

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY ADVOCATES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
September 23, 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; Amie Merz, Vice-Chair; Scott Brothers, Treasurer; Cara Pellerin, Director; Elizabeth Spaugh, Director; Diane Daniels, Director; Tony Sokolic, 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; Jeff Niehaus, DD Advocates; Annette Kendrick, Pony Bird; Rachel Svejowski, FACT; 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** – Elizabeth Spaugh read the Mission Statement.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – The Regular Session minutes from August 26, 2024, were presented for approval. Scott Brothers made a motion to approve Regular Session minutes from August 26, 2024, as presented. Cara Pellerin seconded. Motion carried and minutes approved.
- IV. REPORTS**
  - a. Financial Report** – Dave Weiler reviewed his August 2024 financial report:
    - County tax revenue is very low; however, this is typical for this point in the year and will increase in December/January. Under expenses, professional fees are higher than plan and this is timing related. There are a couple of providers over plan. Ride on St. Louis and Variety Club have begun their billing. These are timing related. Variety Club will likely hit their \$30,000 early in the fiscal year. Total expenses are at 14.8% vs. a plan of 16%. Our Treasury Bill was renewed for 1 year at 4.75%. Under checks written, a payment to Valenti’s Design was for the Pomme Apartment windows. This represents payment for the second half of the project, and the windows look great! There was a payment to Serve Pro on 8/22 to mitigate water damage sustained from a HVAC drain pan leak at Plass A. Tony Sokolic made a motion to approve the August 2024 Financial Report as presented. Elizabeth Spaugh seconded. Motion carried.
  - b. Executive Director Report** – Stacey Ismail distributed her Executive Director report for review:
    - **Tech Fest** – We are hosting a Tech Fest. There is a flyer included with the board packet. This consists mainly of assistive technology vendors however, there will be a few providers there as well. Missouri Assistive Technology will give a Digital Days presentation at 11:30. This is the first one we have hosted. Originally there was one planned in 2020 but was cancelled due to the pandemic. There are 15 confirmed vendors. Board members were invited to attend.

- **AAIM Update** – Recently DDA contracted with AAIM to do an HR audit of the organization. Their report was distributed for review. We’ve met internally and prioritized the items in preparation for a follow-up call with AAIM tomorrow. A redline version of the policy manual, including pulling out sections for a separate employee handbook, a discussion about where procedures should live, and a review of job descriptions/succession plans are first on the list of priorities. Will have a better idea of costs and timing after the meeting tomorrow. There is money in the budget for this item.
  - **Site Reviews** – Plass Campus site review is tomorrow. All site reviews have gone well. If you have not turned in your site review information, please get to Dawn so the summary can be produced for the October meeting.
  - **Head Shots** – Dawn is working to schedule a photographer to come to the office prior to the start of the October 28<sup>th</sup> board meeting to do headshots. Nathan and Dawn are getting ready to update the website and we want professional pictures for this purpose as well as the annual report. We will also have headshots done for Stacey, Dave, Emily, Jeff and Nathan as Executive Leadership.
  - **Employee Appreciation Week – October 14-18** – Staff appreciation week is October 14-18. Each day DDA does something special for the staff. Friday 10/18 there is an appreciation lunch at the office where years of service awards are presented. After lunch the team will go to Pevely to Cornhole Central and play a cornhole tournament. Lunch is at 11:30am. The board is welcome to join the lunch, just let Dawn know in order to have food for you.
- c. **Service Coordination Report** – Emily Brouk shared the following information:
- **Client Tally Report** – The client tally shows 10 new individuals, 4 through intake and 6 transfers. There were 4 discharged for a net growth of 6. Currently, 1,034 individuals being served by DDA. 843 through TCM and 191 through the Resource Specialist (RS).
  - **Personnel** – Interviews for the Assistant Director position were held on 9/10/24. Jeff Niehaus accepted the position on 9/13/24. This change will be affective 9/16/24. The Mentor position that Mr. Niehaus is vacating was posted internally on 9/17/24. Interested applicants are submitting letters of interest to him by 9/23/24. The Service Coordinator position was posted on 9/17/24 on Indeed, DDA website, and all social media. Three Service Coordinators attended the Annual Thompson Center Autism Conference on 9/12-9/13 for professional development.
  - **Columbus (DMH) Audit** – Overall, DDA did very well on the audit this year. The full report is in the board packet. The action plan for two areas that fell below the 87% threshold was written by Angie McGoveran before her departure. Remediation and refresher training took place during the team meeting on 9/17/24. Remediation specific to individual Service Coordinators is taking place currently and will be completed by 9/30/24. The Action Plan will be submitted to the DMH Technical Assistance Coordinator when completed.
  - **DMH Updates** – DMH has completely changed the due process model. Due process occurs when a provider, guardian, etc. wants a rights restriction imposed on an individual for their health, safety, or safety of others and is a complex process. New due process training took place on 9/5/24 and the whole process is now being managed by The Columbus Group starting 9/12/24. They are also the entity that does TCM and provider audits for DMH. DMH announced some TCM Value Based Payment (VBP) Trainings; The Fatal Five for Case Managers and Person-Centered Thinking. One Mentor has completed the Fatal Five for Case Managers Training. This took her 6 hours to complete, however she felt it was beneficial. DMH will pay \$520 for each Service Coordinator who completes that training. The Person-Centered Thinking training is being reported by other TCM agencies as taking 2 to 3 days to complete. DMH will pay \$1,196 for that training. The Leadership team is still looking into this training to see if it is deemed beneficial for our Service Coordinators to complete it due to the time involved. On 10/15/24, Tony Sokolic will present to the DDA SC team about the DD Health Home initiative, which Compass Health is a provider of.
  - **SETWorks Updates** – The ISP is complete in SETWorks. Tentative training for the service coordination team is scheduled for the first week of October.

