

Everett School Employees Benefit Trust
Wednesday, September 24, 2014
Minutes

Attendance

Gregg Elder
Jared Kink
Susan Lindsey
Jeff Moore
Molly Ringo
Kelly Shepherd

Absent

Sean White

Also Attending

Cris Bosket
Gail Buquicchio
Aanya Lee
Bev Rogers
Randi Seaberg
Darla Vanduren
Arlene Vollema-Rich

Recorder

Kellee Newcomb

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Gregg Elder at 4:01 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by Jared Kink and seconded by Kelly Shepherd to approve the agenda as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Kelly Shepherd and seconded by Jared Kink to approve the minutes from the August 26, 2014 and August 27, 2014 meetings as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Financials

Darla noted the June financials were not ready at this time because they are a part of the annual audit.

Review Annual Audit

Darla said she is still working with the trust auditor to complete the annual audit. It is taking longer than expected due to the move from cash to an accrual basis. The goal is to have the draft audit ready for the Trustees to review prior to the October 15 meeting. She hopes to be able to provide the draft to the Trustees by October 10 and asked that if the Trustees have any questions regarding the draft audit, they would email her with their questions prior to the October 15 meeting. The approved audit will need to be provided to the state by October 27.

Consultant Report

Sean White was not able to attend today's meeting due to a conflict. Aanya Lee presented in Sean's place. She provided a 2015 Final Renewal Report and reviewed it with the group. She reviewed the key decisions made by the Trustees for the January 1, 2015 renewals. She explained that the decision for voluntary long-term care with Unum was pending due to an approved 25% increase for 2015, and the possibility that employee enrollment (currently at eighteen employees) might drop below ten, which would terminate the group coverage. Those enrolled would then be ported to individual coverage with the same rates.

The group reviewed the summary of 2015 plan renewals approved at the August 27, 2014 Trust meeting. They noted that the UHC rates were approximately the same as the WEA rates depending on what plan an employee chose; however, Group Health rates had increased by 12% which would have occurred even if the Trust had stayed with the WEA health plans. The group discussed the best approach in communicating this information to staff.

Aanya reviewed the current practice for short-term disability use which allows employees to use their sick bank hours while out on short-term disability to gross up the short-term disability benefit to 100% of the pre-disability earnings. She said this practice is not the norm and that the common or best practice with short-term disability is to provide an employee with a reasonable income while out on disability, but to still have an incentive to return to work. Generally, employers with sick leave banks require the employee to exhaust the sick leave bank prior to beginning short-term disability benefits. She said the current process is administratively cumbersome to HR and payroll. Bev Rogers agreed and explained that she had checked with the Washington Association of School Business Officials (WASBO) who indicated our current practice is unusual compared to other school districts in the state. The group discussed how the process works and who usually purchases short-term disability.

The group discussed possible alternatives to the current short-term disability practice which were to have the employee exhaust their sick leave bank prior to beginning short-term disability benefits, or allow sick leave through the short-term disability waiting period, but then disallow use of sick leave while on short-term disability. Bev said most districts are doing a double-dip. The group noted some contracts do not allow sick leave to be exhausted and that current policy may need to be revised if current practice is changed. Randi was asked what HR's recommendation would be. She said it would be to allow sick leave through the short-term disability waiting period of fourteen days. Concerns expressed included claims implementation time and that there could be times when employees might be without pay.

The group agreed more information and research was needed from Aanya, district staff and MetLife before a decision could be made. They asked that a written plan be brought back to them that clearly showed rates, potential impacts and pros and cons. With the concerns expressed by the HR department to have a decision made in enough time to allow materials to be printed and distributed to employees, the Trustees agreed to meet next week on September 30, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. to review additional information regarding short-term disability practices and to make a decision on the short-term disability process. As a courtesy, Arlene will reach out to the employee group representatives to inform them of the possibility of changes to the short-term disability process.

Approve Annual Budget

This item will be moved to the September 30 special meeting.

Wellness Program Update

Gail provided an update of the month's activities in the wellness program. She noted the wellness program has received the Golden Apple Award which will be presented at the Healthy Worksite Summit on October 1, 2014. She and Molly will attend the awards ceremony.

Wellness Program Vision and Mission

Gail talked about how the wellness program has evolved over the years to what it is now and how options for wellness have increased from what they were seven or eight years ago. She said the trend in school employee wellness programs is to have no separation between staff and student wellness. She shared philosophies from the Alliance for a Healthy Generation and Cherry Creek School District.

Gail provided mission statements from other school districts and asked the Trustees to review them and highlight words or sentences that spoke to them in terms of wellness. The Trustees spent time reviewing the information and provided feedback. Comments included the preference for positive-toned rather than negative-toned statements; using words that are encouraging and supportive; using common traits such as well-being and balanced; and

including language regarding emotional health. Some liked the current mission statement and thought maybe a belief or value statement could be added. Also noted was that the direction of the Trust is not a direct connection to students. Gail talked about adding language stating that the employer cares about their employees, that their health and well-being is of value, and empowering our employees to be leaders and models for health and well-being and setting an example for our students, parents and the community. Gail will provide more information on mission and vision statements at the October 15 meeting.

Other

Randi shared a brief update on open enrollment activities. More information will be provided at the October 15 meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Gregg Elder at 5:42 p.m.

Sincerely,

Kelly Shepherd
Secretary

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