

Meeting Minutes

REDWOOD COAST DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES CORPORATION
Meeting of the Board of Directors – Ukiah, CA
Saturday, September 21, 2019

#1 FY: 2019-20

Directors Present: Isis Brenner-Ward, Allison Hillix,
Steven Jackson, Bill Lacy, Alina Marquardt, Keith Peeples,
Steve Perez, Shirley Valente,

Board Directors Absent: Beverly Fontaine

Facilitators Present: Mark Konkler, Valerie Massey and Margaret Ridgway

RCRC Staff Present: Mary Block, Cassandra Bostick, Dr. Rick Blumberg, Dr. Lucy Esralew, Amy Medina, and Kim Orsi

Others Present: J. Ayres – Parent and Community Member, Delores Delgado-Translator, Diane Larson, Laura Larson – North Coast Office of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), David Matson and Allan Smith, Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call** - The regular meeting of the RCDSC Board of Directors was called to order by President, S. Perez at 9:05 a.m. Roll call of the board was called and a quorum was present.
2. **Select Timekeeper/Introductions/Reading of Vision** – I. Brenner-Ward volunteered as Time Keeper. S. Perez called for introductions and the Vision was read aloud by S. Perez, I. Brenner-Ward and A. Medina.
3. **Closed Session-Client Benefit Fund Discussion** – S. Perez called for a closed session at 9:10 a.m. to discuss the Client Benefit Fund Grant Applications and Awards.

The board meeting was called back to order by S. Perez at 9:44 a.m.

S. Perez reported that the Client Benefit Committee and the Board authorized a total of \$1,000 in awards and instructions were given to A. Medina to process the awards. S. Perez commented on the large number of Grant requests received for this cycle and that a number of the requests were for physical fitness and gym access. The board also expressed concern as a large number of the requests were from the Hispanic community that were submitted in person, two days before the deadline and all still needed to be translated and reviewed by their RCRC service coordinators.

The board asked what RCRC could do to work more closely with local agencies or businesses that might provide opportunities for clients to access local health clubs, community swimming lessons or dance classes. S. Perez would like to include in the letters that will be sent to the clients that requested grants that RCRC does its best to find generic resources and hoping to create partnerships with community activities and clubs in the future.

Another concern of the board was the number of grant requests for iPads. Why are requests coming to the Client Benefit Fund for communication devices and why are such devices not being pursued by RCRC service coordination?

Discussion continued regarding RCRC assessments and funding for communication devices as well as generic resources like Autism Speaks. Dr. L. Esralew commented that individual assessments are conducted. Currently, RCRC is in the process of developing clinics for Augmentative Communication (AC) devices and that there is an expert in the Northern catchment of RCRC that is providing assessments. R. Blumberg added that RCRC is currently working to bring additional resources to our community.

In lieu of time, it was recommended that the agenda be amended to add an additional discussion related to Communication Devices

4. Approval of Agenda – S. Perez called for the approval of today’s meeting agenda.

M/S/C S. Valente (A. Hillix) moved to amend the agenda to add a discussion following Community Input to continue the discussion regarding Communication Devices. S. Perez noted Communication Devices is added as item 7a. to the agenda.

M/S/C A. Hillix (A. Marquardt) moved to add a second amendment to the agenda, adding to New Business a discussion regarding RCRC’s Newsletter.

5. Board Development Committee – S. Perez introduced two potential board members, David Matson, past RCDSC board member from Mendocino County and Diane Larson, Parent and community member from Del Norte County.

M/S/C S. Perez (S. Valente) moved to seat two new members to the Board: David Matson and Diane Larson. S. Perez officiated the Oath of Office and the new members were seated.

6. Approval of July 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes – S. Perez called for approval of the July 12, 2019 meeting minutes as presented.

M/S/C: S Valente (A. Hillix) moved to approved the meeting minutes.

