**MINUTES OF THE September 22nd, 2026 BOARD OF DREICTORS' MEETING**
**IN-PERSON AND ZOOM**

**Roll Call of Board Members:**

1. **Call to Order - 5:32 pm**

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Roll Call of Board Attendees:**
   **Jennifer Beausoleil - Coventry**
   **Samantha Derenthal - Plainfield**
   **Maryellen Donnelly - Hampton**
   **Katherine Paulhus - Mansfield**
   **Michael Morrill - Putnam**
   **Justin Phaiah – Brooklyn**
   **Kathleen Sposato - Pomfret**

4. **Roll call of EASTCONN Staff Attendees:**
   **Eric Protulis, Brian Greenleaf, Melanie Marcaccio, Amy Margelony, Andy DePalma, Diane Gozemba, Kristin Hempel, Shawn Brodeur**

5. **Additions to the Agenda - None**

6. **Audience with Citizens**

**Approve the Minutes from the August 2026 Board of Directors' Meeting:**

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| **MOTION:** | **Maryellen Donnelly motioned to approve the Minutes as presented** |
| **SECOND:** | **Katherine Paulhus** |
| **VOTE:** | **Unanimous** |
| **ABSTENTIONS:** | **Jennifer Beausoleil** |

**Presentation from Technology Solutions – Andy DePalma – ASCENDERA Platform**
System includes calendar management, results analysis, set up for Teacher evaluations
In compliance with 2023 CSBE guidelines for staff assessment; built with input from EASTCONN PDEC committee

All EASTCONN Staff will be set-up in the platform this year. The state evaluation plan is built into this system using goals, feedback, rubrics, consensus feedback and evaluation paths for different types of positions. It can schedule reminders, integrated calendar, building tools, more connections to prior year evaluations to ensure that goals are not repeated, streamline plan alignment, to assemble cohort for Fall 2027. PDEC last year worked with our noncertified paper evaluation, made modifications and it is loaded in Ascendera.

Question regarding TEAMs and ability to integrate ASCENDERA into the TEAMS process were raised: SDE has asked us to do more work with them and there is room to do this differently. Question regarding data compliance: Files are stored in encrypted in drives; and is in compliance with HIPPA and HR compliant.

**Committee Reports:**

**Policy Committee: Updates from Melanie Marcaccio, Katherine Paulhus and Maryellen Donnelly**
**The Committee is presenting these policies for first read:**

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| 1004.1.2 | Non Discrimination Community |
| 4016.1.2 | Non Discrimination Administration |
| 4023.1.1 | Affirmative Action/ Equal Employer Opportunity |

**Facilities Committee: Updates from Eric Protulis and Shawn Brodeur**
**The Committee did not meet last month. They are meeting on Thursday**

**Finance Committee: Updates from Brian Greenleaf and Eric Protulis**

Reviewed the monthly Finance Report. Adjustment pending for food services $210K in losses
Head Start had $46K in losses – offset some with grant funding – will still end in positive flow for FY 26
Randall Mel, the new Director of Food Service is in discussions how to move forward, commercial kitchen coming in on time will allow for more centralized cooking. Randall will do some presentations to you throughout the year.

The two areas of elevated monitoring are transportation and special student services; made a lot of movement with staffing levels and assignments; both programs exceeded summer school projections which is a good beginning.

These programs will have the most frequent rates of monitoring as the impact on the overall budget is greatest.

Updates and discussion around the line of credit.

**Head Start Updates:**

Joe Courtney and Governor Lamont visited sites last week. Administrative cost cap discussed. We have applied for 1303.

Updated discussion around the Birth to Three Program, including funding for services. Recently, a provider in the region exited and EASTCONN has been asked to cover more towns as a result.

**Enrollment Report:**
October 1st is critical date for Magnet Schools. CDT shows 52 enrollments; five students in process of enrolling; There are still a number of vacant positions that impacts ability to serve additional students in some programs.

**Division Directors' Report:**
ACCESS is working with various schools and staff across the region and the State, additionally, they have led Board retreats with Superintendents.
Adult Ed had over 425 YEP at over 120 sites. Eric attended the EWIB board meeting and they highlight the effort to ensure funding is going to the eastern side of the state for rural districts.
Transportation: all mandatory safety trainings are completed. De-escalation training provided to all drivers.
Early Childhood – CT Needs Childcare forum is taking place on October 15th.

**Executive Director's Updates:**
Eric and Kristin Hempel met with Miguel Cardona on a partnership with EASTCONN, EWIB, and the Community Colleges to develop a framework for eastern Connecticut to support Career Pathways work in K-12 and Adult Education.

The Executive Cabinet reviewed our Strategic plan and identified core areas to focus on this year:

Workforce Development as part of the state wide initiative and assessing what EASTCONN already does and specifically in early childhood.

Artificial Intelligence: Focus is on the needs of our agency, our educators, and our learners. Considerations for ethical implications and how are ensuring people know where and when to use this tool.

Feedback: Creating an agency expectation of collecting feedback, at least annually, on the services we provide to our customers (internal/external to the agency) and how do we use the information to make decisions.

Implement Business Matrix Framework: Executive Cabinet developed this process last year and we will begin implementing this year with several departments.

Story Of EASTCONN: This work will continue with a focus on value. What can customers expect when they choose to work with or partner with EASTCONN programs.

**Human Resources Report:**
Reviewed reports and vacancies.
Numbers somewhat stable, next month will see more of a dramatic change

**Grant Excel Document:**

Review and Updates of the Grant Document
One Grant is in process

**Action Items:**

Grant permission for EASTCONN to implement a rental agreement with Generations to use ACT for a function and serve alcohol, in accordance with EASTCONN procedures and regulations

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| **MOTION:** | **Katherine Paulhus motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented** |
| **SECOND:** | **Maryellen Donnelly** |
| **VOTE:** | **Unanimous** |
| **ABSTENTIONS:** | **None** |

## Executive Session:

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| **MOTION:** | **Katherine Paulhus motioned to enter into Executive Session and invite Eric Protulis to discuss the Executive Director's Evaluation and Contract and review of a legal matter at 7:08 pm.** |
| **SECOND:** | **Maryellen Donnelly** |
| **VOTE:** | **Unanimous** |
| **ABSTENTIONS:** | **None** |

**The Board exited Executive Session at**: **7:32pm**

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| **MOTION:** | **Micheal Morrill motioned to accept the changes to the contract for Executive Director Protulis as discussed in Executive Session.** |
| **SECOND:** | **Maryellen Donnelly** |
| **VOTE:** | **Unanimous** |
| **ABSTENTIONS:** | **None** |

**MOTION to ADJOURN:**

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| **MOTION:** | **Michael Morrill motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 pm** |
| **SECOND:** | **Kathleen Sposato** |
| **VOTE:** | **Unanimous** |
| **ABSTENTIONS:** | **NONE** |

**Respectfully Submitted**

**Carol Klemyk**
**Executive Assistant**