



ARROWHEAD ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AGENCY

702 3RD AVENUE SOUTH

VIRGINIA, MINNESOTA 55792-2797

ARROWHEAD HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL MINUTES

December 10, 2025

PRESENT:

Alecia Varani	VA Toddler Center
Brandi Reamer	EHS Hibbing & West Range
Emily Bolin	Proctor
Heidi Becker	Two Harbors
Karissa Kaiser	EHS East Range-Quad 1
Rob Hietala	AEOA Board Representative
Rachael Johnson	Hibbing II
Stacey Roepke	CHIC & Northern Tier
Kelly Garrity	HS Business Analyst & Compliance Monitor
Ileigh Gorham	Disabilities & Mental Health Manager
Connie Derickson	Program Manager
Jerry Crittenden	Community Relations Manager
Linda Kraines	EHS Home Base Educator
Nicole Larsen	Family Support Specialist
Meghan Winsor	Disabilities and Mental Health Manager
Barb Fedora	Program Manager
Chris DeGroot	Head Start Assistant Director
Gabe Johnson	Head Start Director
Tracy Sandnas	Head Start Finance Supervisor

SITES NOT REPRESENTED OR EXCUSED:

Babbitt-Open
Chisholm-Open
Eveleth-Gilbert-Absent
CHIC EHS & Chisholm-Absent
Hermantown-Absent
Hibbing I-Open
Hibbing III-Open
Hibbing IV-Open
EHS Lake & Hermantown-Absent
Policy Council Rep to the Board-Excused
Proctor-Absent
PSHB-Absent
Two Harbors-Absent
Virginia I-Open

The Policy Council meeting was held on December 10, 2025, at the conference room of the Station 44 Building in Eveleth and via Teams.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Stacey Roepke, Chairperson, called the Arrowhead Head Start Policy Council Meeting to order at 9:51 a.m. on Wednesday, December 10, 2025.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Roll call was taken showing 8 members present. A quorum was established.
- III. **CORRECTION/APPROVAL OF November 5, 2025, POLICY COUNCIL MINUTES:** **Rob Hietala moved to accept November 5, 2025, minutes, supported by Rachael Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.**
- IV. **CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:** Change F under Old Business to Family Outcomes on the agenda. **Alicia Varani moved to accept the corrected agenda, supported by Rachael Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.**
- V. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.
- VI. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

OFFICERS	NOMINATED	1ST MOTION	2ND MOTION	APPROVED
CHAIRPERSON	Alicia Varani	Alicia Varani	Brandi Reamer	Approved
VICE CHAIRPERSON	Stacey Roepke	Alicia Varani	Brandi Reamer	Approved
SECRETARY	Brandi Reamer	Alicia Varani	Brandi Reamer	Approved
PC REP TO THE BOARD	Racheal Johnson	Alicia Varani	Brandi Reamer	Approved
SPA	Emily Bolin	Alicia Varani	Brandi Reamer	Approved
SPA ALTERNATE	Tabled	NA	NA	NA
CARRY OVER PARENT	Tabled	NA	NA	NA

VII. **REPORTS:**

DIRECTOR’S REPORT: Gabe Johnson reported on the federal side. We have been assigned a new program specialist following the government shutdown. We are waiting to meet. The Head Start Performance Standards are going through a review. We are anticipating changes. Our federal grant application is due December 31, 2025.

On the state side, Minnesota will be hosting the National Head Start Conference this year. MHSA is planning for this conference which will be held in May 2026.

Our Head Start program is still awaiting the completion of the construction on the new infant toddler center. The licensing process has started. Once construction is complete, a series of reviews will be conducted before we are given the green light to open. **Rachael Johnson moved to accept the Director's Report, supported by Alicia Varani. Motion carried unanimously.**

A. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Tracy Sandnas presented the financial statements.

FY 2025 MN HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$702,898.00 for the period from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$166,894.12; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$263,574.40. The balance is \$439,323.60

FY 2025 FEDERAL HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$2,544,527.00 for the period from April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$553,418.28; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$1,792,356.10. A balance of \$752,170.90 remains.

FY 2025 FEDERAL EARLY HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$1,821,881.00 for the period from April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$373,462.56; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$1,206,435.10; The balance of \$615,445.90 remains.

The September & October credit card report was presented. **Rob Hietala moved to accept the Financial Reports, supported by Alicia Varani. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT: Jerry Crittenden reported on enrollment and shared the current enrollment report. A discussion was held. **Alicia Varani moved to accept the Community Relations Report, supported by Brandi Reamer. Motion carried unanimously.**

D. AEOA BOARD MEETING REPORT OCTOBER 15, 2025: Gabe reported that our new AEOA Executive Director, Mark Page, lead the meeting. A discussion was held on the government shutdown. **Alicia Varani moved to approve the AEOA Board Meeting Report, supported by Rachael Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.**

VIII. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. PIR REPORT 2024-2025:** Chris DeGroot encouraged members to read the report and bring any questions to the next meeting.
- B. STRATEGIC PLANNING SUMMARY:** Chris DeGroot encouraged members to read the report and bring any questions to the next meeting.
- C. PROGRAM SELF ASSESSMENT 2024-2025:** Chris DeGroot encouraged members to read the report and bring any questions to the next meeting.
- D. SCHOOL READINESS-FIRST PERIOD:** Chris DeGroot encouraged members to read the report and bring any questions to the next meeting.
- E. ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025:** Chris DeGroot encouraged members to read the report and bring any questions to the next meeting.
- F. FAMILY OUTCOMES REPORT:** Chris DeGroot encouraged members to read the report and bring any questions to the next meeting.
- G. PARENT FAMILY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. FY 2026 FUNDING APPLICATION APPROVAL: Gabe presented the budgets for Early Head Start and Head Start. A discussion was held. **Alicia Varani moved to approve the 2026 Funding Application, supported by Rob Hietala. Motion carried unanimously.**

B. CCAP FUNDING APPROVAL: Gabe reported that he is looking into this funding to fill the gap in Pathway 1 Scholarships that we no longer have. CCAP is funded through St. Louis County and can be used for parents who are working or attending school. **Alicia Varani moved to approve the CCAP Funding Application, supported by Rachael Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: Full policy is on www.aeoa.org under Head Start

Policies	First	Second	Motion Passed
Eligibility Policy	Rob Hietala	Alicia Varani	Approved
Enrollment Policy	Alicia Varani	Brandi Reamer	Approved
Enrollment Point System	Alicia Varani	Rob Hietala	Approved
EHS Enrollment Point System	Alicia Varani	Brandi Reamer	Approved
Recruitment Policy	Alicia Varani	Rachel Johnson	Approved
Recruitment Plan 2026-2027	Alicia Varani	Brandi Reamer	Approved

D. NEW HIRES:

New Staff	First	Second	Motion Passed
Hibbing 1 Classroom Assistant Michelle Jensen	Rob Hietala	Brandi Reamer	Approved

- X. **POLICY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE (NEXT MTG TBD).** A survey monkey will be sent out to all members to see which day, and time works best for most.
- XI. **PARENT & COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:** Stacey Roepke reported that Mn Discovery program had Santa, face painting, crafts and holiday food.
- XII. **MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION:** Members want to see another theme for our February meeting. Suggestions are Valentine's, football, and Mardi Gras. These will be on the survey monkey with the meeting preferences.
- XIII. **ADJOURNMENT: Rob Hietala moved to adjourn the meeting, supported by Alicia Varani. Motion carried unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Sandnas, Finance Supervisor

Gabe Johnson, Director Arrowhead Head Start