

## **Connections for Independent Living**

### **Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, March 23, 2022 @10:00 a.m.- via Zoom.**

Attendance in the meeting:

President-Mary Jo Brockshus, Secretary-Elizabeth Mahoney, Treasurer-Lou Steinberg, Member-Erica Barraza, Member-Tony Gonzalez, ILS Community Coordinator-Jessica Standiferd, Executive Director-Rochelle Miller, Finance and Admin. Manager-Carol Cochrane

Absent:

Member-Kate Howell

President Brockshus called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Treasurer Steinberg moved to approve the February 2022 board minutes. Secretary Mahoney seconded. Vote taken. Members present passed the motion unanimously.

#### **Financial Report**

Executive Director Miller began the financial portion of the meeting with the P&L for the period of Oct - Feb of the current fiscal year. Expenditures exceeded income by \$84,916. The Interpreting Department achieved a \$1,500 profit in the month of February, the first profitable month for interpreting services since the onset of the pandemic. Connections is utilizing the year-to-date figures to inform the budget by department for next fiscal year. Member Gonzalez entered the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Discussion turned to the expenses in Professional Fees. Board members requested a name change of the accounts for legal and audit fees to provide specificity for the charges. ED Miller stated that the audit fees for the just completed audit were \$20,000 with an additional \$2,000 - \$4,000 for the preparation of the 990.

The Interpreting Department had debt expense write-off that was due to a client that entered into bankruptcy proceedings. The accounts receivable aging report has a minimal number of accounts in 60-day and older columns. Connections is working to resolve collection issues with them.

Connections received a \$10,000 grant from the State of Colorado to extend the *Connect With Friends* program into the next fiscal year. The AAA Vaccine Grant funding is not

fully expended. Remaining funds will provide a small expense budget for the COVID vaccine equity advocate temporary position. We have not received the letter of assurance from the Federal Government for this project. Connections expects a minimum of \$104,000 to fund this eighteen month position.

The budget process at Connections begins soon. In June a budget specific to IL Services will be submitted to the State of Colorado. The ACCIL is asking the Joint Budget Committee to consider a 6% increase in funding. In July preliminary budget numbers for the other segments of the budget will be discussed. In late August or early September a finalized fiscal year budget will be completed. This budget is presented to the board for approval at the September 2022 board meeting. This meeting is very important for board members to attend in order to fully pass the budget. If unable to attend, a proxy should be provided before the meeting.

### **Operations and Executive Director Report**

ED Miller presented the highlights of the ED Report. The stoplight key to the report was explained as a refresher - red indicates need for immediate action, yellow to watch, and green to celebrate. Specific areas of the report were briefly discussed with most of the emphasis on the red highlight in the housing area. This is due both to the department of housing and the amount of housing vouchers still needed to serve the community and a need for affordable and accessible housing. HB22-1283 currently in the state legislature addresses affordability. Connections is attempting to have accessibility included. Additional areas of the report were discussed including the uptick in the amount of outreach and in-person events in February and the progress of establishing ASL services during a state-wide emergency. The busy legislative season includes additional bills which could impact Connections ability to assist our consumers. These include HB22-1281 a behavioral health gap bill which addresses shortages in health care residential services and respite services, HB22-1278 which addresses behavioral health, and HB22-1290, the right to repair bill, which addresses the ability of people to repair their wheelchairs without voiding a warranty or losing funding from medicaid for wheelchair repairs. Brad Taylor, Transitions Coordinator, testified in favor of this last bill.

The board next discussed the Compassion Without Fatigue workshop. It was a very intensive four hour class. If offered again, it should be broken down into shorter sessions. It is important to provide staff with training that supports them.

ED Miller next introduced IL Community Coordinator, Jessica Standiferd. Ms. Standiferd detailed her work history at Connections which began in 2017. Currently as the Independent Living Community Coordinator, she coordinates in-person virtual and hybrid support groups; provides technical assistance and training for staff members,

consumers and volunteers; assists the Director of IL Services with group meetings, programs and projects as needed; assists with grant management related to events, groups and classes; and is involved with project management for consumers and organizations. Her daily routine includes bridging the gap between independent living and housing, social media and website communications and event planning. She currently supervises the information and referral specialist. Ms. Standifer stated that she enjoys working with staff members and loves Connections' mission. The board stated their appreciation and thanked her for her service.

ED Miller next advised the board that the State of Colorado was found to be in violation of the ADA by holding people with disabilities in congregate care centers (Olmstead Findings were included in the Board packet). The results of this Justice Department action are yet to be determined. Hopefully, Connections will have more access and funding to enable more people to transition to independent living from congregate care centers.

Board members President Brockshus and Secretary Mahoney attended a meeting of the Association of Colorado Centers for Independent Living (ACCIL). It was a sharing of ideas and board members from various Colorado centers for independence discussed what they were doing, why they are doing more things in one area than another as well as the fact that they are the only ones that can collect their unique information.

Discussion next turned to the rescission of the block grant by the city of Greeley. This occurred due to the discovery of an environmental concern of certain unknown releases within a one square mile of the Connections building. With these funds removed from the building project, the available funds for building improvements are greatly reduced. It was suggested that the funds in the account be used to complete a part of the proposed project - either leveling the concrete walkway or adding a handrail to the side of the building.

### **Old Business**

The board training and meeting on the ILRU site requires registration. The group discussion of these classes will be in May. The *Clifton Strengths Training Class* is April 28th from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. There will be one additional training in June. The assessment for the Strengths Training should be completed before the April class. The follow up for the *Compassion Without Fatigue* class is March 24th.

### **New Business**

The next Connections board meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2022. It will be a hybrid meeting, both in-person at the Connections office and on ZOOM.

The board adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

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

**APPROVED AT BOARD MEETING** held April 20, 2022.

Affirmed by:  DocuSigned by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 5/6/2022 | 2:04 PM PDT  
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Elizabeth Mahoney, Board Secretary