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**Darlington County First Steps Board Meeting**

**Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 6:00pm**

**Present:** Linda George, Howard Nettles, Thomas “T.C.” Sawyer, Rudell Dubose

**Excused absence:** Barbara Carraway, Lilkenya Jenkins, Lucretia Bellamy

**Present Staff:** Jacqueline Bowman, Britney Dargan, Chrystal Taylor, Darnell Byrd McPherson, Shannon O’Berry

**Invocation and Roll Call**

Howard Nettles called the meeting to order and requested Darnell Byrd McPherson to lead the invocation. Following the prayer, a roll call was conducted to confirm the presence of attendees.

**Financial Updates and Approvals**

Shannon presented the carry-forward amount of $6,411.65 and a state increase of $22,187, both of which were previously approved by the executive committee. A motion was made to accept the carryover, followed by a second motion for the state increase. Both motions received unanimous approval from the attendees.

**Motion to accept carryover funds of $6,411.65- Mr. Nettles**

**Second- Mr. Sawyer**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion to approve state increase of $22,187 – Mr. Sawyer**

**Second- Mr. Nettles**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**Budget Review and Stipend Discussion**

The budget of $746,000 has seen 38% expenditure at the halfway mark of the year. Stipends are used to compensate employees for their work on discretionary grants, as the agency cannot raise salaries due to limited formal funding. A request was made to approve a stipend for the executive director, which would require further approval from the board and the South Carolina First Steps Executive Committee.

**Approval of Stipend for Darnell**

The group discussed a proposed stipend of $20,420 for Darnell, with Shannon O'Berry indicating no objections. After confirming that there were no further concerns, a motion was made and seconded to approve the stipend. The vote was unanimous in favor, but it was noted that final approval rests with the South Carolina First Steps Board.

**Motion to approve proposed stipend of $20,420 for Darnell – Ms. Dubose**

**Second motion- Ms. George**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**Community Engagement and Program Updates**

Darnell Byrd McPherson shared updates on a recent celebration funded by a Barley Foundation grant, which included activities for parents and children, as well as significant donations of diapers and clothing. The event marked a milestone in community engagement, with support from local organizations like Wendy's and United Way. Additionally, there is interest from a new pediatric provider in Lamar to become a Reach Out and Read site.

\* Community engagement and outreach efforts, particularly in underserved areas.

**Upcoming Meetings and Funding Applications**

Darnell Byrd McPherson indicated that there were no further agenda items and confirmed the next meeting will take place in March. Shannon O'Berry emphasized the need to vote on the formula funding application, which is expected to be submitted by April 15th. The group discussed the importance of encouraging participation for this vote.

\* Upcoming meetings and important dates for funding applications.

**Updates and Adjournment**

The meeting included updates on outreach initiatives and recognition of Linda's role in the state-level sexual and reproductive health program advisory committee. Darnell Byrd McPherson thanked participants for their engagement, while Shannon shared important numerical data.