Developmental Disability **Advocates**
Connecting Individuals with Resources
IN JEFFERSON COUNTY - SINCE 1978

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY ADVOCATES BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING November 25, 2024

The mission of Developmental Disability Advocates is to provide resources to create opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities in Jefferson County to live full and enriched lives.

This meeting was held as a hybrid meeting in person with a virtual option through Zoom. The link and phone number to access the meeting virtually were posted more than 24 hours prior to the meeting per Missouri Sunshine Law.

PRESENT: Dr. Marsha Mertens, Chairperson; Scott Brothers, Treasurer; Randy Starkey, Secretary; Diane Daniels, Director; Tony Sokolic, Director; Elizabeth Spaugh, Director; Cara Pellerin, Director; Stacey Ismail, Executive Director DD Advocates; Dawn Warner, Executive Assistant DD Advocates; Dave Weiler, Director of Administration DD Advocates.

PUBLIC PRESENT: Emily Brouk, DD Advocates; Sue Vogt, Pony Bird, Inc.; Scott Skarstad, Lafayette Industries

I. **OPEN and INTRODUCTIONS**– Dr. Marsha Mertens opened and led the regular session of the meeting of Developmental Disability Advocates Board of Directors at 6:30 p.m. Introductions of all present were done at this time.

II. **MISSION STATEMENT** – Tony Sokolic read the Mission Statement.

III. **MISSION MOMENT** – Lindsey Clark, Service Coordinator prepared a mission moment video that was shared with the Board about an individual on her caseload. Lindsey has served her since she started with DD Advocates. She graduated high school in May of 2024. Prior to graduation she enlisted and was accepted into the United States Navy's nuclear engineer program. Prior to leaving for boot camp she had been working and was able to purchase her own vehicle and passed her driver's test. A huge accomplishment for her was that the Navy waived her autism diagnosis and gave her a physical waiver. She and her family are super excited for what the future will look like for her and her Navy career.

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – The Regular Session minutes from October 28, 2024, were presented for approval. Cara Pellerin made a motion to approve the Regular Session minutes from October 28, 2024, as presented. Tony Sokolic seconded. Motion carried and minutes approved.

V. **REPORTS**

a. **Financial Report** – Dave Weiler reviewed the October 2024 financial report:
   - Service Coordination revenue is 2% under plan. October had a lot of training during the month that attributed to the lower revenue numbers. Some expenses are showing above budget. Many of these are under non-operating and are timing related. Pony Bird received a van and therefore a van match payment came through in October. Ride on St. Louis has almost exhausted their funds for the year. These providers will not go over their funded amount and will balance out at years end.
   - On the Financial Position page under the cash breakdown, Dave noted that there is a CD that matures in January. Dave will consult with Scott Brothers on options to choose the best option on the renewal. There is also a Treasury Bill that matures in December.

- There were a couple of checks written during the month that were highlighted:
  - $7500 paid to Illumilab represents 1/3 of the strategic plan consulting fee costs. A payment to Boyer Building and Design for $36,810 was for the door and threshold project at Pomme 1. A $12,297.62 payment to Joint Sealing Solutions was for the sealing of the Imperial office parking lot and a check for $8,160 to CARF is to cover the upcoming re-accreditation survey.

Scott Brothers made a motion to approve the October 2024 Financial Report as presented. Elizabeth Spaugh seconded. Motion carried.

b. **Executive Director Report** – Stacey Ismail distributed her Executive Director report for review:

