

## Meeting Minutes

### REDWOOD COAST DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Meeting of the Board of Director by Zoom

**Saturday, September 16, 2023 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.**

#2 FY: 2023-2024

**Directors Present:** Beverly Fontaine, Diane Larson, Tamera Leighton, Will Lewis  
Dave Matson, Cassandra May, Mike Sawyer, Robert Taylor,  
Kendra Wiegand.

**For the record Directors Present:** Will Lewis joined the meeting by Zoom at 9:20 a.m.  
and Teresa Schnacker joined the meeting in person at 9:20 a.m.

**Directors Absent:** Haley French, Allison Hillix Bill Lacy, Jorge Matias, Chris Nifong,  
Debra Zeno

**Facilitators Present:** Dawn Amaral, Mark Konkler, Michele Rice

**RCRC Staff Present:** Annie Bone, IDEA Specialist, Jerry Freitas: Community Services  
Resource Manager, Elizabeth Hassler: Client Advocate, Nichole Haydon: Director of  
Human Resources, Alma Ingram: Diversity Outreach Specialist for Lake/Mendocino,  
Kimberly Johnson: Humboldt/Del Norte Office Operations Manager, Argelia Munoz:  
Diversity Outreach Specialist for Humboldt/Del Norte, Kim Orsi: Executive Assistant, Dr.  
Kimberly Smalley: Executive Director

**Others Present:** Carmen Baca: Community Member, Jaclyn Balanay: Primary Liaison,  
DDS Office of Community Operations Community Programs Specialist, Dolores  
Delgado: Spanish Translator, Polo Diaz, Community Member, Lety Mendoza,  
Community Member, Desider Wiegand, Community Member

**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 9:12 a.m. K. Orsi  
conducted roll call and a quorum was present. K. Orsi read the Electronic Recording  
Disclaimer and RCRC Executive Staff introduced themselves. M. Sawyer read the  
Points of Order for Board of Directors' Meetings.

**2. Select Timekeeper/ Sharing the Vision:** M. Sawyer and T. Leighton were  
timekeepers and K. Wiegand shared a portion of the Vision: *"We envision a joyful and  
supportive environment in which trust is the cornerstone of all interactions, humor is  
appreciated, and everyone participates fully in teamwork. We envision one  
community. We value diversity and honor individuals."*

**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 July 12, 2023 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 Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for community comment/input:

- **There was no Community Comment/Input**

**6. Executive Director's Report:** M. Sawyer called on Executive Director, Dr. Smalley for her Report and the following are highlights from her Report:

**Fire Update in Del Norte County:** The Smith River fire has consumed approximately 90,000 acres. Dr. Smalley thanked RCRC staff in Del Norte County for their outreach to clients in the area to ensure they were safe. In addition, Del Norte County experienced a total power shutoff on August 18, 2023, and RCRC teams, along DDS and the Pacific Power connected with clients and families to assure they had alternative power sources, especially those with medical needs. Discussion continued regarding concerns that there is only one power source available even though there was backup available for those with medical needs through the regional center.

**Staffing:** Active recruitment continues for a licensed psychologist.

**Caseload Ratio:** RCRC held a public meeting on August 10, 2023, regarding RCRC's caseload ratios which is monitored by the DDS. It was reported that the Enhanced Services is required to carry no more than 40 cases to one service coordinator whereas most other cases cannot carry more than 62 or 66 cases per service coordinator. If funding allows, RCRC will recruit for additional service coordinators, particularly to serve children under age 6 as the mandated caseload ratio should be no more than 40 cases to one service coordinator and currently that ratio is at 50 cases per service coordinator.

**IT:** RCRC's transition from its outdated IT system is coming along nicely. RCRC is also looking to move from AT&T to Comcast as its agency-wide internet service. RCRC's telephone system will also be moved to Ring Central from its current internet-based system.

### **Review of RCRC's 2022 Year End Performance Report**

Dr. Smalley reviewed RCRC's 2022 Year End Performance Report (data from the end of December 2021 through the end of December 2022).

- **Who Uses RCRC Services:** Serving approximately 4,400 clients (2021/2022) of which 65 percent are predominantly white. However, the fastest growth is with the Hispanic community at 16 percent when this data was collected.
- **Regional Center Goals:** The data shows that more children are living with families while more adults receiving services from RCRC live in their own homes with supported living services which is slightly above the state average. Related to Developmental Centers: The RCDSC Board of Directors' does have a Policy in place that RCRC will not send clients to a Developmental Center and the board will protect this policy.
- **Did RCRC Meet DDS Requirements?** In the areas measured, RCRC has met compliance standards. However, while RCRC has been struggling with

technical issues and short staffing, we were finally able to hire additional staff and getting caught up with the CDERs (Client Development Evaluation Reports) and ESRs (Early Start Report).

