

**Connections for Independent Living
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 13, 2020 @ 11:00 a.m.**

Attendance in the digital Meeting:

President-Mary Jo Brockshus, Treasurer-Josh Fulenwider, Secretary-Elizabeth Mahoney , Board Member-Kate Howell, Executive Director (ED)- Rochelle Miller, Finance Director (FD)-Anne Yanez, and Executive and Finance Associate (EFA)- Carol Cochrane

Absent: Assistant Executive Director (AED)-Colin Morey

President Brockshus called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m.

Director Howell moved and Treasurer Fulenwider seconded the approval of the April Board Meeting Minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

COVID 19 Operations –

ED Miller presented a summary of items effecting Connections during COVID 19 work from home (WFH). She stated that all staff, except for one part time employee who provides limited cleaning services, are set up to work remotely. One staff member exited employment with Connections on April 13, 2020. AED Morey is now including overseeing Independent Living Specialists (ILS) in his workload. Connections has filled a Communications Director Position with part-time contractor Roxanne Fry (RoxStarSolutions) who has extensive background in communications and in-depth overall operations in the not-for-profit community. The Leadership Team consisting of ED Miller, AED Mory, Finance Director Yanez, Interpreting Coordinator Augenstien and Communications Director Fry meets as a group and individually with ED Miller on a weekly basis.

The COVID 19 Survey totals are now over 3000 calls and almost 1000 responses. The data of the food and medical welfare survey is being provided to governments and partnering agencies and many other stakeholders on a bi-weekly basis. This sharing of information has strengthened our relationship with these entities.

Treasurer Fulenwider asked if there were any parties we could not assist and ED Miller responded not yet. We have been providing resources during these calls of items such as grocery drop off locations, driving school delivery services and anxiety relief and talk lines. The average time spent on a phone call with our surveyed consumers is 22 minutes. On the flip side of providing this comfort and intrinsic value to our consumers, these calls are incredibly taxing on our staff. As a conscience we are providing resources for staff to support them in this difficult task. These resources include the Employee Assistance Program provided by our payroll provider ADP and community offerings. Finally, in order to connect with some of our participants without available phone number or email contact information, we have constructed a letter and mailed it out to approximately sixty (60) individuals. Board Members then unanimously suggested a letter be sent to the staff of Connections from the Board expressing their thanks and appreciation for exemplary efforts conducting this survey.

On the staffing side, ED Miller expressed her thanks to the Board for times they are able to join the weekly All Hands Staff Meetings. Staff has noticed and appreciated the Board's involvement. Connections for Independent Living has increased staff with a new outreach person for the counties outside of Weld, hired our intern as a regular Independent Living Specialist (ILS), and promoted an ILS to Outreach Director. This hiring has highlighted the need for an onboarding process for new employees.

The plan is to have ED Miller and FD Yanez develop this process in the near future. Connections will revisit the decision to be place Clifton Strengths Training on hold during Work from Home (WFH). Perhaps a short time on ZOOM will help new folks get up to date.

With current work from home conditions, it is an opportunity to revisit Connections' WFH Policy. This policy should include information specific to possible reimbursement of staff members working from home. Many employees are using their own Wi-Fi, cell phones, and utilities. It has been determined through survey and Employers Council resources that \$250.00 per month was reasonable and equitable. The CDLE has indicated that the Board of Directors need to approve a policy that details how we may reimburse people for their expenses while working from home. It should incorporate things such as the lawful American Disability Act (ADA) accommodation. ED Miller composed the policy for review by the Employers Council Attorney. A vote is needed to approve the WFH policy. .

Discussion by Board Members ensued with President Brockshus mentioning the concern of possible issues of staff asking why this person is getting to work from home and I can't. Secretary Mahoney stated that WFH may allow staff to be more productive and that Connections does need to provide reasonable accommodations under ADA. Treasurer Fulenwider asked if requests would need to be submitted in writing and if having staff WFH as a viable option relieves some of the future space constraints of housing staff in the present building. This discussion led to the agreement that response should be physically documented and that WFH may indeed relieve some of the current pressure on the physical space of the Connections' building. Secretary Mahoney stated a concern that if an issue which is unavailable for recall at present can be addressed if the policy were to be approved. Assurances were provided that the policy could be amended at a future board meeting. Treasurer Fulenwider moved and Secretary Mahoney seconded the adoption of the presented WFH policy. Motion passed unanimously.

Connections signed the contract to participate in the SEEKS grant this morning. The money is still there for this program and we are glad for that. It is a five (5) year program and most of the monies are guaranteed for Connections reimbursement. Training of staff that are participating has begun.

Managing performance remotely; the challenges most people have are mediated by a concerted effort to follow best practices of communicating, keeping selves engaged, and clearly defining tasks. To this end we are looking at task management systems (TMS), specifically products Asana and Trello. We are using the free version now while evaluating both. They are both robust systems and allow for the viewing of status of projects without the need for numerous emails and phone calls. All participants in the project can see the status and items still in need of completion. On Wednesday a decision as to which system to initially utilize will be made. Software systems such as Evernote which is more resource management than project management, Mail Chimp, Dropbox and DocuSign are beginning to be instituted as well. Our remote working situation requires these different resources to solve the issues of obtaining signatures, maintaining group access, providing security and managing performance remotely. The board expressed concern about staff becoming overloaded with all of these new systems. ED Miller assured them that the only person that needed to understand all of them was herself. The rest of the staff will only utilize the systems that are required for their positions.

