

**Connections for Independent Living  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, June 24, 2020 @ 1:30 p.m.**

Attendance in the digital Meeting:

President-Mary Jo Brockshus, Treasurer-Josh Fulenwider, Secretary-Elizabeth Mahoney , Board Member-Kate Howell, Board Member-Lou Steinberg, Executive Director (ED),- Rochelle Miller, Communications Director (CD) – Roxanne Fry, James Childress, CPA, Executive Assistant (EA)- Carol Cochrane

President Brockshus called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

Director Howell moved and President Brockshus seconded the approval of the May Board Meeting Minutes. Motion passed unanimously by board members present. Secretary Mahoney was absent at this point of the meeting.

**Financial Report**

Mr. Childress and ED Miller presented the Financial Report:

The P&L and Balance Sheet in QuickBooks are still not indicative on the Accounts Payable (A/P) and Accounts Receivable (A/R) side of things. There is more data and recording of entries to be processed. June financials will be very active due to large amounts of A/R and A/P transactions expected.

Mr. Childress shared his background of eighteen (18) years of experience with fourteen (14) of them in audit. He utilizes technology to improve systems, as is being done for Connections.

The Balance Sheet shows \$187,000 in cash on May 31, 2020 with \$434,000 in AR. As of now, the Balance Sheet shows an A/R balance of \$310,000. This change is due both to collections and write-offs in the interpreting program. The amounts written off are due in part to the duplication of revenue from the conversion of Quick Books (QB) from desktop to online and back to desktop. Also involved in the write-off necessity is the invoicing process from Gridcheck to QB. This process is not integrated in the manner it needs to be. Work needs to be done to make the process seamless. Ownership by the people, who perform the interpreting services as they are the closest to what happened on the specific job, needs to be established and communicated. This will result in more accurate billings regarding services provided and an elimination of duplicate billings for the same services. Of the A/R balance, \$273,000 were invoiced within the last sixty days and based on communications should be received within the next few months and \$29,000 are past sixty (60) days but within the past year. \$60,000 of the A/R are over a year old, some older than two (2) years and are probably a mistake in the system which we need to check and make appropriate adjustments in QuickBooks.

Profit and Loss Statement (P&L) payroll and Interpreting are areas that are most impactful in May. The write-offs in June are also showing up. To close the gap of expenses over revenue an integration of systems and streamlining the interpreting billing process is underway. Quantification of changes to rates and the review of these systems is a team effort utilizing multiple staff members and the Childress group.

The General Fund and Part C Grant input is \$197,789.10.

Part B Funding is considered Deferred Revenue. This amount is reduced as the monthly bills are submitted to the State of Colorado for payment. The A/R is increased with these billings and then reduced when the cash payment is received. As such, there is always visibility to the liability account and one can see the quantification and performance of the Grant.

Discussion of this method of presenting Grants on the Financial Statement by Treasurer Fulenwider, Board Member Steinberg and Mr. Childress ensued. Throughout the year one can tell the status of the specific Grant – how much is spent down, what is left. The Budget can be identified for these Grants (State Gen. Funds, Part B, Part C, SEEKs, CARES Act). The first budget is specific to the CDLE Program, not all encompassing. This Board drafts the CDLE budget in May and approves this CDLE Program budget in June and the main Operations budget is drafted in August and approved in September for the October 1 fiscal year. The Balance Sheet and P&L are the barebones of the report; we need to move into the direction of budget vs. actual across all budget streams. The grants all interrelate to expenses that tie in with their budget. The interpreting service act as a fee for service model program and is not grant related.

ED Miller stated that the reduced cash flow from interpreting is due to an issue with our largest client for interpreting. The Gridcheck system tracks interpreting charges and is pulled into QB and is best described as a very large box of tangled Christmas Lights. Gridcheck has approximately 80 to 90% of what needs to be done, but there is a gap. There are no checks on data validation. The importing of data relied on old invoices in the system. A full stop on invoicing was done in May and we reviewed this with all hands of the team on deck performing a full comprehensive package on all sessions with names redacted and did a soft touch and final close out. We wrote off a significant amount of old invoices. We are working on repairing our relationships with our clients, especially our largest utilizer UNC, sending appropriate apology and retention letters to clients requesting their understanding, expressing our apologies and ensuring that the system is under repair. Sarah Augenstein (Interpreting Director) is speaking directly with clients and in the RFP process with UNC. Going forward a comprehensive procedure to review Gridcheck information before invoicing on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of each month is being implemented which will alleviate the problems with invoicing and smooth out cash flow.

