

Meeting Minutes

REDWOOD COAST DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Meeting of the Board of Directors – By Zoom Video/Teleconferencing

Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

#4 FY: 2022-2023

Directors Present: Haley French, Beverly Fontaine, Diane Larson, Tamera Leighton, Will Lewis, Jorge Matias, Dave Matson, Cassandra May, Chris Nifong, Keith Peeples, Mike Sawyer

Directors Absent: Allison Hillix, Bill Lacy, Teresa Schnacker

RCRC Staff Present: Mary Block: Director of Client Services, Nichole Haydon: Director of Human Resources, Alma Ingram: Diversity Outreach Specialist (Lake/Mendocino), Amy Medina: Director of Administration, Mariana Molina-Nava: Diversity Outreach Specialist (Humboldt/Del Norte), Kim Orsi: Executive Assistant, Jonathan Padilla: Director of Community Services, Dr. Jacinthe Roy: Director of Clinical Services, Dr. Kimberly Smalley: Executive Director

Others Present: Carman and Valerio Baca: Parents/Community Members, Jaclyn Balanay: Primary Liaison, Department of Developmental Services Office of Community Operations Community Programs Specialist, Dolores Delgado: Spanish Translator, Leslie Diaz: Parent/Community Member, Palo Diaz: Community Member, Julie Eby-McKenzie: Manager of the North Coast Office of the SCDD, H. K.: Community Member, Breean Kolster: 24 Hour Care, Rubi Saldana: Integrated Community Collaboration, Ms. Santa Cruz: Parent/Community Member, Ms. Zaid: Parent/Community Member

Closed Session Updates will be provided during Committee Reports:

- 1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions:** The regular meeting of the RCDSC Board of Directors was called to order by Board President M. Sawyer at 6:03 p.m. K. Orsi conducted rollcall and a quorum was present. M. Sawyer called for introductions and K. Orsi read the Electronic Recording Disclaimer.
- 2. Select Timekeeper/ Sharing the Vision:** T. Leighton volunteered as timekeeper and C. May shared the fourth paragraph of the vision statement, *“We envision all people being empowered to communicate with their own minds and hearts to determine their supports and services.”*
- 3. Approval of Agenda:** M. Sawyer called to approve the agenda and asked if there were changes and hearing none the agenda was approved as presented.
- 4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 9, 2022 Board Meeting:** M. Sawyer called to approve the meeting minutes and asked if there were any changes or corrections and hearing none the meeting minutes were approved as presented.

5. Community Input: M. Sawyer called for community input:

- **State Council on Development Disabilities (SCDD):** J. Eby-McKenzie shared that the SCDD is currently organizing trainings for Spanish speakers. Anyone interested in attending is asked to email julie.eby-mckenzie@scdd.ca.gov The SCDD will also provide virtual statewide trainings regarding regional center services and other topics. Please visit <https://scdd.ca.gov/scdd-trainings/> for more information.

Additional information shared by SCDD:

- SB639: Sub-minimum wage jobs: The report has been completed and can be accessed at <https://scdd.ca.gov/sb639-home/>
- Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) next meeting is scheduled on January 19, 2023 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. RCRC Emergency Management Coordinator, Fred Keplinger will provide a presentation followed by a discussion regarding the recent earthquake response and winter storms. SCDD legislative representative, Bridget Kolakosky will also provide an update regarding the Governor's budget and legislative priorities.
- Community member shared the following: The Superintendent's Special Policy Council of the Humboldt-Del Norte SELPA is updating its mission and values statements as it continues the work of leading the SELPA in providing needed services to students with disabilities and seeking the input of educational partners to help guide them in the work to develop these statements. Please contact K. Orsi by email korsi@redwoodcoastrc if you would like the links forwarded to you or reach out to the SELPA office at 707-441-2051, email at hdnselpa@hcoe.org

6. Executive Director's Report: M. Sawyer called on Dr. Smalley for her Report:

Local Disaster Update: Humboldt County experienced a 6.4 earthquake on December 20th followed by numerous storms and flooding. Even though the power, phones and RCRC's network connections were knocked out following the quake, many RCRC staff members still came to work and began contacting clients and families. Many thanks to RCRC's Wellness Nurse, Sarah Hames-Anderson and RCRC Emergency Management Coordinator, Fred Keplinger for their efforts to assure clients and families were safe.

