

## **Connections for Independent Living**

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

**Wednesday, June 22, 2022 @10:00 a.m.** Hybrid via Zoom & in person

Attendance in the meeting:

President-Mary Jo Brockshus, Secretary-Elizabeth Mahoney, Treasurer-Lou Steinberg, Member-Kate Howell, Executive Director-Rochelle Miller, Staff member-Peggy Garcia, Finance and Admin. Manager-Carol Cochrane

Absent from meeting:

Member-Tony Gonzalez (excused), Member-Erica Barraza (excused)

President Brockshus called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

Director Howell moved to approve the May 2022 board minutes. President Brockshus seconded. A quorum of members present who attended the May meeting was not achieved. Vote deferred until the next scheduled board meeting in August 2022.

Digital vote to approve the CDLE/IL 2022-2023 program budget passed unanimously. ED Miller thanked the board for their quick response to the digital vote request. She informed the board that there may be some minor adjustments to the budget and Connections can provide these minor revisions to CDLE without additional board approval. If there are significant changes, the board will be required to revisit this program budget.

Item of Note: This is the only program budget of Connections the board is contractually required to approve. This budget is formed for the state in the state fiscal year (July-June) and is included in the operations budget that is reviewed for approval by the board in September for Connections fiscal year (Oct.- Sept.).

### **Financial Report**

Treasurer Steinberg stated that the finance reports indicate Connections finances are in good shape. Before discussion of the financials occurred, Treasurer Steinberg gave a brief presentation of his meeting with the prospective New Mexico audit firm, Schlenker & Cantwell, P.A. He stated that they currently have 83 non-profit entities that are their clients and they are the auditor for the Center for Independent Living located in southwest Colorado. He was impressed with their quick response to his request for a phone interview as well as their responses to his queries. Based on this interview and

the firm's excellent proposal, he moved to accept their bid for performing the audit for the 2021-2022 fiscal year for Connections for Independent Living. Secretary Mahoney seconded the motion. Vote taken and motion passed unanimously. ED Miller stated that she would quickly reach out to Schlenker & Cantwell, P.A. and inform them of our acceptance of their proposal submission and further the auditor change process.

As there were no questions on the Profit and Loss statement, ED Miller directed the board members' attention to the chart representing income and expenses for the year to date and stated that the chart shows how both expenses and income are within acceptable range of budget. Discussion then moved to the ASL interpreting department and new contracts. There is a statement of work for the State of Colorado Office of Emergency Management, which is slightly delayed by the state, but should be completed by the end of August. This contract should include some funding for administrative support and may entail the utilization of an answering service for 24-hour coverage ability. Next, the A/R Aging report was briefly discussed. The largest outstanding late payments are progressing for resolution by the end of June.

The CDLE Monitoring unit is conducting their financial review exit interview later today. It appears that they will have no major findings, minor improvement suggestions or otherwise. All items called out in last year's monitoring report have been corrected. We did discover one area of needed change due to their review - the background check system in ADP keeps a two year record of requests. We need to transfer the background check information to the employee record side of ADP in order to maintain access to the reports beyond two years. This will be notated in the updated financial procedure document that is being updated.

Paula McElwee our federal technical expert, on a technical assistance call informed Rochelle that Colorado ILCs are the most restricted and highly monitored by their Designated State Entity than any other state. Seven of the months of the year are spent in audit with both our independent audit requirements and the state requirements. Compensation for staff time is an important topic of discussion among the 9 Colorado center directors and is being worked into a suggested improvement plan. An additional layer of audit this year is affirmative action EO requirements of all state contractors.

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

Multiple agencies are pulling out of the SEEKS project. The biggest difficulty is receiving reimbursement. Many items that were originally indicated to qualify for reimbursement were rejected by the state. This resulted in a reexamination of return on investment. It

was determined by Connections and many other CIL's that the amount of resources this program used was not balanced with the return of services for our consumers. The COVID Health Program Advocate position is not yet filled. Connections has drawn down administrative reimbursements for costs incurred in May and June to cover the job development aspects of the position.