7. Community Input – S. Perez called for public input: Mr. J. Ayres commented on the importance of training for law enforcement regarding disability awareness and commended RCRC for its ongoing efforts to improve communication for clients, parents/conservators. Mr. Ayres also commented that the SCDD email notifications are wonderful and appreciated and expressed the importance of email, social media and public radio. In closing, Mr. Ayres shared that he recently attend an IEP meeting and reported that the teacher, teacher’s aid, Principal, Director of Special Education, and both parents attended. He commented that it

was a positive and productive meeting and added that he hoped we can continue to advocate and educate in each school district for those with disabilities.

- 7a. Communication Devices – continued discussion:** S. Perez called for the continued discussion regarding communication devices. S. Perez asked that the grant applications for communication devices (iPads) be shared with R. Blumberg as there are concerns that the grant applications may not have been adequately reviewed and perhaps direction regarding the application process should be reviewed and updated for RCRC staff (service coordination). It was also noted that perhaps it is time for the Client Benefit Fund (CBF) Committee to review the entire Grant Request applications and updated to better assist with the grant process. A. Marquardt, CBF Committee Chairperson recommends adding a question to identify the type of disability (of the client) as this information would be helpful for the committee to understand the need.

With regard to communication devices that include iPads and similar devices, I. Brenner-Ward noted that schools are mandated to conduct assessments and state resources that are available. It was noted that all resources should be reviewed.

S. Valente commented that the process to obtain assessments for communication devices is taking too long and perhaps a Policy should be developed that notes priorities and timelines to expedite purchases. S. Valente also asked if the IPP could be modified to add information regarding communication devices. R. Blumberg reported that Dr. Esralew is currently developing a procedure around communication devices. S. Perez recommends that a presentation to the board on this procedure would be welcomed prior to moving forward with the development of a Policy.

R. Blumberg reported that RCRC service coordinators are person centered professionals and they are working diligently to help meet the needs of clients and families. However, there are barriers with professionals in our area to prove assessments and the development of needed resources. R. Blumberg would like to bring a presentation back to the board in November that will outline the steps that include information regarding the decision making process and timelines around assessments and purchases of communication devices. A. Marquardt reminded everyone that there are many other needs that require assessments, in particular mobility/wheelchair assessments. R. Blumberg commented RCRC's priority is to recruit additional specialized services to build our local capacity.

M/S/C: S. Valente (A. Hillix) motioned to direct the Executive Director (R. Blumberg) to develop resources to provide assessments for communication devices and follow through with obtaining devices in a timely fashion. (abstained: I. Brenner-Ward)

R. Blumberg commented that RCRC should be reporting such information regularly to the Board. Dr. Esralew reported that RCRC is currently in the process of developing mini-clinics that will be held on a regular basis which will help build our local capacity. R. Blumberg is confident that RCRC will be able to vendor new resources in the near future.

ACTION:

S. Perez will follow up with S. Valente and A. Hillix (A. Marquardt) to discuss if a Policy is necessary regarding the Assessment process.

8. **Executive Directors Report** – R. Blumberg welcomed the new board members and thanked them for their willingness to serve on our board. He also thanked existing members for their commitment to service on our board which includes traveling to various areas of our catchment area.

RCRC is continually working to strengthen our communities. Wellness and strength for clients and families are priorities. R. Blumberg is grateful to Dr. Esralew who has developed resources on a statewide level and is working to build RCRC's local capacity. R. Blumberg thanked Executive Assistant, K. Orsi and welcomed L. Larson from the North Coast office of the SCDD to our community, adding that L. Larson has over 35 years of experience working in our service system and that he is looking forward to meeting and getting to know the board members.

R. Blumberg commented that it is RCRC's priority to provide opportunities for meaningful and authentic dialog with those we are here to support and that he along with L. Larson (SCDD) are working together to develop and create these opportunities.

- **Community Safety:** On Monday, October 7, 2019 from 6 to 8 p.m. the Ukiah Chapter of People first will be holding a focus group meeting to discuss community safety which will allow self advocates to express their concerns and needs. R. Blumberg hopes this will be the first of many such gatherings in RCRC's four-county catchment to discuss concerns and needs.

