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

Minutes of the Regular Session Meeting
Developmental Disability Advocates Board of Directors
May 18, 2026 - 6:30 PM

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

Attendance

Board Members Present: Dr. Marsha Mertens, Chairperson; Amie Merz, Vice-Chairperson; Randy Starkey, Secretary; Scott Brothers, Treasurer; Tony Sokolic, Director; Elizabeth Spaugh, Director; Cara Pellerin, Director; Danielle Moskop, Director; Jon Casey, Director
DDA Administration Present: Stacey Ismail, Executive Director; David Weiler, Director of Administration; Dawn Warner, Executive Assistant; Emily Brouk, Director of Service Coordination; Jeff Niehaus, Asst. Director of Service Coordination, Nathan Patton, Director of Information Technology; Rachel Skurnick, Service Coordinator
Public Present: In person – Drew and John Davis; Scott Shelton and Vicky James - Lafayette Jeffco; Victoria Babb, David Farson, Chris Baker and Logan Jaskiewicz – City of Herculaneum/Kade's Playground; Kyrie Hood – Pony Bird. Virtual attendees – Rob Mathes – Crouch, Farley and Heuring; Christine Kennett, FACT; Sara Fulk, Sunnyhill.

Call to Order & Introductions

Meeting called to order by Board Chair, Dr. Marsha Mertens at 6:30PM. Board members, staff, and guests did introductions (in-person and virtual).

Mission Statement

The Mission statement was read by Tony Sokolic.

We create opportunities for people with developmental disabilities in Jefferson County to live fulfilling lives, by investing in services and building connection.

Mission Moment

- Rachel Skurnick introduced an individual she serves, Drew Davis, and his father John. Drew shared his story about being an entrepreneur and founding a hot sauce company called STACKED (originally named Crippling Hot Sauce). STACKED represents the people who've had the odds stacked against them and kept going anyway. Proceeds from every bottle go directly to The Limitless Foundation to fuel dreams for people with disabilities. Drew is a celebrity who has been on several national media shows and is doing a ride from Boston to DC this summer to raise funds for disabled veterans. He is then being honored by the United Nations while in DC.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve the Open & Closed Session Minutes from March 23, 2026, and Finance Committee Minutes from April 29, 2026, as presented.
Moved by: Scott Brothers
Second by: John Casey
Vote: The Open & Closed Session Minutes from March 23, 2026, and Finance Committee Minutes from April 29, 2026, approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Reports

FY25 Audit Report

Rob Mathes of Crouch, Farley and Heuring, independent auditors, presented the FY25 Audit Report. An unmodified (clean) opinion issued.
Motion: To accept the FY25 Audit as presented.
Moved by: Jon Casey
Second by: Tony Sokolic
Vote: The FY25 Audit Report approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Financial Report

Key highlights of the April financial report were reviewed:
- Service Coordination revenue is tracking on budget
- County tax revenue is tracking slightly over budget, $100,000 ahead. Likely at $4M by year end.
- Pony Bird had a capital project expense of $44,000 in April to finish renovation work at Baptist Park.
- JCCP and Pathways to Independence show over budget due to board approved spending from March meeting.
- Total Expenses are 2% better than budget.
- Positive cash flow reported of $471,000.

Motion: To approve the April Financial report as presented.
Moved by: Amie Merz
Second by: Elizabeth Spaugh

Vote: April Financial Report approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Service Coordination Report

The Service Coordination report was presented, including:

- New client intakes totaled 8 in April with 4 discharges for a net growth of 4.
- Currently, 1,236 individuals being served by DDA both Medicaid and Non-Medicaid.
- January, February and March had 9, 3 and 13 cold calls respectively and attended 3 community outreach events.
- March Team average for logging was 76.7% (75.9% YTD) – 75% is expectation.
- FY26 Q2 Billing Review was completed with only 4 note retractions which totaled $475.20
- DMH made changes to the Environmental and Accessibility Adaptions (EAA) process - these have been communicated to the team.
- New UR tracker and Intake Tracker were implemented on 5/1/26.

No action was required.

Executive Director Report

The Executive Director provided updates including:

- Legislative updates include both the House and Senate passing the DMH budget and restoring all rates for day program and self-directed services. 50 Comprehensive waiver slots were added however, even with those there will likely be a waitlist. The Governor has until June 30 to sign the budget and retains authority to approve, withhold or veto specific line items.
- New Board portal was rolled out and communication improvements discussed.
- Recognition received from FOCUS STL at their What's Right With the Region Award Ceremony. Stacey and Dave attended. Social media video highlighting the ERA was shown.
- Ride on St. Louis, a therapeutic horseback riding center has offered to host a board meeting and provide a tour of their facilities. August or September were noted possible dates.
- DDA was highlighted by DMH as a HRSP Performance Measure Hero for our timely corrections to the attestation issue.