## V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Tax Levy Public Hearing** – Dr. Marsha Mertens opened the hearing for public comment at 7:03pm. There were no public comments. The public hearing was closed at 7:05pm.
- b. **Adoption of Tax Levy Rate/Resolution** – Dave Weiler presented the resolution recommending the Board set the tax levy rate at 0.0857 for 2024. This rate is based upon an aggregate assessed valuation in Jefferson County in the amount of \$4,418,164,325. Scott Brothers made a motion to approve the tax levy resolution with a tax rate of 0.0857 for 2024 as presented. Amie Merz seconded. Motion carried.
- c. **Risk Management Plan Review** – Stacey Ismail summarized the Risk Management Plan for FY25 and as this was sent in the packet prior to the meeting for the Board to review, she asked if there were any questions. There were none. Ms. Ismail indicated that if anyone has questions about this at any time, they are welcome to contact her.
- d. **Annual Agency Survey Results** – The survey results were presented for review. This is a survey that traditionally has not received much response in previous years. The questions are geared mostly around service coordination. The survey results will be provided to Sarah Buek to use with the strategic planning efforts. It was suggested to maybe show the results in a year over year format to show progress.
- e. **Annual Participant Survey Results** – This survey was sent to all individuals and guardians served in service coordination. Overall, the results are positive. The results are shown as compared to both the Missouri National Core Indicators and the full National Core Indicator data. It was suggested that the “Rate Your Accessibility” section might need to be worded differently to elicit the response we are really looking for such as, “are there places in the community that you don’t feel are accessible to you and why”. We will gather Board input into these questions prior to sending it out next year.
- f. **Case Management Discussion** – A caseload document was included in the Board packet for review. It has been a couple of years since the Board reviewed this information. At the August Board meeting, changes to DMH Autism funding was shared. In our region, this has been called Eastern Missouri Autism Project (EMAP) funding. EMAP funding provided some families with up to \$1,800 per year to cover services for their child with Autism, however, it has been very underutilized. EMAP also has a 2 year waitlist for funding. The Office of Autism Services at DMH in Jefferson City will now manage what is called Family Financial Assistance Program (FFAP) which replaces EMAP as of 9/30/24. Beginning July 2025 a new online portal will be open for parents to apply for funding and will be done on a first come first serve basis until they exhaust all the funding. This affects DDA in that DMH is no longer providing service coordination for families transferring to FFAP without Medicaid and we were contacted to see if we wanted to keep the 35 people we serve in that group or transfer them to DMH Information Specialist (IS) service. Additionally, DMH shared that they would be transferring 58 individuals in this same group to IS if DDA did not want to accept them. After Leadership discussion about this, we determined that we do want to keep the 35 we are already serving, but do not feel that we can take on 58 more at this time due to our recent change to the Resource Specialist (RS) model for non-Medicaid. The RS is up to 200 on her caseload and we do not want to overwhelm her with 58 more. Additionally, DDA previously received \$99 per quarter, per person from DMH for providing service coordination to those with EMAP. This will end under the new FFAP model. Our commitment to DMH since 2018 has been that we would serve all individuals without Medicaid that are found eligible by DMH in Jefferson county. Not taking the 58 at this time would not be consistent with that and Ms. Ismail wanted Board input before giving DMH an answer about this. After much discussion, the Board agreed that waiting another couple of months to see how well the RS model for non-Medicaid individuals is working and re-evaluating our commitment to DMH through strategic planning is the best solution at this time. Future discussions need to include the 58 people sent to IS as well as the feasibility of serving the remaining 183 people under 16 with Medicaid at the Jeffco DMH office.

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Strategic Plan Proposal** – The Strategic Plan Design Committee (Dave, Stacey, Amie, Marsha) has been meeting with Sarah Buek of IllumiLab to determine the full scope/deliverables of the strategic planning process. \$2000 was earmarked for the design phase with an additional amount to be determined once the project scope was further defined by the committee. IllumiLab provided the committee with a proposal for the remainder of the planning process and development of a plan for \$22,500. The committee and Sarah worked together to refine some details of the plan and extend the timeline for completion to March 2025 due to the large scope and CARF occurring simultaneously in January or February. Therefore the total cost of the process is \$24,500, which is only slightly more than budgeted but very reasonable given

the costs of other planning bids received. The Design Committee would like to have another Board member serve on the planning committee in addition to Amie Merz. The time commitment is roughly 20-22 hours between now and March. Scott Brothers volunteered to serve on the committee with Amie. Scott Brothers made a motion to accept the proposal from IllumiLab in the amount of \$22,500 for the Strategic Plan project. Elizabeth Spaugh seconded. Motion carried.

- VII. APPROVAL OF REQUISITION** – The October 2024 requisition was presented for approval. The requisition is based upon the FY25 budget. Amie Merz made a motion to approve the October 2024 requisition as presented. Cara Pellerin seconded. Motion carried.
- VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT** – There were no comments from the public in attendance.
- IX. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD** – There were no comments from the Board members.
- X. CLOSED SESSION – Missouri Sunshine Law RsMO 610.012 (2) Real Estate** – Amie Merz made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to RsMO 610.012 (2) Real Estate at 8:10 pm. Cara Pellerin seconded. Dr. Mertens called for a roll call vote. Scott Brothers, yes; Diane Daniels, yes; Tony Sokolic, yes; Elizabeth Spaugh, yes; Dr. Marsha Mertens, yes; Cara Pellerin, yes; Amie Merz, yes. Motion carried.
- XI. ADJOURN** – Being no further business, Amie Merz made a motion to adjourn the regular session at 8:31 pm. Tony Sokolic seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Marsha Mertens, Chairperson