Director of Communications Roxanne Fry stated that in these letters we are welcoming feedback from our clients, stressing our improved invoicing system and wonderful payment processing system.

ED Miller put forth that this situation is also a vehicle to promote our ability to digital conference and to provide ASL for remote conferences. We are communicating our marketing plan to add accessibility to our clients in ways other than ASL.

President Brockshus asked Mr. Childress if Gridcheck should be replaced. He responded by saying that it handles some things really well and the cost of another system would be significant and there is no guarantee that a new system would solve the problem. If we can get disparate parts together, the current system may well be worth saving. The key is to have information in Gridcheck correct and to push back to the interpreters the responsibility to have correct information in the system. The interpreters are the closest to what actually occurred at the client's site. They are the likely people to validate what is on the invoice. Director Steinberg stated that the recourse would be if the interpreter did not put the bill in correctly, they would not get paid. As such they need to partner with us to go to the next level and ensure the invoicing is correct.

Bill.com was the next topic introduced by ED Miller. It is a feature rich, software service with monthly fees and charges of \$0.42 per electronic check and \$1.40 per paper check. Bill.com allows for linking

directly with QB. The features allow for an approval process however we want, an audit log and read only user access for auditors so they can see what cancelled checks cleared the bank. Treasurer Fulenwider can see what is going on. We have three audits each year and this will greatly reduce the time needed by the auditors to review transactions. It is a streamlined process for payment approval by ED Miller with excellent internal controls.

Connections is switching the procurement card system from debit to credit. This will provide an opportunity to agree to the procurement card rules. It will also allow for a cash back feature on purchases.

The ACM audit is pushed back once again. With the COVID-19 issues, they are behind their original schedule.

Mr. Childers concluded before leaving at 2:30 that he is excited to be back working with Connections and wishes to get every process as smooth and efficient as possible, find ways to be more cost effective and delegate to staff. He is available to the board and there is a link in his email signature to schedule an appointment.

### **Digital Votes**

On May 29, 2020 at 2:33 PM President Brockshus stated via email that the Connections Board of Directors voted on two items and they have both passed.

The first vote was to add Lou Steinberg as a Board Member.

The second vote was to approve the attached 3 documents as written for the CARES Act funding. Treasurer Fulenwider moved and Director Howell seconded to accept the digital votes. Motion passed unanimously.

### **COVID 19 Operations –**

ED Miller presented a summary of items affecting Connections during COVID 19 work from home (WFH).

- Contractor Roxanne Fry accepted the offer to become our part-time Communications Director.
- We hired a part-time Independent Living Specialist for the Fort Morgan Area.
- The COVID 19 Survey is in a holding pattern and has morphed into a Care Call program geared to our consumers.
- Peer support group meetings have started via ZOOM
- A digital interpreting service classroom with Ethernet, more professional camera and lighting is scheduled to be online the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week of August
- The four phases of COVID 19 – we are still seeing an increase in cases in the entire catchment area, but not as great an increase as in prior weeks.
- Our technology loaner program is on target to begin soon. Proposed times are 3 to 4 hours for 2 days in the a.m. and 2 days in the p.m. for each week. The building is not open for consumers; it is planned for drive-in with a no touch transfer. There are ten Chromebooks which have ZOOM and security functions currently on order. These will have a thirty (30) day check out period in order to fulfill our responsibilities with the CARES Act funding and goals for independent living. Anyone in the community may reserve a Chromebook, but they must first register in our system. They may only reserve a Chromebook for up to three (3) months in the calendar year.

- The “Zoom Room” in the Conference room is scheduled to start the mid to end of July. This will enable ILS’s and the housing coordinator to meet with their consumers who do not have available technology at home to meet via Zoom, as well as provide a private space for a consumer to meet with their doctor or other professional. We will maintain social distancing with set hours for appointments, provide a Plexiglas barrier at the receptionist desk for protection of our staff, provide an Ultra Violet Light to sanitize the room after use, 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.
- We are establishing a Tech Mate program of volunteers to provide Tech Support for our consumers. They will support our consumers via phone or other remote devices with issues from Zoom to setting up Amazon or Kindle or Computer issues. Background checks will be performed before allowing a volunteer to become a Tech Mate.
- Currently the project management system being trialed by the executive staff is Trello. However, we are finding large holes in the program and are probably going to change to another system such as Asana. Going from a smaller to a more robust system should be a seamless transfer.

