

Connections for Independent Living

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 24, 2021 @ 11:00 a.m.

Attendance in the Meeting:

President-Mary Jo Brockshus, Member-Kate Howell, Member-Lou Steinberg,
Executive Director-Rochelle Miller, Executive Associate-Carol Cochrane

Absent:

Secretary-Elizabeth Mahoney

President Brockshus called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

Director Steinberg motioned to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting and Director Howell seconded. Vote taken. Motion approved unanimously.

President Brockshus read into the minutes the results of the digital vote taken March 9, 2021. Motion passed unanimously. All four members voted to amend the employee handbook with an added definition on page 14 so it now reads:
"Full and part-time employees are eligible for applicable benefits after a 90-day probationary period, starting from when their first date of employment has been completed."

Executive Director Miller noted that handbook changes which do not alter the meaning will not be presented to the board. Board members stated their agreement.

President Brockshus mentioned that board members attendance at the staff All Hands Meetings is a courtesy meant to build bridges and trust between the staff and the board members. As such we should remember to observe and not comment. This invitation to attend has provided board members with a better understanding and appreciation of the mission and programs of Connections for Independent Living.

Financial Report

Executive Director Miller informed the Board that the Colorado Division of Labor and Employment (CDLE) lowered the Connections for Independent Living risk level status from high down to medium alert. Connections is one point away from a low risk level, the low risk level status will hopefully be achieved in the next quarterly measurement period. The CDLE audit of Connections will occur in June.

The presentation of the Profit and Loss Statement resulted in a conversation concerning specific areas. Contract labor includes Mountain Sage Consulting, installation of items

in the Virtual Remote Interpreting Room (VRI Room), sign repair, and interior and touch-up exterior painting. Legal expenses, two audits by BDO billed in the same calendar year for differing fiscal years, and the Childress team accounting work are the bulk of what makes up Legal and Professional. We will be reviewing the items in these accounts to ensure they are in the correct buckets and reclassifying them to the other account or repairs and maintenance if deemed appropriate. The future average monthly expense for the Childress accounting team is expected to be between ten and thirteen thousand dollars. The work from home expense reimbursement is \$250 per person per month. This amount will be reduced in June to \$125 per person per month after informing staff of the hybrid situation and reduction in budget. The \$250 was derived from California's (CA) determination and a CA Supreme Court judgement that the average amount for these expenses was \$400 per month, as well as advice from Employers Council that an amount under \$400 per month was reasonable in Colorado. We took this guidance to establish the \$250 per month amount. The computer expense section includes the purchase of low level computers for staff. The original intention and capabilities of these models has been exceeded by our extended remote work conditions. We have begun investigating faster, higher capacity models and will recycle the older models to our borrowing program for consumer use.

The Balance Sheet shows the spike from the PPP loan. The financial dashboard indicates that the last two months expenses have been on track with expected amounts. With the extra audit and CARES Act expenses, the placement of the average line is uncertain. We will track and obtain understanding of anomalies so future budgeting will be more informed. If the PPP revenue is removed, we are in the 90% range of expected revenue. Director Steinberg inquired if seasonality is an issue. ED Miller responded that the fee-for-service Interpreting Department does experience a lowered demand from mid-December through January. We will be utilizing uSked for this analysis in the future.

The Management Financial Dashboard is preferred by the board for the overview that it provides. The conciseness shows at a glance what is in cash reserves and receivables. UNC has not yet responded to our meeting presentation regarding the past due receivables. We sent a PDF with each invoice detailing the information. At this point, we will not provide services until all matters are resolved in this account. The Accounts Receivable Aging Report now includes amounts from CDLE and part C Grant.

ED Miller stated that next month we will spend some time on the quarterly report and Mr. Fulenwider will provide assistance in the discussion of this six month review of our financials. Budget numbers will adjust as we will have true data and our internal controls are tightened. Some anomalies will be identified.

Operations and Executive Director Report

ED Miller stated that the contributions by Board Members is still in the red zone as we do not have 100% of Board Members contributing a monetary amount. The size of the contribution does not matter, but the participation does matter for when we apply for grants, this is a metric that is often requested and weighed in our competitiveness for grant funding.

The audit Engagement Letter with BDO was signed on March 11, 2021. Remote field work is expected the weeks of April 5 and April 12. Connections provided BDO with a trial balance by the due date. We assigned the prepared by client (PBC) items to specific individuals. If BDO is on track with us, the issuance of the audited financial statements for the fiscal year 10/01/2019 - 09/30/2020 should be accomplished by the end of May 2021.

Director of Communications Rhinehart is preparing an Annual Report for Connections. This will be the first in our 35 year history.

The CARES Act grant has approximately ten thousand dollars unspent and these remaining funds are assigned. The release of a new FAQ for CARES Act funding informs us that we are 100% on track for documentation of the expenses and allocation of the funds.

