

The Child Care Advisory Committee held a regular meeting on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017. Committee members present included Johanna Gibbs, Greta Shackelford, Jay Homola, Laura Amedro and Erin Gigliello. Two of our committee members Aaron Ness was absent on paternity leave and Shelly Aleshire is out for the summer. Town staff present was Jennifer McAtamney.

The following topics were covered:

### **Update on Tuition Assistance Round 2017-2018**

This year we received a 20% increase in applications received as part of our open enrollment. Since that time we have continued to see an influx of new families. Johanna Gibbs asked about why we think it is up this year. We believe this is due to a number of factors including extensive public outreach over the last year as well as a combo of new babies, families moving here for jobs, existing families having a 2<sup>nd</sup> child as well as an increase in the AMI, which is enabling additional families to apply. This has presented a little challenge in getting the last 15 applications processed. We proactively reached out to these families to let them know we have received their application and will be in touch with questions and assistance information as we process them.

Laura Amedro had a question about whether we had the funds to serve all the families who have applied. The Child Care fund has been underspending the Tuition Assistance Fund by about \$73,000 annually over the last few years. This has provided cushion for these types of enrollment increases. We also have additional tools like capping assistance amounts that can stretch our funds further. Based on our year to date spending and enrollment patterns we do not believe this will be a problem in 2017.

We shared with the committee how we process applications and spend extensive time reaching out to families with questions on their applications as well as confirming the information they have provided us. We believe this is important from a process standpoint, as it assures families are aware we are processing their application with an eye to detail and diligence.

Erin Gigliello asked how much time it takes to process the applications. A straightforward application with two parents who have single jobs takes about 1 hour and 15 minutes. For families with seasonal/multiple jobs or self-employment we can spend up to 4 hours because their financial situation is complicated and we might need additional documentation and clarifications. It really is our focus for the whole month of July and will be spilling into August as well. Laura asked if rolling enrollment might be a better model. We have contemplated this and believe that if we were to have rolling enrollment it would be hard to accomplish other projects because the process of assisting families during the application process and reviewing applications are time consuming. In answer to Erin's original question based on some rough calculations, it is approximately a six-week man effort to process the annual applications.

We are also excited to let the committee know that next year we will have the opportunity to upgrade our technology platform and re-architect our application forms as Fluid Review is upgrading to Survey Monkey Apply. This is great news as they are moving to a more robust technology platform, which will be able to perform calculations and improve the application performance.

### **2018 Program Elements**

The Child Care program will be going to the Town Council work session on August 22<sup>nd</sup> in the late afternoon. During that work session, we will be briefing them on our 2018 budget requests. We will be presenting the Carriage House renovation as well as hiring a grant writer and providing a development fund to boost teacher salaries.

With regards to the Carriage House, we wanted to talk to the committee about how we want to structure this project. While the town will be the funding source the Carriage House will handle the project. This will help control costs by having a non-profit head it up and give them ownership over the process. In addition to the initial interiors renovations we have identified some code and licensing issues that we will need to address at this time as well. They have hired an owner's rep as well as an interior designer who did Timberline Learning Center to guide them in creating a cohesive vision with an eye to durable materials that are cost effective. They are continuing to refine this budget. Martha is going to start working on grants this fall. Johanna Gibbs has offered to assist with fall grants so Jennifer will put her in contact with Martha at Carriage House.

## Recruitment and retention

Over the last few months, the committee has been looking closely at the schools budgets, teacher salaries/benefits and impacts on the cost of care to local families. The committee believes that our teachers are vital to our Town infrastructure and the ability to employ them ensures families can continue to work and provide excellent service to our visitors. One of the key challenges for recruitment and retention is wages. Erin noted that when the Town was challenged with bus driver recruitment, they increased the salaries to help recruiting efforts. The committee believes we need to take action around teacher's salaries to ensure we can continue to fill these teacher positions and keep them in their jobs. We believe we must impact the system in a positive way; incentivizing continuing education for teachers, improve teacher retention and assure a livable wage for teachers. To this end we have requested a budget item for this purpose and wanted to look at ways we would implement a program to support this. The committee brainstormed three ways we could implement this and vetted the pros and cons of each approach.

Method 1: Expand existing Tuition Assistance Program. This model would put these funds directly into Tuition Assistance and schools would increase tuition to cover the salaries and expand our tuition assistance program to cover families who are cost burdened. We would need to increase the AMI Cap for the program to make sure we are capturing all cost-burdened families. We would also need to consider how families only using a 1 -3 days of care are impacted.

While the committee liked that this method utilizes systems already in place and is not a direct subsidy they believe that our tuition prices will become too high with the initial implementation. This would bring a 10% increase to our daily tuition rates making them \$15 -\$20/day higher than other comparable schools across Summit County. Parents already have sticker shock and as much as schools try to explain that we have a robust tuition assistance program the committee is concerned that it could turn people away or even discourage people from taking jobs here especially when coupled with our housing costs. It also negatively impacts low-income families as well as those who use only 1 – 3 days of care and are not eligible for assistance at those levels. This approach also concerned the committee that higher rates would run contrary to one of our original goals of offering accessible affordable care regardless of the amount you use.

Method 2: Create a Grant/Awards Process that teachers would apply to for a bonus. In this model, we would have teachers apply for a salary supplements 2xs a year through a grants/award process. This would require teachers to apply and provide credentials and continuing education info in turn for a bonus. This would not affect tuition rates.

The committee saw benefits of this approach in that we could partner with ECO who have a similar program or even extend Fluid Review to add this functionality. They also like it because it is straightforward to message and give the perception of strong support for teachers. A system like this also helps us to incentivize behaviors what we want to see. This was seen by the group as both a pro and a con as, it is curious to have a "Town" tell schools what is important for their teachers and programs. We have tried over the years to stay away from this type of micromanaging and the committee did not see this as a role the town should hold. This process also creates extra work for the teachers and directors through the application process. These awards would not impact the teacher's hourly wage. Instead, funds would be received as a bonus, which is taxed at a higher rate and would not affect starting salaries. The final concern the committee had was about the admin time to administer this type of grant process as it would be time consuming to process approximately 50 applications during each cycle.

Method 3: Direct recruitment and retention funds directly to schools to be implemented by the directors and Boards. This would be a similar model to the salary supplement program we created back in 2007 where funds go directly to schools. For this iteration, we would implement a minimum starting salary and create metrics to measure recruitment and retention efforts. (Note: All programs would be able to use these type of metrics)

The committee vetted this final approach. They view this as simple and straightforward. It builds on the success of the last time we did this. It is also streamlined for staff, Boards and teachers while supporting the goals and challenges at the schools since they can determine the most effective way to implement it for their school. To use this approach will require more robust messaging and public outreach to help the people understand this aspect of the program. The other big positive is that it has a direct impact on a teacher's hourly wage and annual earnings while not affecting daily tuition rates.

At the conclusion the committee came to a consensus to recommend the on the third approach to the Town Council. They believe this will bring the desired impact of raising hourly wage, gives flexibility to tailor the program to the schools goals and challenges and is the most streamlined approach to address the wage gap.

**At 4:55 pm we adjourned**

**Next meeting: September 6th**