

Connections for Independent Living

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 28, 2021 @ 11:00 a.m.

Attendance in the Meeting:

President-Mary Jo Brockshus, Secretary-Elizabeth Mahoney, Member-Lou Steinberg, Member-Erica Barraza, Executive Director-Rochelle Miller, Director Independent Living Services-Joshua Fulenwider, Executive Associate-Carol Cochrane

Absent:

Member-Kate Howell

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

Director Steinberg motioned to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2021 Board of Directors meeting with the revisions mentioned and Secretary Mahoney seconded. Vote taken. Motion approved unanimously.

President Brockshus read into the minutes the results of the digital vote taken April 2, 2021. Motion passed unanimously. All four members voted to accept Erica Barraza as a member of the Connections for Independent Living Board of Directors.

President Brockshus welcomed Director Baraza to the Board.

Financial Report

Executive Director Miller began the financial presentation by highlighting specific areas of expenses and revenue metrics in the Financial Dashboard. She encouraged the board to click on specific areas to see more detailed information and noted that the Finance Committee will discuss the financials in their next meeting which is scheduled for the week of May 10, 2021. Of specific note is the fact that halfway through the fiscal year, the Payroll Protection Plan funding and CARES Act funding have skewed the income and expenses.

The Accounts Receivable summary identifies UNC as responsible for the major portion of the over 90 days receivable. ED Miller explained that the Colorado Department of Labor State General Funds and Part B funding will always show in arrears of 1 to 30 days due to the methodology of reimbursement of billing and payments. Secretary Mahoney inquired as to the status of negotiations with UNC and the past due amount. ED Miller responded that the sum due is legitimate and that there will be further actions taken to facilitate payment. Connections is not providing additional interpreting services

to UNC until the debt is paid. A conversation ensued among those present concerning the detail in Professional Services - Other and Professional Services - Accounting. This resulted in identification of a misclassification of some of the expenses and resulting assurances that items misclassified will be corrected.

Operations and Executive Director Report

ED Miller reported that the on-site Covid-19 Vaccine Equity clinic went well. 96 people were given their first Moderna vaccine. At least three quarters of the vaccine recipients would not have been able to receive the vaccine without this intervention. The Connections vehicles were utilized to transport some recipients to and from the clinic. We have opted to participate in the Expanded Disability Network Access to Covid-19 Vaccine funding. This involvement will consist of providing transportation to local vaccine providers for those members of the community who need this service, assisting those without technology access in the navigation of the vaccine process, and providing information on the vaccine and where it is available to members of the community through various platforms utilizing our ASL services and Low Vision equipment when required.

The audit is going well. Field work is completed. Items currently in discussion include bad debt and the write off of some UNC receivables. The required fraud interviews are upcoming.

The State General Funds may be carried over into the next fiscal year if needed. Clarification on when this will go into effect is coming from CDLE and Joint Budget Committee.

Some of the staff computers will be replaced. The current ones are not meeting the staff's needs and will be wiped and placed in the lending technology program.

There is a discussion among the state level directors regarding changing the Part C funding formula for Independent Living Centers. This would reallocate funds among the centers and negatively affect Connections. ED Miller is actively engaged in these discussions.

Connections and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) are becoming closer partners. They are excited to see what is going on and are looking for space to meet with their constituents as DVR will no longer have offices. We explained that we do not have space for rent, but they may be able to utilize our common area at times.

The SEEKS grant has been modified in order to enable Connections to increase our billing. Steps will be taken to ensure that we do not bill both SEEKS and Part B for the same items.

ED Miller reported that her participation in the audit of Atlantis resulted in a good sharing of information. They have approximately 200 more consumers than Connections. This is surprising due to the variance of total population size served. We are also excelling in the Board Strategic Plan area and the services delivered to clients during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Housing Department has received 10 vouchers to distribute. There are 70 people on the waiting list with almost 20 of them experiencing homelessness. This distribution may result in the remaining funds of the deposit assistance program being depleted. Discussion ensued regarding both the ability to increase funds for the program and to partner with other agencies that provide deposit assistance. Connections is one of the two remaining Independent Living Centers that continues to offer Section 8 housing as one of its core services.

The Transitions Department staff is splitting their time between ILS and Transitions or Legislative Advocacy and Transitions due to the reduced utilization of transition services during the pandemic. This action will aid in balancing the workload.

Interpreting requests are low. We have signed a memorandum of understanding with the CIL in Colorado Springs to provide them assistance in establishing an aspect of their interpreting program modeled after ours. We will be paid for this assistance. The VRI room should open in May.

The computer voucher program is going well.