Roxanne Fry presented the status of the RFP for the website. She received five (5) responses, all of whom answered the questionnaire and presented different viable options. Connections selected One Tribe out of Fort Collins, a provider who creates websites for many non-profits. Yesterday’s first call with them went very well. They are concentrating on the accessibility aspect and utilizing best practices, emerging trends and services that are not due to a fad. There will be a Technology email address log and text reminder. A board portal will be available and will allow board documents for all board members to access straight off the website. It should be in operation by September 15, 2020.

#### **Executive Director Report –**

- ED Miller quickly restated the options for paid time off (PTO) to replace the former bonus. The committee requested six (6) days; the ED recommended offering staff four (4) days, the board previously discussed five (5) days. The time would be added at the beginning of each calendar year. There is still a two hundred (200) hour cap on the accumulation of PTO. Director Steinburg moved for the addition of five (5) days PTO to be accrued for each staff member at the beginning of each calendar year. Secretary Mahoney seconded. Discussion ensued confirming five (5) days for full time and two and one half (2.5) days for part time. Treasurer Fulenwider stated his support for the motion. Vote taken. Motion passed unanimously. Treasurer Fulenwider stressed that the employment manual should be worded correctly to indicate the specificity of this newly awarded amount of PTO.
- The issues with the Transitions Department’s government agency HCPF for Medicaid billing approval are now fully resolved. Connections has been recertified as a qualified agency to provide this assistance without providing the Board Members Social Security Numbers.
- The 403(b) benefits committee is in the process of trying to change vendors. The target date for this is September 1, 2020.
- The Employee Handbook is in draft #3 with ED Miller working with our assigned attorney from Employers Council. We are trying to have parts of it incorporate the FMLA concept but on a broader form as we are not eligible to participate in FMLA.
- CD Fry will stand in for ED Miller at the August Board meeting.

**Old Business**

Equality messaging: ED Miller provided information on how Connections was currently handling communications due to the pulse of the nation and the Black Lives Matter movement. Several statements from NCIL, ACCIL, Atlantis in Denver and other agencies have been sent to the board for review to consider Connections position and messaging. Director Brockshus stated that ADA is all inclusive and asked if we should consider making a statement to send out. Treasurer Fulenwider stated that advocacy in Independent Living and the ADA was born in the Civil Rights Movement, so it is natural for Independent Living Centers to speak out with statements of support. ED Miller stated that Connections is in a different climate than Atlantis and provided the statement from Pueblo that they supported equality for all. It was discussed that the time for supportive comments has probably past. More important is our intentional advancement of inclusivity in both the board and staff. Consistent messaging is of great value. Roxanne Fry and ED Miller will put together a suggested statement to add to the core value statements for Connections board to review in the July meeting.

ADA Anniversary: July 26<sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of the ADA. ED Miller would like to have messages via video of what ADA means to you.

Board member recruitment: Secretary Mahoney suggested if you know of someone out east who may be interested in a board position, provide their phone number to call and follow up. We need to promote board membership as an intentional opportunity for people of color. ED Miller stated that the Colorado Non-Profit Association Board intentionally promoted the opportunity for people of color to join and they succeeded in obtaining very qualified candidates. Secretary Mahoney is developing more of a job description for the board including term limits. Once there is a full board, more rotation of members would be standard. The interviewing process is open, but will wait until the strategic planning process is completed and by-laws are in place. Terms can be contemplated in a review of the bylaws. Any assistance with interviewing will be appreciated. Director Steinberg stated that it works best to have the strategic planning and the by-laws in place before adding additional members to the board. That way the expectations are set and can be met and roles and responsibilities are identified and measurable.

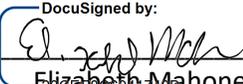
Additional discussion: ED Miller is out for the July Meeting. AED Morey will be at a required SEEK Meeting. Roxanne Fry will make the Executive Director presentation. The strategic planning session will be shorter.

Director Howell moved to adjourn the meeting Treasurer Fulenwider seconded. Vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

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

**APPROVED AT BOARD MEETING** held July 15, 2020.

Affirmed by:  \_\_\_\_\_  
Elizabeth Mahoney, Board Secretary

Date: 7/30/2020