

**STEM Action Center Board Meeting Minutes**

November 15, 2017 • 2:00pm

STEM Action Center: 60 East South Temple, Suite 850, Salt Lake City

**Members Present:** Angie Tymofichuk, Dee Knight, Eric Pope, Justin Lee, Joseph Spence**Members Absent:****Staff:** Allison Spencer, Lolly Bowler, Tami Goetz**Visitors:****I. Welcome and Related Business**

Allison Spencer, STEM Foundation Director, called the meeting to order and introduced Angie Tymofichuk and the proposed board chair. Justin Lee (Microsoft) made the motion to confirm Angie's position as board chair, Eric Pope (U.S. Synthetic) seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

**II. Board Discussion**

Angie Tymofichuk introduced herself and her background and experience in the STEM industry and with Hill Air Force Base and other Air Force Base engineering programs. She talked about the importance of getting students involved with science when they show interest and the importance of equal opportunity for all genders and races. She apologized for missing the last meeting and mentioned that she had read through the minutes. In the last meeting, the board talked about keeping the messaging consistent and she asked for some more information on the messaging and how to tag the STEM Action Center in social media, etc. Allison Spencer mentioned that we could have a complete, mandatory training for messaging and that would be a good way to kick things off for January. Allison briefly spoke about the board responsibilities and expectations. She talked about company gifts, whether they are monetary or in-kind. Tami Goetz, STEM Action Center Executive Director, mentioned that if any represented companies have ideas of in-kind donations or programs they would like to implement in local schools, the STEM AC team can help get those ideas going.

Allison Spencer asked the board to be thinking of ideas in regards to a kick-off event/fundraiser for the STEM Foundation. Joseph Spence asked when the board bios will be distributed. Allison explained that the web page for the Foundation is in progress and will include the photos and bios of each board member. There needs to be more advertising of the foundation, so that awareness is increased. Most people don't know that it exists yet.

Tami Goetz spoke about how the Foundation- and the public-private relationship it embodies- is an important topic of discussion for legislators. It would be great to queue up some talking points for the foundation board members to share what we are doing with the legislators since it is a topic of interest for them. Dee Knight included that it would be helpful to have a one page informational handout to leave behind.

Allison Spencer shared the mission statement for the STEM Foundation, described how it helps explain the need for a 501(c) (3) non-profit and asked the board members for approval. The

mission statement is: "Promoting economic prosperity by assisting the Utah STEM Action Center to build industry connections and provide STEM resources to the State of Utah." Eric Pope made a motion to approve, Justin Lee seconded. Unanimously approved.

Tami Goetz spoke about how it might be nice to discuss in a meeting what kind of funds the legislature is willing to give and what they are not wanting to fund. It's tough to get scholarship funds from the legislature. What can we not do with legislative funds?

Allison showed a list of funding received by the foundation so far, including donations from Wells Fargo, Tesoro (now Andeavor), Hill AFB and Larry H. Miller. She asked that the board discuss a possible scholarship program. Tami asked for the board member's opinions in regards to scholarships. How can we create a meaningful scholarship program? What are the key areas of concern for our company partner and how can we implement that in the creation of a program with specific scholarships? What makes sense from the perspective of the business world for some key areas that will light up the passion of industry members? What makes sense for us to focus on with this?

Joseph Spence shared information about the programs that he has been working on, including tech/programming classes for underprivileged (vulnerable communities) high school students (homeless, refugees) and adults. These programs are made possible by volunteers, and they sacrifice a lot. A small "thank you" stipend for the professional volunteers that are teaching these classes would be a good use of funds and help support the programs. An educator scholarship or trainer training scholarship of sorts. Allison explained that as a 501(c) (3), we cannot use funds to pay stipends to staff or teachers. She said that she would look into it further. Joseph also suggested supporting high performing students who may need additional assistance for competitions, etc.

Allison mentioned that when she has talked to donors, they all have a mission statement that they want to cater to. That's why it's helpful to see what is important to them. A lot of them focus on women and children and STEAM. Tami Goetz asked the board members if they know if there are any companies focused on rural communities. Dee Knight from Comcast said that their company has interest in aiding rural communities and getting people access to Internet to do online learning.

Eric Pope from U.S. Synthetic said that industry will do what benefits them; companies are struggling to find qualified people to hire. So they would be supportive of programs that would train potential employees. US Synthetic feels responsibility to do good things and enjoys trying to inspire creative thinkers. He said that his company is not targeting a specific demographic. Dee Knight contributed that Comcast is working with community colleges through pipeline programs for adults and college students that are looking to go into the tech field. The goal is to get them in contact with mentors. Angie Tymofichuk said that Hill AFB is also looking for lifelong employees and is interested in connecting people to mentors.

Dee Knight commented that it would be great to create some sort of grant through the foundation that can cover these needs. The big why for companies now is having their employees volunteer and give back to the community. They are all for getting kids interested in STEM and into internships. Sponsoring individual programs seems a little overwhelming. Tami Goetz agreed that a grant approach sounds like a good idea. Dee said that Comcast could fund that through their charitable foundation, to help cover food/transportation costs, teacher stipends, etc. for these programs and courses. Joseph Spence mentioned a program idea to

renovate/create a STEM/Tech Lab (program through SLCC and USU). Grants could add the needed additional funds to make it happen. Tami said that she'd like to sit down with Dee and Joseph and possibly some people from Department of Workforce Services to talk about the idea and process of a grant.

Tami asked if the board thinks that a scholarship program is the place to start. Justin Lee expressed that the idea of a scholarship program is not a broad enough scope and he is leaning towards a grant program, since it would have broader outreach opportunities. Eric Pope contributed that scholarships can be kind of bland and not interesting to industry. But perhaps we can use "scholarships" per se for the programs that we already have in place to bridge the gap in turns of funding.

Allison Spencer expressed that she definitely wants input from the board, since they will be helping and contributing to the program. The inspiration for doing a scholarship fund came from the Fairs, Camps and Competitions grant that the STEM AC has distributed before. Do we want to do a scholarship fund similar to that? All of the board members present agreed that a grant program would be more interesting to industry members because of its potentially broader reach. Scholarships are very individualized.

Allison took a moment to explain that our finance department will not let us put the funds in an endowment and invest it. It is currently not an option, but never say never. She thanked everyone for their input and said that she would contact each board member individually to talk about their ideas. She also invited Angie to send out any thoughts that she has to the board members as well. Angie challenged everyone to reach out to other companies as well and see what their goals are and what they are looking to support.

There was some discussion about how companies are more likely to fund programs, since it is easier to track the metrics and outcomes. It would also be better to fund programs that are already in place in Utah. There are many great STEM programs that are already established in the state and in need of more funding.

Allison Spencer wrapped up the meeting and got everyone's input on what day of the week and time works best to meet. It was decided that a Thursday lunch meeting would work best.

### **III. Adjournment**