ED Miller has been asked by the Governor's office to participate in a newly established Digital Literacy and Inclusion Committee. There are two other members from northern Colorado on this committee.

The Reeves grant winner should be announced soon. We did not pursue another grant opportunity this fiscal year as it was not a good fit at this time.

Our communication efforts are progressing. Social media stats are going up, this month Connections was featured twice in the local newspaper, the Greeley Tribune.

Responding to ED Miller's request for comments or questions on the report, Secretary Mahoney inquired as to the red status of contributions from Board Members. Executive Director Miller replied that we do not yet have 100% of board members contributing.

Board members suggested various service clubs and business group meetings that would allow Connections to make an appeal for donations to the housing deposit fund.

Director of Independent Living Services Fulenwider provided an update of his first two months in this position. The ILS department assists participants with advocacy, both on an individual and systemic level; disseminates information and referrals; provides peer group support; and provides training and coaching. Director ILS Fulenwider gave specific examples in each of the above categories. President Brockshus expressed her concern of providing legal advice. Director ILS Fulenwider responded that all Independent Living Specialists (ILS's) constantly go through training and tenants rights and other rights information is forwarded to all of the team. They are not acting as lawyers and do not give legal advice. ILS's provide information to their consumers on their rights and responsibilities which is obtained from different government agencies. For example, current CDC guidelines do not allow for evictions. If a consumer discusses with their ILS that they need to find new housing because they have an eviction notice, we will inform them that under current guidelines evictions are on hold. Secretary Mahoney inquired if we provide mental health support. Director ILS Fulenwider responded that we make referrals to the North Range Behavioral Center. If a person is unable to communicate effectively, we might initiate a three way call with the facility, consumer and Connections staff in order to facilitate the intake process. Another example of the referral process is in housing. If a person is scheduled to receive a housing voucher, we are suggesting that they meet with one of the Connections ILS team to facilitate referrals to agencies or groups that may provide housing deposit assistance so they are ready when the voucher is received to complete the housing process and utilize the Section 8 voucher.

Director ILS Fulenwider continued his presentation with the announcement that Connections is 5-star certified by the City of Greeley for COVID-19 safety. Even though this program is now ended, we will continue to comply with the certification requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic as many of our consumers are in the high risk population.

The SEEKS program is a five-year pilot program which provides DVR specific counseling and coaching to those with SSI and SSDI benefits. Three staff members have undergone training to work in this program. The state selects who is able to enter the program and currently those enrolled are all on the control side. Our staff is looking forward to utilizing their training to assist the first participants selected for the study side.

The ILS department is currently working on the yearly maintenance of MiCIL, the consumer database. Contact information is being updated, inactive participants purged

from the active list, and information entry standardized in order to conform to best practices.

ED Miller stated that the operations plan is structured off of the strategic plan. Each priority is broken down into objectives and tasks with a comments and notes section. A new column for 2021 priorities, work plans with real actionable items, and the strengthening of current consumer experiences will be the finishing items on the document. The completed operations plan will be shared on Google Drive and in an alternate Excel format. She is very proud of the work the Board did on the strategic plan which is looked at often in the development of the operations plan. It provides a guide for saying yes or no to a new opportunity. Future plans should provide a longer time horizon. The new workplace will probably be a hybrid of in-office and remote assistance. We will shortly send out a survey to Connections' consumers to use as a litmus test to answer questions such as do we need to change our goals, are we achieving the results consumers desire, and what are we doing that has less impact. .

New Business

Seventy (70) percent of staff have received at least one of the vaccine shots for COVID-19. Connections should have a policy regarding staff receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Attached in the preparation material for this meeting were informational brochures supplied by Employers Council. Discussion ensued by those present regarding the desire to mandate, or not, and the position that Connections should take on the topic. With the sentiments expressed ED Miller will draft a policy in the near future and send to the Board members via email. Comments will be accepted and a final draft will be voted on digitally before the next Board meeting.

Old Business

Committee meetings will be held.

The building committee will discuss possible facade changes to help reduce the amount of window breakage and flooding potential. President Brockshus will talk with area contractors to obtain their advice on the topic.

Broke for Executive Session at 12:41 PM to discuss annual review of the Executive Director.

Resumed board meeting at 12:57 PM

The next board meeting is on May 26, 2021.

President Brockshus moved to adjourn the meeting. Secretary Mahoney seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board adjourned at 12:58p.m.

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

APPROVED AT BOARD MEETING held May 26, 2021.

DocuSigned by:
Affirmed by:  Date: 5/28/2021 | 10:53 AM PDT
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Elizabeth Mahoney, Board Secretary