

Connections for Independent Living

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 22, 2021 @11:00 a.m.- digital meeting room.

Attendance in the meeting:

President-Mary Jo Brockshus, Secretary-Elizabeth Mahoney, Treasurer-Lou Steinberg, Member-Kate Howell, Member-Erica Barraza, Executive Director-Rochelle Miller, Finance and Admin. Manager-Carol Cochran

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

President Brockshus inquired if there were any questions concerning the November board minutes. Treasurer Steinberg moved to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2021 Board of Directors meeting with spacing and department name reference items corrected. Secretary Mahoney seconded. Vote taken. Motion approved unanimously.

Financial Report

Executive Director Miller shared the financial dashboard presenting the budget vs. actual numbers for November. She explained that total expenses and total revenue for the month were in line with the budget. The expenses are tracking in the desired 8% monthly range of the yearly budget. November expenses include items for marketing of the vaccine bus and some attorney expenses for ongoing communications with the major delinquent interpreting customer. Answering Secretary Mahoney's question about the \$26,000 deficit, ED Miller responded that this is normal for Connections as it operates on a pay and then receive reimbursement methodology. We are normally a 1 month in arrears. Part C revenue helps with the administrative expenses as the billing cycle is monthly at one twelfth of the yearly award which equates to slightly more than \$10,000 per month.

The A/R Aging report shows most customers are paying within the 30 day time frame. Our system sends out notices if they do not pay within the time frame. We have discussed with collection professionals a plan to utilize their services if a customer does not pay after the 90 day invoice is sent with the appropriate late fees included. Connections would like to avoid getting into a situation of having a large overdue balance and the need to utilize lawyers to achieve payment. ED Miller stated that interpreting has an increase in appointments. These include a new client, additional work with Laramie County (WY) school district and an additional Weld school district.

Treasurer Steinberg stated that the Balance Sheet shows that the balance in the bank accounts is \$132,000. This is 2 months of operating expenses. 3 to 4 months of operating expenses is the desired amount in these accounts.

Operations and Executive Director Report

ED Miller played a clip from her interview on KFKA during the vaccine bus visit to Connections. The highlights of the December vaccine bus visits include nearly 300 people receiving a vaccine, providing ASL interpreters at the four sites, the availability of braille and low vision materials, interviews of staff members and numerous social media posts which placed a positive spotlight on Connections.

We are striving to increase our clients and our partnerships with organizations in the outer counties. Currently coordination and collaborative efforts are underway with Fort Morgan United Way, and many other chamber partners.

Our building improvement efforts continue. A 2 foot high wrap along the front windows of the Greeley office is installed. Additionally, sunscreen film on three of the windows is now applied. This will help with the reduction of cooling costs in the summer and will be continued on the remainder of the front windows when funds allow.

In preparation for the front entry project, it was discovered that the building is on the historic registry. This may provide for some additional hurdles, but we will utilize experts in this field to help us comply and mitigate any additional costs and requirements.*Update, it was revealed to us in January that the building does not qualify for any historic registry parameters, as there is not enough original facade remaining to demand special dispensation.

The financial audit is ongoing. It is more difficult this time as no one on the BDO audit team has been involved in our audits in the past, so is unfamiliar with our funding streams and their nuances. We will be conducting RFPs for the next audit, per best practices. The preferences will go to Northern Colorado firms and firms that have experience auditing non-profit organizations. The RFP letters will be sent out no later than March 2022. BDO is aware of this plan.

The state of Colorado is now recognizing the silent disabilities of our board members. Therefore, Connections is at an 80% rating of board members with disabilities.

Finance and Administration Manager Cochrane gave a brief overview of what is happening in the department. To this end she emphasized the ongoing process to utilize technology for the repository of information, moving away from paper files. Additionally Ms. Cochrane stated that an ongoing effort of cross training is underway to ensure the

continuity of processes if one person is not available. The board expressed their appreciation of the cross training efforts.