R. Blumberg invited L. Larson to share information regarding the upcoming meeting on October 7th: L. Larson discussed abuse in our communities which includes bullying, stealing money and exploiting individuals. She shared information regarding the We Care A Lot Foundation which was developed in the Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC) catchment area and their Abuse Prevention Team will be providing a peer-to-peer training for the People First focus group during the October 7th meeting. L. Larson commented that such trainings have reduced abuse in the FNRC area. However, there was an increase of abuse in environments of those who are non-verbal. The Abuse Prevention Team will sharing information about their work so that others can develop a similar approach in the RCRC catchment area. Working together and supporting folks to be their own best advocates in our communities is key.

L. Larson announced that the SCDD gathers information from the community which is sent to the state who then shares the information with the federal government. SCDD will be hosting upcoming Town Hall meetings to gather community input on what is needed. Locations for these meetings are currently being secured for Crescent City, Eureka, Ukiah, Lakeport and Fort

Bragg. Dates and locations will be forwarded soon and posted to their website and RCRC's website.

R. Blumberg welcomed and introduced RCRC staff member, Kassandra Bostick who is a new service coordinator at RCRC and shared that she has a degree in child development.

- **RCRC 2020 Performance Measures and Activities and The Redwood Coast Community Plan:** R. Blumberg announced that a public meeting to discuss RCRC 2020 Performance Contract Measures and Activities will be held in the Ukiah and Eureka offices of RCRC on Thursday, October 10th from 3 to 5 p.m. R. Blumberg provided background regarding RCRC's contract requirement with DDS to review Public Policy Outcomes and obtain community input. Information collected during these meetings will be included in the DRAFT 2020 Performance Contract Measures and Activities which will be presented to the Board of Directors during the November board meeting for approval prior to submitting to DDS (as required). RCRC is striving to make these meetings more meaningful as we gather important community input and dialog about what is needed as well as other issues in our community.

R. Blumberg reported that there are 21 regional centers in the state and that RCRC is one of eight regional centers that include additional outcomes known as Local Policy Outcomes which are not required by DDS in the annual Performance Plan reporting. However, over the past several years, the required information for the Public Policy Outcomes has grown and regional centers must now provide additional reporting to DDS. R. Blumberg would like to suggest and request approval from the board that RCRC remove the Local Policy Outcomes from the annual Performance Plan reporting and develop our own Redwood Coast Community Plan which will identify RCRC's own priorities in all four counties. R. Blumberg suggests to the board that RCRC move forward with its work with consultant Anh Nguyen who provided information to the board during the July 12, 2019 meeting. The information and input received from the community will be more authentic and measureable on how RCRC can improve services that are provide. R. Blumberg will be planning future meetings in all four counties as we look for more meaningful participation from our community.

R. Blumberg added that RCRC Directors, M. Block, Dr. Esralew and K. Nash have been nominated to a State Task Force and RCRC is very optimistic to have stronger voices at the state level. RCRC has also met with the Directors of DDS and ARCA to advocate for RCRC as our regional center is unique and our needs differ from other regional centers as we cover a very large and rural area.

R. Blumberg would like to suggest to the board for their approval to remove the Local Policy Outcomes from the annual Performance Plan reporting (which is not required by DDS) and RCRC will move forward and work with consultant, Anh Nguyen to develop the Redwood Coast Community Plan.

M/S/C: A. Hillix (S. Jackson) moved to remove Local Policy Outcomes and RCRC will move forward and work with Anh Nguyen to develop the Redwood Coast Community Plan.

