

## **Connections for Independent Living**

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

**Wednesday, May 25, 2022 @10:00 a.m.** Hybrid via Zoom & in person

#### Attendance in the meeting:

President-Mary Jo Brockshus, Member-Kate Howell, Member-Erica Barraza, Member-Tony Gonzalez, Outreach Director-Kevin Thompson, Outreach ILS-Teresa Roberts, Outreach ILS-Hannah Nielsen, Executive Director-Rochelle Miller, Finance and Admin. Manager-Carol Cochrane

#### Absent from meeting:

Secretary-Elizabeth Mahoney (excused), Treasurer-Lou Steinberg (excused)

President Brockshus called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m.

Director Howell moved to approve the April 2022 board minutes. Director Barazza seconded. Vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Financial Report**

ED Miller began the financial presentation with a brief discussion of accounts receivable aging and the improvement in volume of interpreting department services since the beginning of the year. The profit and loss statement was reviewed with an explanation of the bank charges which included account closing fees from First Farm Bank. Other items discussed included the vaccine charges and classification of professional services. Changes in labeling were agreed upon to clarify the QuickBooks classifications of differing professional service charges. The balance sheet was presented. ED Miller stated that the finance committee intends to move forward with moving some of the reserves into an account with Raymond James. The Merrill Lynch option is no longer viable as they have closed their non-profit section in Northern Colorado. Treasurer Steinberg plans on interviewing the audit firm from Albuquerque, NM in June before selecting our next audit firm.

Next ED Miller stated that the federal government awarded Connections \$136,000 for the COVID Public Health Workforce grant. This grant will show as a liability on the financial statements from next month until September 2024 when the grant ends.

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

The job description for the COVID Public Health Workforce grant position is being rewritten as the three applicants interviewed did not possess the necessary communications skills. Some of the administrative costs of this grant have occurred and will be visible on next month's financial statements.

There are two grants pending. One would assist youth with disabilities in their efforts to receive training in order to provide coaching services. This grant is being requested from OtterCares in conjunction with the city of Greeley recreation department.

Connections is continuing to lobby for a spot on the board of the Homeless Coalition run by the city of Greeley and the United Way. The accessibility piece of affordable housing is currently being overlooked by this group. It is estimated that 80 - 90% of the people experiencing homelessness have a disability.

As COVID numbers are increasing, Connections is reinstating mask requirements in the office. We are maintaining the two day a week open building policy and will not adjust this until the number of cases change. The phases chart continues to advise the procedures we put in place.

Housing has 114 people renting homes that utilize DOH Section 8 vouchers. 150 vouchers is the maximum number of vouchers Connections is currently allowed by DOH housing department agency staffing rules. There are 52 emergency vouchers available which must be utilized by the end of December. The board and ED briefly discussed methods used by other centers to achieve an increased number of vouchers allotted to the agency.

With the Reeve/Connect with Friends grant period ending, the board is invited to an open house on June 22 after the board meeting. Participants in the Reeve grant program are presenting items they produced during this grant. Pizza will be provided.

Transitions has three potential participants identified. The new Olmstead investigation results might be the reason larger congregate care facilities may be more open to transitioning residents to independent living.

Interpreter time totaled 429.5 hours. This is one of the highest months ever.

ED Miller is looking into another grant. This may provide assistance in recruiting volunteers and/or expand and hire people for technical assistance. President Brockshus discussed the process of putting the pieces in place of varying grants and funding to provide the necessary services to the community.

The legislative session went well. The ACCIL is now working together to expand our contact with legislators to improve our relationship for the next session. Connections sent a public letter of gratitude to legislators in our area that supported disability advocacy legislation.

ED Miller next introduced Outreach Director Kevin Thompson. She praised his willingness to assist when we suddenly lost our Director of Independent Living Colin Morey. He makes our leadership team better and has expanded Connections outreach dramatically

Mr. Thompson began his presentation by stating that our catchment area is 14,000 square miles over seven counties. Historically there was not much emphasis on the outer six counties when he was hired to open an office in Fort Morgan. That office subsequently closed.

He then shared the story of being able to assist a gentleman in Fort Morgan who was spending 90% of his income on rent and had less than \$50 to get through the rest of the month. With our assistance, he has moved into a subsidized 2-bedroom apartment which enables him to have visitation with his daughter, worked with a peer specialist at Centennial Mental Health in Fort Morgan, and progressed from being bedridden, to wheelchair bound, to walking with a cane, to walking with no assistance.

Outreach Director Thompson's team now consists of Ms. Hannah Neilsen and Ms. Teresa Roberts. Ms. Neilsen spoke first and stated that she is the newest member of the team, lives in the Marino area and services Washington, Logan, Yuma, Sedgwick and Phillips counties. She is 25 credits away from her degree and her prior work experience includes being an IPS employment specialist with Centennial. She appreciates her opportunity with Connections to assist participants in many areas, not only in the narrow area of employment. She has recently been appointed as a member of the Community First Choice Council (CFCC).

Ms. Roberts introduced herself to the board. She stated that she lives in Jackson Lake and services Fort Morgan and Brush. She appreciates being able to assist people through encouraging them to challenge their mindset and behaviors and providing resources to enable them to receive cognitive behavioral therapy, housing and other needed services.

President Brockshus thanked the three members of the outreach team for their presentation and stated her appreciation of hearing stories that show the support Connections provides.

**Old Business**

Director Brockshus noted that training with board members on Clifton Strengths is completed. She asked if members completed the training webinar on IRLU. Hearing a few no's, she stated that it does not take long and to please complete the training as soon as possible. The most difficult part is gaining access and if you have difficulty gaining access please contact ED Miller or Finance and Admin. Manager Cochrane for assistance.

Director Brockshus advised the board that an email was sent to Dane and Dillon Roche advising them that the grant for the entryway improvement was withdrawn. ED Miller stated that various mud-jacking companies indicated that the best solution for the lifted concrete problem would be to replace the two pieces of concrete after the tree roots were removed as mud-jacking is not a viable option. Unfortunately, the small size of the project resulted in an absence of contractors willing to perform the work and ED Miller solicited the board for names of possible contractors.

**New Business**

The proposed budget for CDLE funding for the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 is due May 31. Connections received notification of the amount of funding for this period from the state office on May 13, 2022. ED Miller requested that board members quickly review the budget when it is sent via email and reply all with their vote regarding approval as soon as possible as board approval is required for adoption of budgets. This digital vote will be recorded in the minutes at the next board meeting.

ED Miller advised the board that the State Monitoring Unit will begin their annual financial monitoring event the first full week in June. It is scheduled for a two week time period.

The next Connections board meeting is scheduled for June 22, 2022. It will be a hybrid meeting, both in-person at the Connections office and on ZOOM.

The board adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

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

**APPROVED AT BOARD MEETING** held August 25, 2022.

Affirmed by:  Date: 8/25/2022 | 4:47 PM PDT  
Elizabeth Mahoney, Board Secretary