Regional Center Service System is Growing: When Dr. Smalley began working at RCRC 16 years ago, six percent of clients on service coordinator's caseloads had a diagnosis of autism; as of today that has grown to 50 percent. Since Dr. Smalley became the Executive Director of RCRC in 2021, the number of clients has grown by 500 individuals. RCRC is increasingly serving individuals with dual diagnosis who have more significant health and complex family dynamics. DDS has expanded its capacity and has supported RCRC to have specialty positions to adequately serve of our community members. RCRC continues working with DDS, START and YAI to support local youth with significant challenges.

Local Demographics: RCRC's demographics are also changing as our catchment has predominately been Caucasian (currently 74 percent). RCRC needs additional linguistic and culturally diverse staff internally as well as our vendor community.

Service Providers: Additional Adult Services are needed in our catchment as well as services to support individuals with more complex needs.

New Intakes at RCRC: In 2022, 70 percent of all new intakes were individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. These individuals are predominately school age; however, when they become adults, they will need adult services that will meet their needs. RCRC has much to do to continue building services for everyone's needs.

New RCRC Office: As RCRC continues to grow, a sixth office has been opened in Clearlake and is located at 14888 Olympic Drive.

RCRC Staffing: RCRC has hired nine new staff and there are currently 12 openings. RCRC continues recruiting for a licensed Psychologist. New positions designated by DDS have been filled including two Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialists who support our service coordinators and vendors to serve the deaf plus population. Self Determination and Quality Assurance positions as well as our wellness nurses are fully staffed. RCRC is in the process of filling the IDEA Specialist who will be working closely with local schools in our catchment. RCRC does have a robust Diversity and Equity Outreach team and Enhanced Service Coordination for RCRC's Latinx, Native and ASL populations and RCRC continues to strengthen its presence in the Hmong community.

Early Start: The law now states that all children under age six will be served by a service coordinator with a caseload of no more than one service coordinator to 40 children (age 0-5). Regional centers were not initially funded to hire the additional staff needed in order to bring the caseload ratios to the new 1:40 ratio and moved forward to begin hiring. It was reported in the Governor's budget that additional funding to hire additional service coordinators will be provided to regional centers to meet this caseload ratio. The Early start unit has since been reorganized as children who would have aged out at age 3 will now be able to remain with their current service coordinator through age 5.

IT Needs and Upgrade: RCRC continues working on this project/upgrades.

RISE (Realizing Interdependent Success and Empowerment): This self-advocacy group continues to meet regularly and is working to develop future trainings for RCRC and our vendor community.

Diversity and Equity Outreach: RCRC's team continues to provide outreach and is working to improve RCRC's performance around language and accessibility.

Autism Specialists: This team has started a monthly support group for families whose children have been newly diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. A flier with additional information is included in your meeting package (Information section).

Chat with the Executive Director: Dr. Smalley and RCRC's Diversity Outreach Specialists are meeting monthly by Zoom with a small group of RCRC's Spanish speaking community members/families to learn more about their needs. During these meetings, Dr. Smalley has discovered that there has been some misinformation regarding the responsibilities of region centers and community partners. Since these meetings began, RCRC has initiated in-house training to improve responsiveness

and cultural awareness and will continue to pursue cultural and linguistically appropriate vendors to improve our relationships as a community.

Santa Claus: Santa visits returned to RCRC in December and photos are included in your packets (Information section). Several hundred families participated this year and many thanks to all who helped make these events successful. RCRC also participated in the Eureka Light Parade and thank you to Jorge Matias who helped organize a second float representing Spanish speaking families.

Autism Awareness Month: April is Autism Awareness month and more information will follow regarding planned activities.