R. Blumberg thanked the board and will provide reports to the board on the Redwood Coast Community Plan in the future.

- **Associate Service Coordinators:** R. Blumberg reported that RCRC's Lakeport office has experienced difficulty in recruitment and retaining staff and most recently, fires in the Lake County communities have caused hardships and difficulty around affordable housing as incomes are lower and accessibility to a four-year universities is difficult for people to afford. R. Blumberg reported that the Directors Team has been involved in analyzing our operations budget and considering various strategies to ensure quality person centered services and open recruitment for a position within service coordination, Associate Service Coordinator (ASC). This position requires an Associates Degree (AA) from an accredited college and a level of years of experience relative to the position. This gives individuals the opportunity to receive on-the-job experience. M. Block reported that the ASC positions will assist RCRC with its caseload ratio requirements which RCRC along with may other regional centers has been unable to meet due to limited operations funding. The ASC position will be supervised by a senior service coordinator and additional education requirements for advancement will be supported so that these individuals will be able to obtain a BA.

9. Administrators Report – S. Perez call on A. Medina who provided the following information:

- **State Budget FY 2019/2020:** The State budget has been passed and it was reported that is has increased 9.4% over FY 2018/2019. The state budget includes \$163 billion for Health and Human Services of which the DDS will be allocated \$7.8 billion which is an increase of 5.8% over last year. The state is looking to fund and implement improved technology which could trickle down to the regional centers as our current fiscal system (UFS) is outdated. RCRC will submit information to DDS on what will be needed to improve our communication (IT) as well as agency needs.
- **OPS Budget FY 2019/2020:** RCRC's allocation is \$10.6 million which is approximately \$45,000 less (1%) less than prior year FY 2018/2019. These figures do not include CPP funding. The reduction includes a decrease for IT, software and maintenance as well as reductions in rent costs and Intake and Assessments. A. Medina will continue to review why RCRC's allocation has been reduced and noted that RCRC may receive a small increase to meet the specialized caseload of 1:25 full time position.
- **CPP Funding:** It is expected that RCRC will receive approximately \$230,000 for CPP. This funding is earmarked for resource development and operations funding.
- **Diversity Grant:** R. Blumberg reported that RCRC is requesting an increase for our Diversity Grant to assist M. Ochoa with outreach to our underserved communities as well as develop new resources and ongoing resources.

S. Valente commented that RCRC service coordinators are missing valuable time with clients due to travel. Could efficiency be improved by providing cellular phones to staff? R. Blumberg responded that this was recently discussed during a recent meeting. RCRC does provide flip-phones for check out. However, the RCRC catchment has many isolated areas where cellular service may not always be available and that RCRC is committed to the safety of staff and better technology.

ACTION:

- **A. Medina will email an update to the board when RCRC receives its allocations.**

S. Perez called for working lunch break at: 12:07 p.m.

S. Perez called the meeting back to order at: 12:30 p.m.

10. Executive Assistant Follow Up/Action Items: K. Orsi reported the following:

- July 12, 2019 meeting ACTIONS:
 - CBF Actions have been completed.
 - Cost Breakdown for Board Expenses has been completed by A. Medina and included in the Administrators Report
 - S. Perez will forward email to the board with links for federal issues –not yet completed
 - July 2020 Meeting Schedule has been confirmed with R. Blumberg and on today's agenda for final approval.

11. Committee Reports

11a) Executive Committee Report – S. Perez reported the Executive Committee recently met to discuss board recruitment issues. There have been difficulties with recruitment due to travel and it is hoped that holding several meetings by videoconferencing will be helpful. S. Perez shared an update regarding ARCA meetings, attendance and representation. There can be two representatives with one vote from the board delegate from each regional center. S. Perez noted that the board representative can take anyone who is interested in serving as future Board representative to an upcoming ARCA meeting. S. Perez added that he is also advocating for videoconferencing ARCA meetings due to the extensive travel that is involved. In addition to scheduled Board meetings, there are six ARCA meetings scheduled per year with four meetings held in Sacramento followed by two meetings in Southern California (Torrance and San Diego).