- **How well is RCRC doing at getting clients working?** The Report shows that RCRC is better than the state average of getting people who want work to work; however, the wages in our four counties is not as high as other wages in the state simply because of the area/economy that we live in.
- **How well is RCRC doing at reducing disparities and improving equity?** Data shows that RCRC is even across age ranges, ethnicities and languages spoken. RCRC spends more money on individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing (American Sign Language or ASL) than any other languages spoken. The least amount of money was spent in our Native communities which are far more underserved than any other ethnic groups. RCRC is working very hard to change this with more outreach in these underserved communities.

Dr. Smalley called for questions/comments. A question was asked by K. Wiegand about how the data is reflected for those who have a dual diagnosis? Dr. Smalley indicated that this data could be reflected in more than one area.

A comment was made by R. Taylor who reported that calls were received that indicated recent surveys, particularly recent information sent regarding emergency bags were sent to individuals who have passed away. How can we make sure that future mailings are correct? Dr. Smalley answered that, unfortunately, this does sometimes occur depending on notifications and the databases utilized. RCRC may not have control over mailings conducted by other organizations.

In closing, board president, M. Sawyer reminded those in attendance that the data included in the 2022 Year End Report is important and to keep in mind that it is dated from 2021 to 2022. Because of the size of our catchment, the data can be dramatically impacted when individuals move or aging out of a specific age category. people moving can change the data from one year to another.

**7. Director of Community Service's Report:** M. Sawyer called on J. Freitas who introduced himself and reported that he is attending on behalf of Community Services Director, J. Padilla and referred to the report provided in the board packet and provided the following highlights:

- **Retirement Announcement:** CMS Waiver-Employment Specialist Manager and Ukiah People First Facilitator, Cindy Claus-John will be retiring at the end of September after 26 years with RCRC. Ms. Claus-John began her career with RCRC as a service coordinator and moved to Community Services. Ms. Claus-John also filled in as the acting Director of Community Services during a transition period.
- **HCBS Final Rule:** The client advocacy group RISE (Realizing Interdependent Success and Empowerment) continues to be co-led by RCRC's client advocates, Elizabeth Hassler and Alex Bland. This group includes seven clients and one pier assistant. To date, RISE has completed their review of

proposals and has selected several projects to receive funding. The list is included in J. Padilla's report.

- **People First of California:** RISE met with this advocacy group to discuss and collaborate to re-establish chapters in Del Norte, Humboldt and Lake Counties. The Ukiah chapter continues to thrive and has done so for many years.
- **Employment:** RCRC has received a grant from DDS to fund mentoring employment service providers in customized employment. Parents & Friends, Inc. on the Mendocino Coast currently has staff going through the mentoring process and will begin supporting clients by the end of June 2024.
- **October is Disability Employment Awareness Month:** RCRC will be partnering with community members, Eureka Chamber of Commerce and Mendocino County Office of Education for various events in October. See J. Padilla's report for additional information.
- **Housing:** RCRC has partnered with DDS, CRP Affordable Housing and Hyder Company to refer qualifying RCRC clients (up to 11 units) at a new, 90-unit property in Clearlake. Konocti Gardens will open in December 2023.
- **Social Recreation Grants:** Grants approved by DDS include the Redwood Parks Conservancy (RPC) that promotes experiencing nature for persons with developmental disabilities. RPC is also holding focus groups with clients and families to help recognize barriers to access and participation. Those participating in the focus groups will be provided with a stipend of \$25/hr., transportation and lunch. There will also be an additional focus group online by Zoom (TBD). The California State Parks system will receive a report and feedback to help efforts to increase access and activities statewide.
- **Burns and Associates Rates Study Implementation:** RCRC has been working with DDS to finalize as Legislation direction calls for full implementation on July 1, 2024, and rates will be standardized across vendors utilizing a benchmark rate.

J. Freitas called for questions. R. Taylor commented that Self Advocates should be available to vendors for adult clients and asked if anyone can attend the Self Advocate Theatre?

Dr. Smalley provided the following information for clarity purposes: RISE (not RCRC) was awarded a grant by DDS (not RCRC) and it is the sole responsibility and decision of RISE to determine what proposals will move to the interview process. Following the interview process, RISE will also decide what proposals will be funded.