No action was required.

New Business

Kade's Playground Presentation

Victoria Babb and David Farson gave a presentation requesting funding support for Phase III expansion of Kade's Playground.

- Phase III focuses on an early childhood area for the playground.
- $55,000 still needed to fully fund Phase III. If received, the goal would be to get everything installed for the summer.

No immediate action taken during presentation.

FY26 Funding Redirect Requests

Sunnyhill and Pony Bird made requests to the board asking to redirect some of their FY26 funding.

- Pony Bird's FY26 funding included a request for three vehicles. To date they have received two of them with $13,573 remaining. Pony Bird asked to carry over the $13,573 to FY27 for vehicle purchase.
- Sunnyhill requested approval to redirect funds from Capital Grant 9203/10 for FY26. These funds were allocated for asphalt repair work at the Sunnyhill Camp in Dittmer. Sunnyhill is asking to utilize these funds instead towards Phase 1 of a generator project for their Assisted Living Facility currently planned for FY27.

Motion: To allow Pony Bird to redirect $13,573 to FY27 for vehicle purchase.
Moved by: Jon Casey
Second by: Elizabeth Spaugh
Vote: Pony Bird's redirect request of $13,573 to FY27 for vehicle purchase was approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Motion: To approve Sunnyhill's request to redirect $36,000 towards Phase 1 generator project.
Moved by: Scott Brothers
Second by: Amie Merz
Vote: Sunnyhill's redirect request of $36,000 to use towards their Phase 1 generator project instead of the original asphalt project was approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

FY27 Budget Approval

Highlights of FY27 Budget presented included:

- Service Coordination has expanded by 3 FTE this year and an additional Service Coordinator is budgeted for half a year in FY27 depending on growth
- Service Coordination deficit of $644,000 needs to be covered by levy
- Budgeted $4M in tax levy dollars to remain flat
- One new funded service through Easter Seals Midwest – Autism Diagnostic Services
- Total revenue approximately $7.463M and expenses of $8.044M for a deficit of $581,000
- Cash Reserve after FY27 budget is $4.5M or 56% of expenses – assumes sale of Plass Campus and Hwy. A property

Motion: To approve FY27 Budget as presented.

Moved by: Scott Brothers
Second by: Randy Starkey
Vote: The FY27 Budget was approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Additional Funding Request – Kade's Playground

Motion: To approve $55,000 in funding to be paid in FY26 (current year's budget)
Moved by: Scott Brothers
Second by: Cara Pellerin
Vote: $55,000 in funding for Kade's Playground Phase III to be paid from FY26 budget approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

AI Meeting Recording & Summarization Policy

- Policy reviewed
- Amendment required: retention period corrected to **120 days**

Motion: To approve AI Meeting Recording and Summarization policy as amended with a 120 day retention period.
Moved by: Scott Brothers
Second by: Jon Casey
Vote: AI Meeting Recording and Summarization policy approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Record Retention Policy Update

Updated policy presented and reviewed.

Motion: To approve updated Record Retention policy as presented.
Moved by: Amie Merz
Second by: Elizabeth Spaugh
Vote: Record Retention Policy approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Old Business

- No items discussed.

Requisition – June 2026

Requisition for budgeted June 2026 expenditures plus $100,000 for Promise Community Homes was presented.

Motion: To approve June 2026 requisition, including the $100,000 for Promise Community Homes.
Moved by: Cara Pellerin
Second by: Tony Sokolic

Vote: The June 2026 Requisition was approved as presented by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Public Comments

- None.

Board Comments

- Positive comments shared regarding Drew Davis and his Mission Moment.

Closed Session

Motion: To enter closed session pursuant to Missouri Sunshine Law RSMo 610.021(2) (Real Estate)
Moved by: Amie Merz
Second by: Tony Sokolic
Vote: Dr. Marsha Mertens, Chairperson called for a roll-call vote to enter closed session. Amie Merz, yes; Randy Starkey, yes; Scott Brothers, yes; Elizabeth Spaugh, yes; Tony Sokolic, yes; Cara Pellerin, yes; Danielle Moskop, yes; Jon Casey, yes; Dr. Marsha Mertens, yes.

Adjournment

The open session of the meeting was adjourned following completion of agenda items.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Starkey

Randy Starkey, Secretary