

NORTHWESTERN COUNSELING & SUPPORT SERVICES
107 FISHER POND ROAD
ST. ALBANS VT 05478

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 4, 2024

Present: Angela Poirier, Elaine Carpenter, Jason Minor, David Hutchinson, Dan Thompson
David McCallum, Meg Marshall, Casey Toof, Ken Gagne

Excused: Anjanette Watson, Rob Hirss, Andrea Patrick-Baudet

Staff: Todd Bauman, Derek Hoy, Kim McClellan, Stacey Remillard, Danielle Roberts, Emily Richards, Belinda Bessette, Matt Habedank

Presenters: Stacey Remillard and Kim McClellan

Minutes received and meeting called to order by Angela Poirier at 5:45 pm.

Motion was made to approve August minutes as presented by Dan Thompson. Second by Elaine Carpenter. One Opposed. Eight in Favor. Motion Passes

Presentation

Client and Staff Satisfaction Survey Results

Executive Director Report

- Todd and Angela spoke about the timing of our meetings. We want to make sure we are starting and stopping on time. We have decided that we will adjust the structure a little bit. Starting next month, the agenda will say dinner between 5:15 and 5:45, meeting starting at 5:45.
- Our NCSS Billing Team has been actively helping LCMH (Lamoille County Mental Health) for the last three months and it is going very well. LCMHS has reached out and are looking to expand our partnership to also include finance supports. We are developing a contract to share both billing and finance services.
- 6HH (Home Health Circle) construction is under way. We brought the directors and the program manager to the site and did a walk through to see the progress. This is going to be a wonderful building that is made for the program that will use it. Once the construction is done, we would like to do a walk through with the board.
- PCB (Polychlorinated Biphenyl) update – Testing is being done on the space to see what will need to be remedied. This means we do not have a plan yet as our next step forward. Once the testing is done, we will come up with a plan. We wanted to keep the board in the loop on this process.

Financial Report

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- Derek included the year end numbers in the financial packet that was sent to the board. These numbers are subject to change as we have gone through the audit yet. Derek does not feel like the numbers will go into the negative but more likely end with a higher positive number. We reviewed the July balance sheet we are a very strong place as an agency.
- We reviewed the process of using bonds, and talked about how the current bond we have is the only debit the agency has. The bond has helped us build 107 Fisher Pond Rd, 130 Fisher Pond Rd, purchase the building that Soar is in as well as purchase the equipment and furnishings for 130 Fisher Pond Rd. Bonds are good options as we talk about growing as an agency.
- Dan Thompson wanted to talk about the budget. In reviewing the budget FY23 vs FY24 there is an increase in the administrative rate, since 10% is the standard, we want to make sure we are classifying things correctly. Todd and Derek both spoke to how we look at this number often and are sensitive it being a little higher than the 10%, but we are in the middle of our peers, and we are doing really work. An example of where some of that extra is coming from, with the help we are offering LCMHS we needed to add to staff. We also have contracts for this work so admin is actually generating funds.

Executive Committee Report

- Everything we spoke about in the executive committee meeting we have talked about already.

Early Childhood and School Based Services Division Update

- Matt wanted to let the board know that there was an event where we got all the school-based staff together. We have not done this before, but are trying to build the team up, since they are working together within the schools, even though it is in different capacities we felt it was very important. We broke them into groups based on who was at what school. It went very well, and staff made some really good connections with one another
- Matt also wanted to call attention to the client store that he had in his board report. As a division we are trying to find a way to make this program work more smoothly. Currently our staff Lindsay Hunn is listed on the grant, so she gets the call, and has to facilitate the help they need. We are going to be working with Belinda's team in the hopes to come up with a better system.

Developmental Services Update

- Todd wanted to draw attention the information in Sam's board report about the pilot program that we have been selected for around TBI (traumatic brain injury) clients and the services they receive.

Community Relations Update

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- Dani wanted to touch base on it being suicide prevention and awareness month. We are trying to spread the word on the resources we have to offer. We are doing a positivity challenge, where we are asking staff with their teams, families or friends to send a photo or video with a positive message. Belinda's leadership team did one and it has been shared on social media. Our engagement is up on all our social media sites.
- We are bringing back the Freelance writer's club. This is something that we did years ago but we are hoping it will give staff the opportunity tell their story and get money into staff's pocket.

Community Mental Health Division

- Belinda wanted to highlight the client story she had in the board report. The team worked so hard to keep this client in the community and even though they need a break at the moment the fully believe they will welcome her back at some point.
- The last thing Belinda wanted to talk about was the collaboration that has been happening across the agency. Things are happening in away that has never happened before, and clients are getting better care because of it.

Human Resources Update

- The Burlington Pride parade is this Sunday. We are looking for volunteers to walk or ride in the parade, if you would like to join, we would love to have you. The theme this year is rainbow resilience, we have a trailer for the first time and tie-dyed shirts! Friday we are meeting in the main conference room to work on the float.

Quality and Risk Management Update

- Kim wanted to talk about the grievance and appeals since she had gotten the information to add to the board report. AHS (Agency of Human Services) require us to offer this process to those clients who have Medicaid. We offer it to all our clients because we want our clients to have a way to give us this information. DMH (Department of Mental Health) and DAİL (Department of Aging and Independent Living) track these, they feel the more they see in the system the better. They feel this way because to them it means we are educating our clients on the process and the rights they have. We have all the FY24 numbers so next month Kim will share some more data. In July we had no complaints or grievances in the Early Childhood and School Based Division, five complaints in the Community Mental Health Services Division and one grievance in Developmental Services.

Public Comment

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- There was some conversation about how we need to spread the word about what we do, and Jim McMillian wanted to let us know he agrees. He thinks that people know the basics of what we do but do not know the depth of our services.

Other Business

- Peoples Trust Company had a presentation from law enforcement around safety. Sam Weber was present, and during the presentation there was a situation, and she handled it and deescalated and showed how we can do things a little different. She gave them another point of contact and other things to think about vs just going right the police department. It was very appreciated.
- What are requirements we have to do as staff for safety, in light of the school shooting. We have policies in place, but we are in the process of reviewing all of them, and the state is doing the same. All staff are mandated reporters. One thing we need to do is be careful because we want clients to keep coming here and keep talking. We do work closer with our lawyer to make sure we are doing the right things. We do offer ALICE training to all staff, If any of you were interested in joining the training even if it just to an observer please let us know.

Motion made to adjourn by Dan Thompson. Second by Elaine Carpenter. Motion passes with all in Favor.

Meeting adjourn at 7:15 pm

Minutes recorded by: Emily Richards