Policy Council Minutes Mar. 2026

Submitted on: August 12, 2026

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Members Present: Carl Telford, Chekeia Hunt, Tajae Smith, Rosalind Moss, Angela Brown, Teneie Mathis, Joyce Smith, Carl Powe, Rita Hunter, Eric McCullough, Bryan Martinez, Cathy Breazeale,

Members Absent: Jesla Hendrix, Maisha Delph, Adiah Franklin, Terail Dorn, Diamond Neal, Thomasina Watson, Z'Quoia Blassingame, Harriett Hunt, Neco Hester, Mikya Cowan, Cheyenne Beasley, Jordan Machen, Bobby Allison, Tomeika Bennett

Mini Training: Self- Assessment

Patrice led a mini-training on the importance of our program's Self-assessment. She explained the purpose, components, and the role of different stakeholders in the process. She outlined the roles of team members and leaders, emphasizing the need for ongoing monitoring and data analysis to improve program effectiveness. Shannon encouraged participation in teams, highlighting the benefits of hands-on involvement and the support provided to staff. Patrice concluded by inviting participants to express interest in specific service areas and emphasized the importance of attending scheduled team meetings and training sessions.

The meeting was called to order by Carl Telford, Chair. A quorum was met.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from last month's meeting were reviewed by the Policy Council (See Attachment). After discussion, Chekeia Hunt made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Joyce Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Personnel Report:

The personnel report was then presented by Tara Cannon, Director of Human Resources. We are recommending hire for 3 perspective new employees (See attachment). All applicants are subject to Background Investigation as mandated by the S.C. Department of Social Services. This includes State and Federal Background Investigation and the Child Registry Search to determine if any abuse or neglect has been made against a child and Pre-Employment Drug Screenings. Also, we will conduct reference checks on all perspective new employees. Appointments are conditional based upon the receipt of satisfactory references, state, and federal background investigation and approval from the Head Start Policy Council. Each full-time employee must serve a three-month introductory probationary period before obtaining regular appointment status. Substitutes are on an as needed basis. After discussion, Chekeia Hunt made a motion to approve the perspective new employees as presented. Angela Brown seconded. Motion carried.

Nicole Jones — **Program:** Head Start; **Position:** Cook; **Location:** Parker

Education Credentials: High School Diploma. She has some experience working in a childcare center and meal prepping. She has a culinary certification.

Rachel Bartsch — **Program:** Early Head Start; **Position:** Classroom Aide; **Location:** Willis H. Crosby

Education Credentials: High School Diploma. She has five years of experience working with young children. She is currently enrolled in an Early Childhood Education program.

Pauline Cobb — **Program:** Early Head Start; **Position:** Substitute Teacher; **Location:** Westside

Education Credentials: Bachelor's Degree: Biology. She does not have any formal work experience with children; however, she has experience with children as a mother and babysitter. She is currently a SHARE Head Start parent.

Approval of the 2026-2027 Training Plan

The 2026-27 Head Start/EHS training plan was presented by Shannon Vaughan, Head Start Director. Ms. Vaughn emphasized that the training Plan is designed to ensure that all staff receive ongoing, high-quality professional development that supports program compliance, continuous improvement, and positive outcomes for children and families. The plan outlines required and supplemental trainings aligned with Head Start Program Performance Standards, including topics such as early childhood development, family engagement, health and safety, data use, and program governance. A key component of the plan is that all required trainings are fully budgeted, ensuring that staff have the necessary financial support to attend scheduled sessions, conferences, and professional learning opportunities without personal cost or barriers. This intentional budgeting reflects the program's commitment to staff development, retention, and quality service delivery, while also ensuring that training participation is consistent, accessible, and aligned with program goals and federal requirements. Ms. Hawthorne displayed the training plan so that all could review and ask questions. After discussion, Carl Powe made a motion to approve the training plan as presented. Angela Brown seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of the 2026-2027 Continuation Grant Application Budget Justification and Narrative

The 2026-2027 Continuation Grant Application Budget Justification and Narrative was presented by Doris Pitchford, Director of Business & Finance. Ms. Pitchford informed the council that the budget for 2026-2027 remained unchanged at $22,473,063 for Head Start and over $1 million for Early Head Start, with no cost-of-living increases from Congress. They are very little changes to the budget. There were minor changes to the supplies, contractual, and the other category. Tajae Smith expressed that she did not like the fact that no more money was given by Congress to Head Start programs. Angela Brown asked a question regarding how the additional monies provided to the supply's category is determined. Ms. Doris explained that because of the increase in cost of living and how prices are going up, it was necessary to add more in the supply's category. Another question was asked about food costs and if we were able to partner with food services to get a cheaper price for food. Ms. Pitchford explained that we must be part of a CACFP co-op with regard of the SC Food Alliance. After discussion, Tajae Smith made a motion to approve the grant application budget justification and narrative as presented. Chekeia Hunt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Self-Assessment Plan and Process:

Ms. Vaughn explained the self-assessment plan and process. She explained the purpose, components, and the role of staff, policy council, board of directors and community partners. Ms. Vaughn reiterated the need for ongoing monitoring and data analysis to improve program effectiveness. She encouraged participation on service area teams. Ms. Patrice will e-mail a list of the different teams, an overview of service areas and the date, time and location of upcoming orientations. Each member of the policy council was encouraged to provide input and to select a team to participate. After discussion, Teneia Mathis made a motion to approve the Self-assessment plan and process. Carl Powe seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Director's Report:

The Director's Report was provided by Ms. Vaughn. She shared that the program is required to meet a 10% enrollment requirement for children with disabilities. The program is currently very close to meeting this requirement and, as a result, will not request a waiver this school year as has been done in the past. Collaboration with local school districts has been instrumental in supporting progress toward meeting this mandate. Additionally, the health team will participate in the "Land of Smiles" dental education program, through which children will receive a free book and a calendar of activities centered on oral health awareness and prevention. Ms. Hawthorne reported to the Council that PFCE data reflects an increase across all seven categories for both the first and second quarters. The program will continue to monitor and track family progress toward goals established for this school year. Regarding in-kind contributions, the program reported a rate of 51.79% in February and is still not meeting the required non-federal share requirement. At this time, consideration of an in-kind waiver is being tabled until later in the school year as efforts continue to increase contributions and meet compliance expectations. After discussion, Tajae Smith made a motion to approve the Director's report as presented. Teneia Mathis seconded. Motion carried.

Budget Review:

The Budget Review was provided by Doris Pitchford, Director of Business & Finance. She reported that 66.67% time has expired with 70.69% of the funding for Head Start and 59.47% for Early Head Start. Combined totals are at 66.39% which is on target. We do not spend as much in the summer due to Head Start program ending in May. In-kind contributions were only at 51.79%. We will consider submitting a waiver in the upcoming months. The council received and reviewed the credit card expenditure and CACFP reports. After discussion, Harriet Hunt Chekia Hunt made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Carl Powe seconded the motion. Motion carried.

No further business, Teneia Mathis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Carl Powe seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Recorded by. Acting Secretary
Carl Telford, Chair