The discussion next turned to the staffing changes at Connections. Secretary Mahoney stated that a recent Gallup survey revealed that 43% of the workforce is anticipated to leave their jobs in the next year. ED Miller stated that longtime employee Ms. Fuller is retiring. It is hoped that a small celebration will be held at the office when she feels able to participate. We are letting her know that she is welcome to utilize Connections services as a consumer and we are looking forward to her willingness to volunteer in peer support groups. In order to help her live independently the laptop that she has been using for work will be cleaned of proprietary information and returned to her as her permanent property. This technology gift, a small severance package and providing payment for her health insurance reimbursement through August 2022 are the tokens of appreciation being supplied for her many years of service and caring at Connections. Ms. Ham is leaving Connections at the beginning of July. We are very happy for her as she proved her ability to return to full time work with her disability accommodations. Her new position with North Range Behavioral Health is wonderful and although we are sad to see her go, we are excited for her new growth in her career.

Ms. Fuller and Ms. Ham will not be replaced due to the budget available for next year. We will start a wait list for consumers, watch the budget and see how the situation progresses before considering filling any vacated position.

A brief discussion ensued regarding ED Miller's time spent at another CIL agency in Colorado trying to assist them in processing an internal issue. This time with another CIL brought a new level of urgency to complete Connections succession planning, and cohesion of internal matters.

Alternatives to cost of living salary increases in the 2023/24 budget are being discussed with the leadership team. Ultimately the ED has the final decision on what, if any alternative, should be chosen and presented to the board. Board members provided their ideas and stated their opinions on various options.

As Connections has more than one service, emotional support, companion and other animals present in the office, there is a need to develop a more comprehensive animal policy. A draft was shown to board members, and asked to be reviewed by Employers

Council. Upon completion it will be shared with the board via email for their digital vote sometime in July.

The training scheduled for next month is first-aid training.

Connections had a booth in Loveland at the Juneteenth Celebration on 6/18/2022.

Peggy Garcia was welcomed to the meeting. Peggy has been overseeing the Connect With Friends grant programs for the past 12 months. An open house for Connect With Friends was held at our offices today. *Photovoice* books on “*What Isolation Means To Me*” or “*A Life Well Lived*”, *Videography*, and *Exercising The Brain* presentations are available for guests to view.

Ms. Garcia gave a brief overview of the open house and the offerings Connect With Friends provided to their participants over the last year. Sessions included the above mentioned as well as *Armchair Travel*. The two most popular sessions were *Exercising the Brain* and *Photovoice*. Two of the participants from last year are now mentoring the classes for the current year’s offerings. A second session is underway with a new funding grant source and is no longer restricted to paralysis disability, but is now open to all consumers with disabilities.

### **Old Business**

Director Brockshus announced an online finance training class in *Non-profit Finance* is available to all board members. It is free and provides a certificate upon successful completion.

There is no contractor chosen at this time to fix the concrete path which is elevated from tree roots. If you have any potential contractor information, please let ED Miller know.

### **New Business**

Due to a critical illness in her immediate family, board member Erica Barraza will be stepping away from her duties. We are requesting that rather than resigning, she takes a leave of absence. President Brockshus is in contact with her and will inform the board of her decision.

The next Connections board meeting was scheduled for August 24, 2022. Treasurer Steinberg stated he had a scheduling conflict. As this meeting is primarily focused on the operations budget draft, it was decided to entertain an alternative date. Discussion ensued focusing on two alternative dates, August 25th and August 31st. An update as to which date will suit the majority will be announced as soon as it is determined.

President Brockshus motioned to adjourn the meeting. Treasurer Steinberg seconded. Vote taken. Motion approved unanimously.

The board adjourned at 11:30 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:  23CEE8C6841748B... Date: 8/25/2022 | 4:45 PM PDT  
Elizabeth Mahoney, Board Secretary