Our work with the committee on the State General Fund and Part B Funding methods for the next two years has been beneficial. We received word that independent living agencies are on track to carry over, 10% of unused funds, to the next fiscal year. This legislation still needs to go through a few more votes and be adopted by Governor Polis into the budget before implementation. Connections part C funding is behind schedule in utilization as the CARES Act funding was used first.

The SEEKS grant is going well. We have eight to ten new intakes every one to two weeks and our ILS service is up 27% since ED Miller's tenure began. Services to our outlying counties are delayed in ramping up, but there are plans in development to improve our presence.

Connection Cares resumed last Friday. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has chosen our April 9th event to host an equity vaccine clinic. If successful, they would like to replicate this in other locations in our catchment area. We have been lobbying for this for a while in order to assist people without technology to obtain COVID-19 vaccines and to increase our visibility in the community.

The DOH waiting list is opening in April. In a response to President Brockshus' question on the funds for housing deposits ED Miller stated that the funds are getting low with only \$1,200 remaining. Connections has applied for more grant funding from two Rotary groups and is awaiting their responses.

The Transition Department activity is reduced due to the facilities being closed off during the COVID pandemic. As a result the one full time employee in the department will be temporarily reassigned to half-time in the ILS department and half-time in Transitions.

The Interpreting Department is moving back to a growth stage. They were not awarded the UC Health contract. It went to a national firm. However, they are approved as a fill in agency and are receiving appointments on a pace similar to last year. The kinks in the uSked system are being worked out.

The computer voucher awards are going well. It is anticipated that we will distribute the last of these vouchers in June.

We have applied for a Reeves Foundation grant to develop and run an outreach program for people with paralysis. This program could help with the isolation endured during the pandemic. It would assist people with engaging in relationships and encourage peer support through lived experience with paralysis. Proposed modules include interpretive photography. Small groups in each of the modules would be guided and assisted with computer use and technology support. If awarded, the grant will fund a part-time temporary position for one year.

We did receive a grant from a source that wishes to remain private for training of staff.

The Communications department contracted with a digital communications consultant for three to six months. They will assist and provide guidance with digital services such as Twitter and Facebook. The goal is to gain more activity and social media presence.

The Connections Newsletter is bi-monthly and a new one will be out in April.

The Operations plan at six months is ahead of schedule and there is no section that is less than 50% of goal. It has been a great tool for our new Director of ILS. We will be moving the 3-5 year plan to a 1-2 year plan and will send these updates to you in the April board packet.

Secretary Mahoney is feeling more comfortable with the process of gaining new board members due to the succession plan for the board, consistency in the on-boarding process and the training provided by Mountain Sage Consulting.

ED Miller is working on a vaccine policy that will follow the law in regard to documentation and when and how waivers will be accepted.

Some State of Colorado employees recognize the successes Connections made in servicing their consumers remotely during the pandemic. They believe we are a good example.

ED Miller is approaching her one year anniversary with Connections. The annual review is due. The board will receive some examples on review tools.

Old Business

President Brockshus stated that Secretary Mahoney requested the Board review the application of the potential new member. She is experienced in the penal system. Director Steinberg and Director Howell will review her qualifications before the next meeting. Executive Director Miller stated that during her interview the candidate was enthusiastic and volunteered that she has an invisible disability. The board agreed that a vote should not be taken before the two Directors completed their review of the application and/or conversation with the candidate. It was suggested that a digital vote on acceptance of the new member could be accomplished before the next board meeting. President Brockshus stated that it is time to look back at the board matrix and put a plan in place to recruit the next board member.

Director Howell suggested that she would like to be part of a fundraising committee but does not have the time to take the lead. She believes that we need to take advantage of the 35th anniversary and make Connections known. Director Steinberg stated that there are many levels of fundraising and we should form a committee to decide what the funds would be used for and how to execute the efforts by choosing an event or a mailing.

President Brockshus provided the names of three potential roofing companies to inspect the roof and make an evaluation of its condition and recommendations on repair if needed.

The investment brokerage change is behind schedule. Ryan Roth called to apologize, take responsibility, and provide assurance that he is still on top of it. There are a few more items to be accomplished, but all should be completed within a week. He anticipates attending the next Finance Committee meeting.

The last Mountain Sage Consulting training is scheduled for April. If an issue arises in the future, the board may always reach out to Mr. Holdt for guidance.

Connections is switching from Debit to Credit cards. As the bank will not accept digital signatures, President Brocksus will go to 1st Bank to sign the paperwork.

The next board meeting is on April 28, 2021.

Director Steinberg moved to adjourn the meeting. Director Howell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board adjourned at 12:43 p.m.

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

APPROVED AT BOARD MEETING held April 28, 2021

DocuSigned by:

Affirmed by: Elizabeth Mahoney, Board Secretary Date: 4/28/2021 | 12:33 PM PDT

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Elizabeth Mahoney, Board Secretary