The phased re-occupation of physical office space are still being built out and waiting for the new task management system to complete. Indicators of phases have been established, but as Weld County is a veritable hot-spot of COVID activity, our agency cannot move beyond its current phase until there is a leveling and few to no cases of the virus. Absolutely every service to Connections' clients is better than six weeks ago, with the exception of in-person peer support meetings.

Staff is establishing curriculum for technology and a curbside check out process for our consumers who do not have technology but need it to participate in Peer Support groups and other services and programs. Staff is moving forward to obtain personal protective equipment (PPE) such as N-95 face masks, gloves, sanitizer and cleaning items for when we begin to phase workers back into our physical space. Appointments will be set up for the exact time of distribution in order to maintain proper cleaning, distance and changing of PPE between each consumer. This PPE and technology is eligible for reimbursement in the Cares Grant. As some Centers for Independent Living (CIL) in Colorado did not receive the Cares Act Part C funding a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with the Ft. Collin CIL to share money by creation of some sort of calculation to set some money aside for other centers is under consideration and review.

Treasurer Fulenwider presented information on detailed procedures needed to distribute PPE to individuals. Secretary Mahoney expressed an interest on who is checking on the building during WFH. ED Miller stated that FD Yanez is coming once a week for mail and AED Morey is going to the facility as needed. The Board expressed their gladness that a policy of keeping people safe is evident, especially knowing the population of consumers and employees is at a higher risk during this COVID 19 period.

Financial Report

Finance Director Yanez and ED Miller presented the Financial Report:

Debit card items in the two bank accounts are resolved. Current assets due from bank, another issue James Childress and his staff will resolve and hopefully remove from the balance sheet. Payroll liabilities with ADP not yet resolved but now looking at a different approach in order to accomplish this..

Board reviewed the Profit & Loss, A/R Aging reports and scrolling down by month you can see April light on income. We are working on the resolution of that issue. The chart of accounts is now revised and cost center or department will be a key descriptor going forward. Treasurer Fulenwider has no questions on the P & L.

CDLE Budget review/vote; ED Miller stated this is not an operating budget – but the CDLE program/services budget. This is the budget to submit to the State of Colorado for the funding Independent Living Centers receive for ILS services. ED Miller and James Childress reviewed salaries and saw discrepancies Other ILCs responded to our request to share salaries for similar positions. As a result this budget includes salary increases to resolve discrepancies and bring pay to a reasonable level as compared to other ILCs. President Brockshus asked if these increases are separate from the cost of living adjustment (COLA). ED Miller responded in the affirmative. A spreadsheet detailing individual increases was presented. Knowing there is a budget cut in 2021, the increases in salary still fit within this budget amount as well as an additional twenty percent (20%) to account for risk of reduction. This budget will add \$37,000 at full rate for the year of June 1 to Sept 30. President Brockshus raised the concern of the amount of the budget cuts. Director Miller stated that she has been told that the cuts will be between 10 and 14%. A second risk budget to accommodate a larger cut has been prepared in the event it is needed. President Brockshus asked if we approving both budgets. Director Miller answered in the affirmative, but only the 1st prepared budget will be sent initially, if that budget is rejected by the state, the second reduced budget will be submitted. President Brockshus requested a motion be made to approve the budget. Secretary Mahoney motioned to approve and Treasurer Fulenwider seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Old Business

Anton, Collins, Mitchell (ACM) moved the audit back due to their backlog from COVID 19; performance evaluations on track; there is no new information of the RFP for Medicaid.

The formerly known as bonus committee recommended six (6) days additional PTO. ED Miller recommends four (4) PTO days for the maximum amount as an alternative to the Bonus Committee request. This enables Connections to avoid a sliding scale in order to fit the accrued liability amount into the budget. Board members asked how many PTO days are available. ED Miller responded that it depends on how many years an individual staff member is with us. There is a maximum of 200 hours allowed to be accrued. Treasurer Fulenwider stated that he is leaning to five (5) days. Secretary Mahoney supported Treasurer Fulenwider’s position. ED Miller stated that she would check with James Childress to see if this could be worked into the budget. Secretary Mahoney expressed support for this time to be available as soon as an employee was hired, as this policy would allow a new hire to stay home if they became ill before the accrual of sick time kicks in after (90) days. This would not add to the existing accrual policy. ED Miller stated that she would research to see what best practices are as well as have James Childress review.

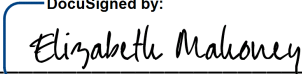
Board member recruitment: Secretary Mahoney plans on including the mission statement for the board in the board application packet. She proposed a process to vet applicants. She requested fellow board members send referrals for potential board members again as some prospective board members have not gotten back to her. Secretary Mahoney will send out applications this week and will contact board members when candidates are available for interviews

Treasurer Fulenwider moved to adjourn the meeting. President Brockshus seconded. Vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, done to the best of my belief and ability, by Carol Cochrane.

APPROVED AT BOARD MEETING held _____.

Affirmed by:  _____
Elizabeth Mahoney, Board Secretary

Date: _____ 