



Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development
School of Social Work
Stephen F. Austin State University
420 E. Starr Avenue
Nacogdoches, Texas 75962
(936) 468-2228

Better Together Board Meeting: Agenda

Friday, February 23, 2024 - 12 pm - 1 pm
School of Social Work, Room 201 / TEAMS

Invitations/Attendance

Jordan Bridges	Anna Donihoo	Tracie Estepp (virtual)	Dr. Katie Moses
Dr. Andrew Dies	Dr. Freddie Avant	Sara Mendez (virtual)	Amelia Ruiz Fischer
Hart Hintze	Michelle Key	Carlos Palomo	Terrence Reeves
Mario Torres	Erin Windham		

Purpose: discuss upcoming events, sustainability efforts, new file management for BT

Call to order 12:06 p.m. Roll was taken and it was determined a quorum was present.

1. Approve Minutes from January

Previous meeting minutes from January 26, 2024 meeting were offered for review by the chair. The minutes were approved in a unanimous vote by all attendees.

2. Lone Star Legislative Summit April 4-5 (Erin)

Erin shared the Lone Star Legislative Summit will be April 4-5th and is put on by legislators along with a panel of people from across the state. They share updates on latest topics. Suggested it may be beneficial to attend to ask questions and know where they stand on topics. Rural health care and mental health and education are thought to be topics of interest to be discussed at this meeting, which aligns with the Better Together Common Agenda. Registration will be through the Chamber. Erin stated she will check on cost as the prices are not yet available on website. Erin would like videos of Better Together needs video so legislators know who we are. Erin will talk to Graham Garner with SFA marketing to see if photos from Better Together projects can be added to video montage. Erin stated she is planning on attending. She find out cost and who all is going and will get back with the group.

3. How To Festival March 2 at the Nacogdoches Public Library (Mario)

Mario will host a booth at the How-to Festival on March 2nd at the Nacogdoches Public Library. The booth will offer a vitality assessment, healthy snacks, and the Blue Zone Book. Discussed high turnover in community heads that had previously supported the Blue Zone initiative, causing delays in progress. Mario reported he will be out of town March 7- April 5. It was suggested the discussion be revisited during April meeting and to bring suggestions for possible pathways and directions forward that can be brought to the board for a vote.

4. Sustainability Efforts



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a. Grant writing (Anna)

- i. Free resources: open to all board members and Dr Moses. Nonprofitready.org, Candid
- ii. East Texas Center for Nonprofits (Tyler/Longview): 2 day in-person training for \$300 per person and smaller ones for \$50 per person

Anna discussed the need for members of the group to learn about grant writing. Members want to be able to look for funding and write proposals. She suggested to send Katie and a couple of board members to those. Options include getting a Database subscription. Grant Station \$179/month gives access to funding opportunities. Due to time constraints, a decision needs to be made soon for in-person opportunities. Erin interested in going to grant writing. Dates are needed for Carlos and Mario to be able to commit to attending. Anna asked the board for a dollar amount limit suggested for investing in training. It would be \$900 for three people for two day in person. Katie to meet with Dr. Forrest Lane at 3:00 p.m. to learn about SFA's grant subscription services and will share with the group via Teams. Anna will inquire with East Texas Center for Non-Profits to inquire about training options including the cost to train as a group with the possibility to host and invite others to attend. A motion was made to approve five people up to \$1500 to get trained. The board unanimously approved the motion.

b. Leadership Nac (Erin)

Erin suggested sending new associate director to Leadership Nacogdoches to increase community connections for the group. The cost is \$1000. The application for the 2025 year is available through the Chamber of Commerce. Jordan made a motion to approve. Those present voted unanimously to approve the motion.

c. New Board Members:

Anna discussed nominations for new board members are due by the April board meeting. The election will happen during the May meeting and new members take office June 1. We do not currently have a "nominating committee" so members need to let the chair know if they have a recommendation. The board has a goal of adding 5 more members. The maximum number of members allowed according to the bylaws is 20. The group discussed the need to be intentional with adding others that are committed while think of industry and community representation the group is missing. Between now and April Meeting, Katie will create a list in Teams for board members to begin adding potential advisory board members to be discuss during March's Advisory Board Meeting. Current officers are willing to continue another year, but we really need a chair elect for this next year.

5. TEAMS demo (Dr Moses)

Katie demonstrated shared files in the new Better Together Teams account. Will be sending invitations to the group next week.



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6. Mental Health Crisis Committee Update

a. Possible summer intern to help with research project

Erin Taravella has expressed interest in completing her social work internship from Texas A&M with Better Together. Erin made a motion to approve getting an intern. The group unanimously approved the motion. Katie will share her internship requirements to Dr. Avant for approval through SFA.