

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 2, 2024

Present: Angela Poirier, Elaine Carpenter, Jason Minor, Dan Thompson, David McCallum, Casey Toof, Ken Gagne, Anjanette Watson, Rob Hirss,

Excused: Andrea Patrick-Baudet, David Hutchinson, Meg Marshall

Staff: Todd Bauman, Derek Hoy, Danielle Roberts, Emily Richards, Belinda Bessette, Matt Habedank, Samantha Thomas

Presenters: Samantha Thomas

Minutes received and meeting called to order by Angela Poirier at 5:47 pm.

Motion was made to approve September minutes as presented by Dan Thompson. Second by Jason Minor. All in Favor

Presentation

Brain Injury and Developmental Disabilities Advocacy Project (BDAP) – Presented by Samantha Thomas

Executive Director Report

- The board voted and approved a wage for the staff and the 2.4% COLA has been communicated to our staff, they are very excited about it. Stacey is on schedule to have this implemented by the end of October. Staff will get this COLA retroactive to July 1st.
- The state has released the CCBHC grant application. Trisha Ketchum our CCBHC program manager has put the application together and has sent the draft out to some directors and our consultant for review. This was a large lift, and a lot of people were involved but Trisha was an inertial part of pulling it together. The application is due October 15th and we should hear if our application is chosen by the end of the year.
- We have our Annual Meeting November 6th. We will be voting on a new executive committee as Rob Hirss has served his second three-year term and, per our by-laws, must take a year off. We will be asking for a vote to keep Angela Poirier as the president, Jason Minor as the Vice President, Dan Thompson as the treasurer, Elaine Carpenter as the secretary and since Jim McMillan will be coming back him as the member at large. Ken Gange would like to recommend a staff member that works with him, Sean Harrington as a recipient of the Impact award that is given at the annual dinner. Ken feels he is a good candidate for the awards. The awards have already been decided but we as leadership team are working on other ways to recognize our staff and we will add him to list of people to recognize. Todd wanted to recognize Rob for his work with the group. He has appreciated Rob's view and dedication to the board. Rob said thank you and wanted to make sure we know "we are not done with him yet." Samantha also wanted to recognize Rob for the

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value that Rob made her feel even before she was a director. He has been a value member of this team.

Financial Report

- We are finishing up the audit and it is has gone very well. We have an adjusted trial balance which the auditors are fine tuning. The allowance for doubtful accounts is being adjusted, which is great. This is something that we have been working on for about four years, but with all that work we are able to bring this number way down, down to pre-COVID (2018) numbers which is wonderful. We are expecting the net gain of 2.1%. Derek wanted to give our administrative structures a shout out. Things have been hard, but we are finally having these systems working together and it is giving us great data and accurate numbers.
- The new reports that we are able to pull will included out budgeted numbers. We have not closed August yet, due to the fact that we have a CMS billing audit happening right now. Next month we will have August and September numbers.
- Our Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) grant funds we have, have given us the ability to do creative and innovated things. We have purchased a few vehicles that we were in need of, for example, ADA accessibly vans for Able House, CRT, AOL and a 15-passenger van. Part of this grant is dedicated to developing partnerships with the Abenaki community. Belinda and Todd are working with Chief Gagne and Felicia Cota to support their ideas which are grounded in traditional Abenaki culture.
- The town of Alburgh is working on opening a childcare center, the Alburgh Club House. It will be a center for 62 kids. They are coming up a few hundred thousand dollars short. We would like to help them get over the hump. This is one way we are looking into childcare on the request of the board. If we work with them, it will give us the ability to integrate our services into the center.

Executive Committee Report

- We talked about all the things listed above and Angela is very thankful for the thoughtful conversations that we have in this and the executive committee meeting.

Community Mental Health Services Update

- We have been working on access, and a van that we are hoping to have will help us meet people where they are.
- We are redesigning the emergency services to improve our response to children. The enhanced mobile program has helped with this and given us the ability to have two person response. We have a new staff that within just this week, has helped 2 kids get to school in the morning, been to four schools and helped someone access inpatient services.

Early Education & School Based Services Update

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- We have been meeting with the superintendent and they are talking about the enhanced mobile crisis model, and they seem to be looking forward to the changes that Belinda and her team are making.
- Soars open house is next Thursday the 10th from 5pm – 7pm.
- The Parent Child Center is hosting their Trunk or Treat on October 24th from 4:30 – 6:30. Last year we had 550 people come.
- Our Chittenden EI program has been short staffed since we took it on. We are required to serve all children wanting to access support. We have recently filled vacant positions, and the team is now fully staffed.

Nursing & Psychiatry Services Update

- Access has been our radar as well as others. We have a great relationship with Green State Psychiatry. One of the providers is in the second week of a six-week medical leave and the whole team is pitching in so things are going very smoothly.
- Nursing has been planning to join in on the fun of putting on a agency wide morale booster and we are going to be doing a Maple Wonder Land event in January.
- The nursing team is going to have a trunk in the trunk or treat that we are partnering with NMC and Monarch Maple on October 30th.

Developmental Services Update

- We are trying to put a focus on date and outcomes. This been hard within our division in the past. But Samantha is very excited for the coming year. We have an offsite coming up with the division leadership and the morning is going to be completely focused on outcomes, why they are important and why we need them. We are hoping to make it fun and them excited about it. They are all so proud of the work they are doing we want to give them the opportunity to share that.

Community Relations Update

- Hog Island Campground did a benefit race and donated \$2000 for suicide prevention. They were so thankful for the work we do, and it was nice to see ourselves being part of the community. We are thinking that we could possibly be part of the race next year and keep this partnership going.
- Consulted Communication is working on putting fiber access at 7 of our locations to help with internet access and they are starting at Soar. We will be doing some promotional stuff with them around this.
- During the month of September, we have had a focus on suicide awareness. Our employees are coming together to talk about how we can grow this effort.
- October is pregnancy and infant loss awareness month. Dani has appreciated staff coming to her to talk about awareness months and how we can do different things to share and spread the word.

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Other Business

- Jason wanted to point out how all the report outs played off each other and how that just goes to show how well everyone works together. Rob and Angela agree.

Motion made to adjourn by Elaine Carpenter. Second by Jason Minor . Motion passes with all in Favor.

Meeting adjourn at 7:12 pm

Minutes recorded by: Emily Richards