ED Miller stated that the draft of the final SILS audit report shows that Connections fell short in only one area of compliance for certification. Every other area exceeded the reviewers expectations and the state representatives were impressed with how far the organization has progressed in the past two years. The consumer record (database for consumer files) section received a 70% grade with 80% being the passing threshold. The ILS Director is addressing the issues and has developed a plan with processes and training to resolve the items in question going forward. This plan also includes regular quality control checks of the newly revised record keeping system to ensure that the procedures are being followed.

The Program Performance Report (PPR) is in process. This yearly report required by the US Department of Health and Human Services takes in excess of 30 hours to complete. It contains numbers and a narrative which is quite involved. It is due January 31, 2022.

ED Miller next shared three proposed changes to the Connections Handbook which will need approval from the Board of Directors. The first is to add Juneteenth to the paid holiday schedule as the federal government has added this to the federal holidays. The second is to remove the Long Term Disability (LTD) section from the handbook as it is cost prohibitive to implement. The third is to provide a leave sharing policy. This leave bank enables an employee to place some of their PTO time into a pool of time that is available, upon approval, to an employee if they have utilized all of their own available PTO. Recommendations on best practices and guidelines were followed per Employers Council HR specialists.

The board first discussed the proposed Juneteenth Holiday. A significant discussion ensued regarding the fact that Veteran's Day, which is also on the federal holiday schedule, is not on Connections' holiday calendar. Next ED Miller presented the information that Connections could not procure an affordable LTD policy. The premiums were three to four times higher than a normal policy amount, due to the fact that we employ people with disabilities. Finally ED Miller provided the board with the details of the PTO Leave Share Policy. The summary of this information includes a part time person may donate up to 20 of their PTO hours in a calendar year and a full time employee may donate up to 40 of their PTO hours in a calendar year into a bank of time. An employee would not receive more than 20 hours if part time or 40 hours if full time if they completely utilized their own PTO hours and requested an amount from the bank due to medical, emergency, or other appropriate reasons. The ED would make the decision on awarding and if the ED were the employee asking for the donation from the

bank, the board would make the decision to award. The hours will be awarded at the amount of \$27.00 per hour. This is approximately the median wage of the employees at Connections. The above mentioned details fulfill Employers Council recommended policy outlines for leave share programs. They also comply with IRS requirements.

Treasurer Steinberg motioned to approve the Leave Share Policy. Director Howell seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Treasurer Steinberg motioned to approve the removal of the LTD offering. Director Howell seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Secretary Mahoney motioned to approve Juneteenth as an addition to the paid holiday calendar. Director Barazza seconded the motion. President Brockshus abstained. Secretary Mahoney, Treasurer Steinberg, Director Howell, and Director Barazza voted in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Next the board and ED Miller discussed thank-you's to Colorado Gives Day donors. President Brockshus spoke of her calls to donors and the positive reaction that she received. Other board members added their comments. It was determined that this should be done again next year.

The 2022 calendar for board and committee meetings was discussed. Dates and times for the meetings were determined. A 10:00 a.m. start for the board meetings was selected pending input from potential new board members.

Secretary Mahoney motioned to approve the 2022 board and committee meeting calendar. Treasurer Steinberg seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The dates and times for these meetings are in a separate document and on the board calendar.

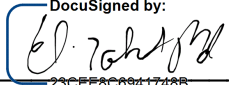
Board training for the 2022 year most likely will restart the Strengths Training. ED Miller will discuss with Ms. Brown a plan of implementation.

Secretary Mahoney provided an update from the nominating committee. There are three identified prospective board candidates. One person is on the finance side and two are in the mental health profession. One potential member is from the Sterling area. Director Howell will follow up with this member. It is hoped that at least one new board member will be onboarded in the January, February time frame.

Treasurer Steinberg voted to adjourn the meeting and Director Howell seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The board adjourned into executive session to discuss an email sent by the Connections attorney at 12:45 p.m.

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

APPROVED AT BOARD MEETING held January 19, 2022.

Affirmed by:  23CEE8C6941748B... Date: 2/1/2022 | 4:37 PM PST
Elizabeth Mahoney, Board Secretary