7. Director of Community Services Report: M. Sawyer called on J. Padilla for his Report:

New Administrative Assistant: Congratulations to Angelica Limon, former Community Services (CSD) administrative assistant as she has accepted a promotion as RCRC's Enhanced Service Coordinator for Lake and Mendocino counties. Welcome Geneva Beaman who has joined RCRC and the CSD team as the new administrative assistant.

Social Recreation Grants: RCRC has received four proposals from community partners that are looking to develop enhancements for social recreation opportunities for RCRC clients. DDS retains the selection authority and RCRC has a review committee (meeting later this month) that will identify which proposals will be recommended to DDS. DDS has allocated up to \$162,000 to develop projects across RCRC's four county catchment. RCRC will have additional information by the end of February with an announcement in April of grantees.

Employment Grants: DDS has allocated \$10 million in grants for regional centers that will improve access to services to increase pathways to employment for clients. RCRC submitted its proposal for customized employment and DDS has awarded \$97,000 to provide specialized mentoring for three individuals in customized employment and to certify an additional nine individuals to customized employment.

RISE: This advocacy group continues to meet and has developed parameters around priorities for the HCBS Grant funds and how they will be utilized. RCRC obtained permission from DDS for RISE to continue to meet throughout the grant cycle to provide feedback, input and help select/identify projects that will be funded.

Burns Rate Study Implementation: The second round of increases went into effective January 1, 2023 (previously proposed for July 1, 2023). RCRC will continue discussions with vendors regarding the minimum wage increases that will also be completed over the next 3 months and all retroactive to January 1, 2023.

Person Centered Thinking (PCT) Trainers: As part of RCRC's performance incentive, DDS would like to insure that all regional centers statewide apply/work in PCT. RCRC currently has one certified PCT mentor and is in the process of adding two additional individuals to provide PCT training for staff over the next several months.

Alternative Services: These services were created during the pandemic and the provisions ended on December 31, 2022. DDS has made some adjustments for flexibility for some traditional services with alternative services, such as employment. The Tailor Day option provides employment/education advancement for adult clients

while still participating in traditional recreation/leisure day service opportunities. Several vendors have expressed interest; however, there are no vendors currently participating in the Tailor Day option. DDS has also expanded remote service options that are not as flexible as alternative services and is limited to traditional day programs and independent living services.

J. Padilla called for questions: A community member asked how families can learn more about social/recreation and the various services available. J. Padilla encouraged families to talk with their service coordinators to identify needs that social recreation can fulfill. There are approximately 30 to 40 social/recreation services with the majority located in Humboldt and Mendocino counties. Anyone can access a list of vendored service providers as they are posted on RCRC's website under the Transparency tab.

B. Fontaine asked what the timeline is for vendors if they want to sign up for the Tailor Day option. J. Padilla reported that if a vendor is interested, it is a quick vendorization process. J. Padilla will follow up with the Resource Manager in Del Norte County to determine if any providers have expressed interest.

- 8. Director of Administration's Report:** M. Sawyer called on A. Medina who provided the following update: The RCRC Crescent City office lease will be amended to add an additional 2,000 square feet as the landlord will be building out space into the adjoining building specifically for RCRC. DDS has already approved the expansion and will fund the additional rent cost. There were no additional questions/comments. A. Medina requested approval by the board to sign the lease agreement.

M/S/C: T. Leighton (B. Fontaine) motioned to approve the lease for the additional square footage/expansion of the Crescent City office. K. Orsi called a vote by rollcall and the motion carried.

- 9. Standing Committee Reports:** M. Sawyer called on committee chairs for their reports:

- **Executive Committee Report:** M. Sawyer provided the following update: The Executive Committee has met with Dr. Smalley and has conducted her annual Performance Review. An update was provided during Closed Session before the board meeting. Based on the Executive Committee's report and recommendation, the board motioned and voted to approve Dr. Smalley's Employment Agreement for the term of February 1, 2023 through January 30, 2024.
- **Ad-Hoc Bylaws/Policies Committee Meeting:** M. Sawyer provided the following update: The Ad-Hoc Bylaws/Policies Committee met on November 18, 2022 and reviewed the RCDSC Bylaws to remove redundant information for consistency throughout. This committee will meet again on January 10th to review the final changes and prepare recommendations that will be posted to RCRC's website for review and public comment prior to moving forward for approval by the board.