ACTION:

- **Steve will contact Daniel Savino at ARCA regarding the possibility of videoconferencing future ARCA meetings.**

Discussion continued regarding future Board of Director representation. R. Blumberg commented that with SB81 there are now requirements that regional center boards must have representatives with business/public relations expertise, board experience (not related to regional center) and financial expertise. S. Perez discussed the difficulties with finding new board members to fill the current vacancies and one of the barriers is the amount of travel involved. The RCDCS Bylaws were reviewed regarding the membership of the board. There are

currently six vacancies on the RCDSC Board and the new criteria from SB81 will need to be met.

11b) Client Advisory Committee – B. Lacy and M. Konkler reported that they met on Friday, September 20th with R. Blumberg and Alex Bland, Client Advocate at RCRC and they discussed meeting by teleconference a week or two before future board meetings to discuss updates from clients that can then be shared by B. Lacy during his report at future board meetings. The goal is to help facilitate communication with the board from clients in the community. S. Valente commented that she would be interested in hearing feedback from clients during upcoming meetings. B. Lacy is looking forward to being able to bring communications from clients living in our area to the board.

11c) Vendor Advisory Committee - S. Jackson provided the following highlights from the Alliance of Service Providers (ASP) meeting that was held on September 11, 2019.

- Laura Larson from the SCDD attended the meeting and shared information about upcoming meetings they will be holding.
- Kim Nash, RCRC Director of Community Services provided information on DOR and customized employment. She also reported on affordable housing goals and is hoping to see 100 units of affordable units in each county within the next 5 years.
- UVAH – Pam Jenson talked about customized employment. A local casino has hired 4 individuals that UVAH supports.
- People Services Executive Director, Dana Lewis shared that the agency is promoting 3 Program Coordinators are transitioning to Program Directors. She also reported that they are also experiencing difficulties recruiting professional staff.
- CBEM reported that they are fully staffed in both offices and accepting referrals adding that the agency continues to grow throughout California.
- SCDD – Deborah Kindley announced that the Family Surveys will be coming soon and would like to remind everyone to complete them so that their voices will be heard at the State level.
- Providers expressed that there were some difficulties that they experienced with billings during the RCRC annual roll-over.
- Dr. Rick Blumberg reported on many things happening at the executive level including advocacy for rate increases and many agencies are provide trainings including Pro-ACT and Person Centered Thinking and new state requirements around sexual harassment.
- All agencies are discussing the potential PG&E planned power outages and putting emergency plans in place and solar generators are being provided to individuals supported through the IPP process.
- The upcoming CAPTAINS Training was discussed.
- The Ukiah Rotary Club received a grant to conduct a Bike Camp for adults and children December 30, 2019 through January 3, 2020.

11d) Client Benefit Committee – I. Brenner-Ward commented that an additional discussion topic that was not addressed during the agenda amendments was to

discuss fundraising for the CBF. S. Perez recommends this discussion be moved to New Business.

11e) David A. Isom Award – S. Perez reports that now that the SCDD now has a Director that the board should move forward with this award.

M/S/C: I. Brenner-Ward (S. Perez) moves to restore the David Isom Award of Excellence.

ACTION:

- **R. Blumberg will discuss with L. Larson at SCDD regarding their participation.**

11f) Ad Hoc Bylaws Committee – No updates to report.

11g) Legislative Committee – No updates to report

12 ARCA Report –

a) Board Delegate Report: S. Perez reported that he has received information from ARCA that the State is expanding the CalFresh program. SSI recipients are eligible to enroll. R. Blumberg reported that he and K. Nash discussed reaching out to service providers for their assistance with helping clients with enrollment. RCRC is also working to roll out enrollment assistance in all of its offices. B. Lacy commented that CalFresh can be used at local Farmers Markets with vendors matching the benefit. A. Marquardt commented that enrollment can also be completed by telephone.

