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

Minutes of the Regular Session Meeting
Developmental Disability Advocates Board of Directors
June 22, 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; Tony Sokolic, Director; Elizabeth Spaugh, 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; Nathan Patton, Director of Information Technology; Rebecca Reven, Service Coordinator
Public Present: Vicky James, Lafayette Industries; Annette Kendrick, Pony Bird; Christine Kennett, FACT; Matt Jannings, Pathways to Independence

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

Mission Moment

- Rebecca Reven, Service Coordinator, shared a success story highlighting an individual she serves. This individual previously was living in an unsafe/unstable situation with inconsistent care. Through collaboration with DHSS and other community partners this young man was able to transition from unstable care conditions to independent living. In addition, he now has consistent personal assistance support. This has improved not only his physical health but his mental health as well. He is happy and thriving.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve the Open & Closed Session Minutes from May 18, 2026, and Public Awareness Committee Minutes from June 15, 2026, as presented.
Moved by: Amie Merz
Second by: Elizabeth Spaugh
Vote: The Open & Closed Session Minutes from May 18, 2026, and Public Awareness Committee Minutes from June 15, 2026, approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Reports

Financial Report

Key highlights of the May financial report were reviewed:

- Revenues at or above projections, especially service coordination revenues.
- County tax revenue exceeding budget by approximately 3%, with anticipated total exceeding $4 million.
- Expenses overall under budget (~89.6%), despite overspending in:
  - Staffing (planned early hiring)
  - Office/technology investments
  - Property-related (landlord) costs
- Year-end projection indicates near break-even financial position.

Motion: To approve the May Financial report as presented.
Moved by: Randy Starkey
Second by: Tony Sokolic
Vote: May Financial Report, approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Service Coordination Report

The Service Coordination report was presented, including:
Key performance highlights:

- 8 new client intakes; 11 discharges (net -3; total served: 1,233)
- No staff resignations; strong workforce stability
- Logging performance above expectations (May average ~79%)
- New FY27 performance targets increased due to sustained success

State audit/trend data exceeded statewide averages:

- 98% timely assessments
- Minimal plan errors
- 100% supervisory approval timeliness

Improved data tracking systems implemented (AI tools and internal dashboards)

No action was required.

Executive Director Report

The Executive Director provided updates including:

Legislative Update:

- State budget uncertainty pending gubernatorial veto actions
- Federal changes affecting special education and disability services
- Increased need for education (not advocacy) due to restrictions on political activity for taxing entities

Public Awareness Strategy Discussion:

- Board discussed potential role in educating the public about legislative issues (e.g., Amendment 5)
- Emphasis on:
  - Neutral, fact-based communication
  - Avoidance of lobbying or taking positions
- No formal motion was made; consensus leaned toward cautious engagement

Community Engagement:

- John Stockton, who is running for County Executive, stopped by on June 4th to learn more about what DDA does.
- Participated in the Down Syndrome Step Up event in Forest Park on June 7th with an information booth.
- Attended a Needs Assessment event with Jefferson Franklin Community Action on June 9th.
- Stacey and Emily toured the Autism Adventure Day Camp in Imperial along with Nick Davis of JCMHFB.
- On June 12th DDA presented the City of Herculaneum with a check for $55,000 for Kade's Playground to complete Phase III. The Bauman family also attended this presentation. (picture of the event shown)

Organizational Updates:

- ISL fire at Darkmoor -individual temporarily placed in another ISL.
- Annual Report complete – Copies presented to the Board.
- Met with AAIM to discuss the HR restructuring and finance leadership transition planning
- Implementation of automated payroll and HR systems
- No new TCM Contract. An extension of current contract is expected.
- Fiscal New Year picnic was held on June 16th. Catered by Pedal 'n Pi.

No action was required.

New Business

Board Officer Elections

The nominating committee proposed the following slate of officers:

- Chairperson: Dr. Marsha Mertens
- Vice Chair: Amie Merz
- Secretary: Randy Starkey
- Treasurer: Scott Brothers

Scott Brothers was not in attendance but was contacted and confirmed his approval of the nomination and agreed to serve as Treasurer if Board approved.

Motion: To approve the slate of officers as presented.
Moved by: Tony Sokolic
Second by: Elizabeth Spaugh
Vote: Slate of officers naming Dr. Marsha Mertens, as Chairperson; Amie Merz as Vice-Chairperson; Randy Starkey as Secretary and Scott Brothers as Treasurer, approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Technology Plan Annual Review (CARF)

Nathan Patton IT Director presented the Technology Plan for review and approval. Highlights of the plan included:

- Completion of prior-year objectives (security, reporting, AI policies)
- Continued investment in Microsoft 365 tools and automation
- Development of internal data tracking and reporting systems
- Planned initiatives:
    - Web accessibility improvements
    - HRIS system expansion
    - Vendor risk management framework

Motion: To approve the Technology Plan as presented.
Moved by: Amie Merz
Second by: Randy Starkey
Vote: The Technology Plan was approved by voice vote; no opposition noted.

By-Laws Annual Review (CARF)

- Review confirmed no recommended changes following major revisions in prior year.
- Discussion included committee quorum considerations and governance practices.

Motion: To approve the By-Laws as presented with no changes.
Moved by: Tony Sokolic
Second by: Elizabeth Spaugh
Vote: By-Laws approved as presented by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Workers' Compensation Renewal

- Renewal through Missouri Employers Mutual (MEM):
    - Quoted premium slightly above budget ($13K budgeted vs. $13,387 quoted)
    - Renews July 1, 2026

    - Favorable experience modifier maintained.
    - Dave is working on getting quote amount reduced.

Motion: To approve renewal at quoted amount or less (pending Dave's negotiations).
Moved by: Amie Merz
Second by: Tony Sokolic
Vote: Renewal with Missouri Employers Mutual for $13,387 or less approved by voice vote, no opposition noted.

Old Business

Board Self-Assessment Review

- Overall performance slightly improved from prior year.
- Identified areas for improvement:
    - Meeting efficiency/duration
    - Attendance awareness
    - Board recruitment pipeline
- Board reaffirmed strong governance performance overall.
- A change to question E10 was proposed for next years assessment.

Action: Informational; no motion required

Requisition – July and August 2026

Requisition for budgeted July and August 2026 expenditures was presented.

Motion: To approve July and August 2026 requisition as presented.
Moved by: Amie Merz
Second by: Tony Sokolic
Vote: The July and August 2026 Requisitions were approved as presented by voice vote; no opposition noted.

Public Comments

- None.

Board Comments

Board members expressed appreciation for:

- Service Coordination Department performance
- Staff contributions and organizational progress

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, absent; Elizabeth Spaugh, yes; Tony Sokolic, yes; Cara Pellerin, absent; Danielle Moskop, absent; 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, Secretary