- ***Regional Office Transfers:*** Previously we discussed 58 individuals from Jefferson County who had been served by the DMH Regional Office and were transferred to their Information Specialist service (IS) due to the changes in EMAP. After thorough review, we determined that there were actually 85 people in the IS service from Jefferson County who should have been transferred to us throughout the years instead of being in IS. This discrepancy in numbers was communicated to DMH and we clarified that since 2018, we agreed to serve everyone without Medicaid in the county regardless of age, so no one should be sent to IS from DMH. We determined that DDA's current Resource Specialist has capacity on her caseload and our Administrative Assistant, who requested additional duties, can serve individuals once the Resource Specialist caseload is full. Therefore, we agreed to take all of the 85 people in IS, 20 at a time, beginning in December. Ms. Pellerin and Dr. Mertens both expressed they were happy that the decision was made to serve those individuals through our agency.
- ***Meeting with Dennis Gannon*** – Stacey and Sara Sucharski, CEO of Pony Bird, met with the County Executive Dennis Gannon regarding concerns about the new practice of the Jefferson County Public Administrators (PA) office sending bills for their services to individuals for whom they serve as guardian. He was not aware of this. While it appears to be legal for PA's to charge their wards for their services, there was no communication to the individuals, families, agency providers, or DDA that this would be happening and some of the bills dated back to 4 years. The amounts of the bills varied but were generally $1,000 to $2,000 or more and the individuals do not have the funds to pay them. Ms. Sucharski reached out to Tracey Perry, the PA, to share that some of the charges were incorrect and to ask for clarification about what happens if they cannot pay, will they continue to get these bills and how often, is there a fee schedule that can be shared, etc. It states on the PA website that fees collected are not used for salaries so there are questions about what the funds are used for. The vague answers received from Ms. Perry at this point were not satisfactory which is why a meeting was requested with Mr. Gannon. He requested that a redacted copy of a bill be sent to him to review with legal and recommended that Stacey and Ms. Sucharski schedule an in person meeting with Ms. Perry to ask for additional clarification. He also indicated that he has no authority or oversight of the PA's office as she is an elected official. Stacey will continue to update the Board as more information becomes available.
- ***Starling Conference*** – Stacey and Emily Brouk attended the Starling Conference in St. Charles in November and it was excellent. This was the first statewide conference hosted by Starling (formerly MARF) and the focus was on developing leaders. There were many resources shared that will benefit leaders at DDA. Starling is primarily an association of agency providers, however, several SB40 Boards are also members for the relationship building opportunities, robust legislative advocacy, and expanded provider perspectives. Stacey has obtained information about membership costs and the Strategic Planning Committee will discuss the pros and cons of pursuing membership.
- ***MACDDS/MASWM Partnership*** – A group of MACDDS members, Stacey included, have started meeting with members of the Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshop Managers (MASWM) to discuss issues that may exist between SB40 Boards and sheltered workshops throughout the state that led to the filing of legislation last session by MASWM to change the SB40 statue language. The change in language would <u>require</u> SB40's to fund a sheltered workshop(s) if one is in their county and not require certification by CARF or any other accrediting body other than DESE. The purpose of these meetings is to eliminate the need to

introduce legislation to change the statute and instead partner to resolve issues. The next meeting of this group is in Kansas City in December so Stacey will keep the Board apprised of conversations.

- ***Legislative Breakfast Reminders*** – There are two legislative breakfasts coming up. The first one is on the 11th at Pony Bird's Herculaneum location. The second is on the 12th at Sunnyhill Camp, hosted by the Gateway Coalition. Details and RSVP information is in the packet. Stacey will be speaking at the Sunnyhill event. Board members interested in attend need to register through the links provided.
- ***AAIM Project Progress*** – We have received feedback from AAIM on our employee handbook, IT policy manual, job descriptions, and succession plans. Dave, Stacey, Dawn and Nathan are reviewing the feedback and seeking clarification on changes. Since this is a large volume of information to review and discuss with Leadership, the Board will likely receive it incrementally starting with the January Board meeting.
- ***Strategic Planning Progress*** – Stacey and Dave are working on data gathering and analysis related to strategic questions identified by the committee. A 6-question survey has been sent to the service coordination team regarding those they serve in an effort to capture any unmet needs. Sarah Buek has been provided with recent MACDDS TCM survey information, DDRB in St. Charles has agreed to share information they gathered from TCM interviews they collected during their strategic planning process, and Sarah has sent the option for a 30 minute phone interview or a survey to selected TCMs (Abilities First – Springfield, eitas – Kansas City, Camden County DDR – Lake of the Ozarks, Progressive Community Services – St. Joe, Disability Resource Connection – Franklin Co., DDRB of Jasper Co. – Joplin) to gather specific information. Sarah is also scheduling one on one, 30-minute interviews with six agencies - Pony Bird, Judevine, Sunnyhill, Aspiring Solutions, Easterseals Midwest and St. Louis Arc to discuss any anticipated growth or goals for services in Jefferson County, get feedback on their knowledge of the Jefferson Foundation, as well as their understanding/satisfaction with DDA's growth strategy, funding practices and service coordination.

c. **Service Coordination Report** – Emily Brouk shared the following information:

- ***Client Tally Report*** – We received 8 new individuals (6 intake/2 transfers – 6 non-Medicaid/2 Medicaid) in October. In addition, 3 individuals were discharged for a net growth of 5 for the month. Currently 1,042 are being served by DDA. 806 are TCM and 236 are Resource Specialist (RS).
- ***Community Outreach***- There were several outreach opportunities in October and November which DDA participated in. They are as follows:
    - Jefferson County Superintendents Meeting, October 9th
    - DD Advocates Tech Fest, October 15th
    - Heroes Care Veteran Meeting, October 17
    - Fox Antonio Middle School SPED presentation, November 1st
    - Family Forward Foster Care presentation, November 7th
    - Hillsboro Parent Information Night, November 13th
    - Pony Bird Caregiver Academy, November 16th
- ***Personnel*** – There has been no staff turnover in October or November 2024. The two most recent new hires, Dee Dee Hammock and Rebecca Reven are off to a great start.
- ***Logging***- The team average for the month of October was 75.8%. This is the second month in a row of achieving the target goal. FY25 Q1billing review is in progress.
- ***DMH Audits*** – There was a state audit request. Three files were requested and submitted by 11/18/24. This was a new audit / request for DDA.
- ***DMH Updates***- There were two new trainings released by DMH which have a value-based payment (VBP) attached. Initially, DDA wasn't sure about completing due to the time involved, however it is believed that DMH will require these trainings at some point with no payment offered and therefore DDA leadership decided to move forward with them while there is a VBP attached to them. The payment will not cover all DDA's cost but will recoup the majority. These trainings are the Fatal Five and Person-Centered Thinking. Carolyn Fischer, DDA Mentor has

completed the Fatal Five and shared it was very beneficial. Our team has until June 30th to complete and qualify for the VBP.

