for the program (while the fees didn't increase for winter/spring, the cost "doubled" since registration took place only once) they haven't heard any feedback of that kind and requests for scholarship funds have not increased.

IV. Communications: None

V. Omnibus Agenda: Motion was made by Scott Nadeau, York Center; to approve the Omnibus Agenda and motion seconded by Jim Berg, Westchester.

- A. Approval of December 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. Approval of January 2017 Check Register
- C. Approval of January 2017 Treasurer's Report

On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

VI. Reports:

A. Superintendent Cortez reviewed her monthly report and highlighted that staffing is continuing to be an issue but they are making due the best they can as registration numbers have increased over YTD last year. Gateway currently has only 7 part-time staff and that the possibility exists of having to turn participants away due to shortage of staff but, for now, this has not been an issue. Discussions have taken place regarding the possible sharing of staff between Gateway and RGA staff. Vehicle 192 went in for an alignment and upon examination, it was determined that tailpipe/exhaust was missing, along with needing upper and lower ball joints, brake pads, brake rotors, brake calipers, and brake fluid. The total cost of repairs to keep the vehicle in proper working and safe condition for use was \$1839.38.

A motion was made by Karen Spandikow, Oakbrook; to approve the necessary repairs to vehicle 192, totaling \$1839.38, and motion seconded by Jim Pacanowski, Burr Ridge.

On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Two families have taken advantage of the \$200 scholarship (\$100 for winter, \$100 for spring). Planning for summer brochure is underway. Superintendent Cortez is attempting to get as much of this work done ahead of time as possible before her leave. Lastly, she highlighted the 12 special events that were offered in the fall. Participants had a fantastic time attending the WWE wrestling event and a Blackhawks game.

VII. Old Business:

A. Inclusion: Karen Spandikow noted that we all seem to struggle with securing inclusion aides for program participants at our own districts, especially with the emerging trend of families having more inclusion needs. This is especially difficult when Gateway is also short-staffed. President Szkolka mentioned that Elmhurst offers inclusion services and that staffing has been an ongoing issue, especially with before and after school programs. Ms. Spandikow asked members to envision where Gateway may be headed in the future and if offering inclusion services might be something in which the membership is interested. She feels an "Inclusion Manager", who would handle all of the inclusion requests/needs/logistics from individual districts would be a valuable service that Gateway could offer in the future. Discussion continued and Mr. Pacanowski reframed the suggestion where the Inclusion Manager would be an employee of Gateway and the cost of the individual inclusion aide that actually works at a program would be the responsibility of the agency where the aide worked.

Ms. Spandikow reiterated that the goal is to give the participants the best care possible and wonders if participants would be better served by having a professional available that has the ability to properly train aides regarding the wide range of needs in the SRA community. Superintendent Cortez raised the question of programs. Is the participant more appropriately placed in an agency program or a Gateway program? Secondly, what staff would be required for participation in either program? It was noted that the decision is ultimately left to the parents after weighing out the pros and cons.

Jim Pacanowski offered some historical perspective and that Gateway came into existence because of the agencies that did not particularly care for the equation whereby SRA participation dues were calculated based on EAV. The formula that was adopted for Gateway was based on population. This formula allowed for agencies to pay lower fees while still offering quality services/programs.

President Szkolka questioned the level of interest of other agencies to pursue Gateway-provided inclusion services. Ms. Spandikow added that an Inclusion Manager could also serve as a recruiter, who would be designated to hire staff, and could fill a major hole as lack of staff is a continuous issue. Discussion continued regarding various other needs and issues regarding aides. Superintendent Cortez added that when an inclusion aide is used, specific plans should be established with the goal of having the participant start the program with the aide and not require the aide by the conclusion of the program. The model is not for a participant to have an aide for every moment of the program. Informal input was taken from each board member and

while the notion seemed intriguing for some agencies, a high-level of interest from the majority of the board was not expressed. At this point in time, pursuing an Inclusion Manager option will not be pursued as part of the contract negotiations with RGA.

VIII. New Business:

A. Vehicle Insurance: President Szkolka asked about receiving current Certificates of Insurance for Gateway vehicles as the ones on file presently expired in September. She will forward a copy upon receipt to Matt Russian for Gateway's archival of documents. She also inquired about Certificates of Insurance for use of facilities. Individual agencies are encouraged to reach out to RGA to secure a current certificate on an as-needed basis.

B. Quickbooks Purchase: Gary Kasanders sent a memo to the board on December 7, 2016. That was one day prior to the last meeting and therefore not enough time to be officially added to the agenda. The email stated that Quickbooks, the program which our auditors would like us to use and what we have been using (2011 version) is no longer working with Gary's Windows 10 computer. An updated version of Quickbooks is required to keep financial records up to date.

A motion was made by Jim Pacanowski, Burr Ridge; to authorize the \$200.00 purchase of an updated version of Quickbooks, and seconded by Matt Russian, Pleasant Dale.

On a voice vote, the motion passed with all present members voting aye with Jim Berg, Westchester abstaining from the vote.

IX. Open Forum: Matt Russian inquired about the status of the new logo which was discussed many months ago. Superintendent Cortez stated that the idea has been tabled for a while as the new website was getting up and running.

President Szkolka asked member agencies to check with their respective finance departments as there are three member agencies with an outstanding balance owed.

X. Adjournment: Scott Nadeau, York Center; made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jim Pacanowski, Burr Ridge. Motion passed on a voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 4:05pm.