S. Perez reported that the board delegates participated in a survey at the last ARCA meeting as to why they became board delegates. ARCA will be using this information to create a presentation to communicate to the State of California (and Legislature) what regional centers are doing at the grassroots level. S. Perez also reported that within the next 2 years all board members will be attending a board member academy (training) to help board members develop skills and become effective board members as well as engage with other board members from across the state. R. Blumberg added that the board training (academy) also emerged from SB81. R. Blumberg will be providing information during the November board meeting on SB81 and what reporting responsibilities as regional centers and boards will be required in an effort to make our system stronger and more accountable.

S. Valente asked A. Medina to break out ARCA delegate expenses from the Board expenses. I. Brenner-Ward asked why the board expenses increased for FY 2018/2019 over FY 2017/2018. A. Medina indicated that a portion of the increase is due to \$5,000 for the purchase of board laptops and that lodging increased as RCRC is booking higher quality (safer) accommodations for board members. The mileage reimbursement rate also increased to \$0.58/mile.

ACTION:

- **A. Medina will confirm that ACRA delegate expenses are separate from the board travel expenses.**

- b) **ARCA Client Advisory** – S. Perez reported that C. Miller provided a written report which is included in the board packets.

13. Old/Tabled/Unfinished Business

a) **Approve Meeting Date for the July 17 & 18, 2019** - K. Orsi has confirmed the availability of R. Blumberg who is planning to attend the proposed board meeting date of July 17, 2019 and board training on July 18, 2019.

M/S/C: S. Valente (I. Brenner-Ward) moves to approve the proposed meeting date of Friday, July 17, 2020 and Board Development Training on Saturday, July 18, 2020.

S. Valente asked the board what type of development activities might the board desire and suggested that perhaps the board could invite several clients to the development training to hear their perspectives of what it's like to be a regional center client, how regional center has helped them and how they became a client.

14. New Business – S. Perez requested this discussion be added for Fundraising for the Client Benefit Fund to increase grants rewards: The CBF Committee would like to discuss how donations could be used to increase the amount of grants that are awarded and would like to discuss appealing to local businesses, banks and services. B. Lacy recommends creating a brochure about the CBF that could be shared with local businesses.

ACTION:

- **Client Benefit Fund Fundraising and Donations will be added to the next Board of Directors meeting agenda (November 16, 2019) for discussion. Board members are asked to bring their thoughts and ideas to the discussion.**

S. Perez would also like the CBF Committee to review and update the current Grant Application.

ACTION:

- **S. Perez will work with CBF Chairperson, A. Marquardt and committee member, B. Fontaine to review the current Application to modify and update.**

RCRC Newsletter: R. Blumberg thanked A. Hillix and her students who developed the first DRAFT edition of RCRC's Newsletter. It was determined that mailing of the newsletter to clients, family members, service providers and community members would not be cost effective and that sharing the Newsletter by e-blasts would be the best way to share this information quarterly. Newsletter copies would also be posted to RCRC's website and available at all RCRC offices and shared at quarterly meetings. A. Medina commented that the Newsletter could be included with the upcoming mailing of the Annual Cost Statements. However, she will first need to confirm when this mailing will be processed as there may not be sufficient time to coordinate the addition of the Newsletter this cycle.

15. County by County Liaison Reports

15a) Humboldt - There were no updates to report.

15b) Del Norte - There were no updates to report.

15c) Lake – There were no updates to report

15d) Mendocino County – There were no updates to report.

16. Community Input – Mr. Joe Ayers expressed a need for parent input during meetings. He also suggested that perhaps SCDD, RCRC, and SELPA partnering together to provide disability awareness for school personnel to help parents and improve access to resources. Mr. Ayers also expressed that he is happy organizations are doing more about emergency preparedness and that everyone needs to be thinking about emergency preparation. Mr. Ayers also expressed his appreciation for medical care within our communities and noted that he also appreciates alternative medical care that is available which has been great for him.

17. Adjournment of Meeting –
M/S/C: S. Valente (I. Brenner-Ward) motioned to adjourn the meeting. **S. Perez** adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2019 in Ukiah.



Isis Brenner-Ward, Secretary
RCDSC Board of Directors
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