- ***SETWorks Updates-*** All staff have been trained on the ISP in SETWorks. Tasks have been pushed and Task training for Mentors took place on 11/19/2024.
- ***HEARO Remote Support Provider Presentation*** – HEARO will be on-site December 17th with their demonstration trailer. They are looking for a provider in Jefferson County to become a monitor of their service. County providers have been invited to hear this presentation from HEARO and tour their demo trailer at 11AM on the 17th and the DDA Team will receive a presentation and tour that afternoon at 2PM. Board members are welcome.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. **Critical Incidents Annual Analysis** – The Critical Incident Annual Summary was presented for review. Traditionally, DDA doesn't have many critical incidents to report. There was one workman's compensation claim during the year related to carpal tunnel. The individual was interested in surgery however the insurance ruled that there were mitigating factors and ultimately denied the surgery. Our team did a lot of accommodation efforts such as ergonomic keyboard and mouse, dragon speak software etc. to mitigate the situation.

b. **CARF Appreciation Request** – Annually the Board has agreed to fund a CARF Appreciation award to the staff on the December payroll for their efforts in maintaining our CARF accreditation. Dave Weiler recommended that this $50.00 award be given again this year to all staff. This is a $2,100 expense. Scott Brothers made a motion to approve the $50 CARF Appreciation award to be given to all staff for 2024. Randy Starkey seconded. Motion carried.

c. **Board Re-Appointment Packets** – There are three members up for re-appointment in January of 2025 - Dr. Marsha Mertens, Elizabeth Spaugh and Diane Daniels. Stacey will send the renewal packets to each member who is due. Packets need to be returned as soon as possible so that they can be submitted to the County Executive's office to be put on the January agenda for the County Council to review and approve. If there are any questions or concerns, please let Stacey know.

d. **New Board Member Ideas** – Stacey shared a handout from Board Source on Board Diversity. The article shares best practices in Board member recruitment and discusses geographic, gender, racial, perspective/experience, etc. considerations. It would be ideal for us to try and recruit members along the western side of the county along the Hwy 21/30 corridors. Currently, the Board members are mainly along the Highway 55 corridor with the exception of Amie Merz who is in Hillsboro. Stacey needs ideas for filling Julian Erber's vacant seat and encouraged the current members to think of anyone who they know that might be interested and forward that information to her.

e. **December Meeting Discussion and Holiday Plan** – The Board typically does not meet in December and is only required to meet 8 times per year according to the by-laws. It was agreed that the Board will not meet in December. In addition, a holiday dinner is typically planned. Dawn will send a doodle poll with dates and see if a date can be secured to accommodate everyone's schedules.

f. **Annual Rate Adjustment for FY26** – The new funding cycle begins in January 2025. If DDA wants to provide an annual rate adjustment to allow for inflation, now is the time to make that decision. The most recent Consumer Price Index adjustment was showing a 2.9% increase in 2024. Last year we made a 3.5% adjustment for providers. Our peer agencies are doing somewhere between 2-4% for FY26. Dave Weiler recommended a 3% increase to the rate which would equate to $15,000 in extra cost over the prior year. Scott Brothers made a motion to approve a 3% rate increase for POS funding for FY26. Cara Pellerin seconded. Motion carried.

g. **Cultural Competency, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan Annual Review** – The Cultural Competency, Diversity and Inclusion Plan was presented for review. The document contained more data than in the past. Previously DDA had talked about hiring a DEI consultant, but Stacey doesn't think this is needed at this time and believes the team can do this effort in-house and with on-line resources that she has found to be quite comprehensive. The new term for this is DEIB with the "B" standing for belonging. If the Board has any feedback on the report or the DEIB initiative, they were encouraged to provide to Stacey.

VII. OLD BUSINESS – There was no old business to discuss.

VIII. APPROVAL OF REQUISITION – The December 2024 and January 2025 requisitions were presented for approval. These requisitions are based upon the FY25 budget. Scott Brothers made a motion to approve the December 2024 and January 2025 requisitions as presented. Tony Sokolic seconded. Motion carried.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – There were no comments from the public in attendance.

X. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD – Elizabeth Spaugh expressed her appreciation to Emily Brouk for doing a great job of stepping into the role of the Director of Service Coordination.

XI. ADJOURN – Being no further business, Elizabeth Spaugh made a motion to adjourn the regular session at 7:58 pm. Cara Pellerin seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Randy Starkey, Secretary