- **Client Benefit Fund (CBF) Committee Meeting:** M. Sawyer provided the following update: The Humboldt Area Foundation made a one-time grant of \$3,500 in earthquake relief for RCRC clients following the December 20th earthquake that struck Humboldt County. RCRC service coordinators contacted their clients and collected a list of immediate needs for fourteen clients. These requests were submitted to and reviewed by the CBF Committee that met on January 6, 2023. The CBF Committee recommended releasing an additional \$1,800 from the CBF for immediate needs. During a Closed Session prior to the board meeting, the Committee provided their recommendations to the board for approval of \$5,300 in grants for immediate earthquake relief to RCRC clients. The board motioned and voted to approve the recommendations.
- **Vendor Representative Update:** H. French provided the following update: The ASP group met on January 10th and provided the following for the board:
 - **Alternative Services:** As noted by J. Padilla during his report, Alternative Services have ended as of December 31, 2022; however, vendors are troubled as this sunset will remove a financial safety net. Providers requested an extension by DDS for alternative services through the end of the State of Emergency and the request was denied.
 - **Natural Disasters:** The recent earthquake in Humboldt County and the severe winter weather/storms have impacted many clients, staff and vendored agencies. Communication has been difficult due to the power outages that has highlighted the vulnerability of clients with various health issues.
 - **Independent Vendor Audits:** It has been difficult and recently more so to comply with this mandate as local CPA's are no longer providing these audits. The cost to contract with an out-of-area CPA firm is two to three times more costly. DDS does provide waivers for several years following an audit; however, this additional expense is still a hardship as the cost of the audits falls under the Administrative costs that cannot exceed 15% of a providers operating budget. Providers have reached out to DDS and only received a "thank you for your communication" reply. The ASP group will continue to advocate with DDS.
 - **Positive Feedback:** The ASP group would like to thank RCRC service coordinator, Veronica Lewis for the one-on-one support that she provided over the New Year with managing COVID Special Incident Reports.

10. County Liaison and Connection Reports: M. Sawyer called for updates from the following counties:

- ❖ **Del Norte County: No updates were reported.**
- ❖ **Humboldt County: No updates were reported.**

11. Community Input: M. Sawyer called for community input:

- Community member reported that families are unaware of the services that are available in their area for their children and have been hearing similar concerns

from other families. M. Sawyer encouraged families to contact and work with their service coordinators as they will be able to assist them to identify needs and available services.

- Community member reported that communication improvement is needed within the regional center system. It was noted earlier that Dr. Smalley continues meeting monthly with the Spanish community to find solutions and improve communication issues.
- Community member asked if a separate meeting could be scheduled with the board of directors to ask questions and obtain answers regarding regional center services. It was specifically asked that regional center staff not be included in such a meeting. M. Sawyer explained the responsibility of the board to delegate the course of business to the Executive Director that includes operational management, purchase of services and mandated responses. The board does not oversee day-to-day business of RCRC as this is the responsibility of Dr. Smalley who reports to the board. Please continue working with Dr. Smalley and your RCRC service coordinator.
- Community member asked if trainings for families could be added to future board meetings. M. Sawyer responded that the function of a board meeting is to manage the business of the board. Such trainings for clients/families is the duty of RCRC. Please continue working with Dr. Smalley as she is diligently working to improve communication and awareness regarding RCRC and the services that are available in our rural catchment area.
- Community member asked how they can contact the board. M. Sawyer noted that any correspondence for the board/officers can be sent to the RCRC Executive Assistant, K. Orsi either by email at korsi@redwoodcoastrc.org or by mail to the Ukiah RCRC office, 1116 Airport Park Blvd., Ukiah, CA 95482. K. Orsi will forward any correspondence received to the board/officers.

12. Close the Meeting: M. Sawyer adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m. There will be a board training on Wednesday, February 8, 2023 by Zoom and the next board meeting is Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. by Zoom.

Cassandra May

Cassandra May, Secretary
RCDSC Board of Directors'