With regard to R. Taylor's recommendation related to Self Advocates/Sexual Education: Dr. Smalley reported that RCRC previously worked with Planned Parenthood to provide sexual education services for adult clients. Unfortunately, Planned Parenthood lost its funding for educational services and was unable to provide these needed services. The person who was the head of the local Planned Parenthood's education department wrote and submitted a proposal for Sexual Education Self Advocacy Theatre to RISE and was selected for an interview and the

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proposal will be awarded as well as a similar proposal submitted by Trajectory (an Employment/Arts vendor). These theatre groups will be teaching this content, and anyone can attend.

R. Taylor commented about needed affordable housing and asked how to increase the number of projects and units available to RCRC clients as 11 units is not adequate. Dr. Smalley replied that DDS provides funding to the regional center to help with affordable housing projects. Other community partners also contribute to these housing projects for their clients as well. The 11 apartments designated for RCRC clients will be available for 50 years at below market rents. M. Sawyer commented that affordable housing is a problem, not only in RCRC's catchment, but statewide as well.

- 8. New Business:** M. Sawyer shared that he joined the RCDSC Board of Directors in November 2019, and attended two board meetings and a meeting in Sacramento and then COVID hit followed by a State of Emergency which was very concerning for all. RCRC recently celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and held celebrations in all four counties. M. Sawyer was fortunate to attend two of these celebrations and reported that it was heartwarming to see RCRC employees, clients/families and vendors actively engaging and enjoying the celebrations of RCRC's reopening. The gatherings were so inspiring that it prompted M. Sawyer to write a 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Proclamation on behalf of the RCDSC Board of Directors. M. Sawyer read the Proclamation aloud and called for a motion to approve and present the Proclamation to RCRC.

**M/S/C: W. Lewis (T. Leighton and members of the board who were present) approve the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Proclamation to present to RCRC. K. Orsi called a vote by roll call and the motion carried.**

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

- **Client Benefit Fund (CBF) Committee Update:** M. Sawyer provided the following update from the July 26, 2023, CBF committee meeting. The committee reviewed the Client Benefit Fund which was established in 1993 with a grant of \$40,000 from the Earl True Trust Foundation. The committee realized that the fund and grant process had not been reviewed for quite some time and it had grown by a significant amount in value. The point of the fund is not to build a huge cash reserve but to provide additional resources for RCRC clients.

**The committee has recommended the following revisions to the Client Benefit Fund Board Policy #10 (included in the board meeting packets):**

- **Item 7:** All requests will be considered as long as there are no other funds available for the same purpose. Other types of government, insurance, or generic funding must be pursued first by the client or his/her service coordinator or representative. The vigorous pursuit of other funding sources must be documented on the grant request form.



- **Item 8:** The total annual spending policy is 4% of the average total fund balance over the last years as determined on September 1. This formulation follows the UPMIFA (Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act) and creates slow growth while maintaining the principle.
- **Item 9:** The board of directors is advised to review this policy should the fund balance become less than \$70,000 or greater than \$100,000.

**Recommended Additions to the Policy:**

- **Item 10:** The Board Committee will have two grant cycles per year – February and June. Grant request forms, completed in part by the client and in part by the service coordinator, can be submitted at any point in the year to the RCRC Executive Assistant. The RCRC Executive Assistant will forward the requests to the committee members at the end of February and June. The committee will meet before the March and July board meetings to make their decisions on the requests. The RCDSC Board will vote on the recommendations of the committee at the March and July Board meetings, and approved funds will be distributed in March and July.
- **Item 11:** The individual client may make one request per grant year. Each grant request must be less than 50% of the total amount in that grant cycle. Money granted but not picked up within 90 days of the date approved will revert to the fund.
- **Item 12:** The RCRC Executive Assistant or the Committee Chair will contact applicants regarding the status of their request following the March and July board meeting.

M. Sawyer called for any questions/input followed by a recommendation to the board to approve the proposed revisions/additions to the Client Benefit Fund RCDSC Board Policy #10

**M/S/C: T. Schnacker (D. Larson) motioned to approve the recommended changes/additions to the Client Benefit Fund RCDSC Board Policy #10. K. Orsi called a vote by roll call and the motion carried.**

- **Client Advisory Committee:** M. Sawyer reported that CAC Chair, D. Zeno is not in attendance and an update will be provided during the November 8, 2023 board meeting.
- **Vendor Representative Update:** M. Sawyer reported that H. French is not in attendance and an update will be provided during the November 8, 2023, board meeting.

**10. ARCA Report:** M. Sawyer reported that in lieu of time, updates will be provided during the November 8, 2023, board meeting.

**11. County Liaison and Connection Reports:** M. Sawyer reported that in lieu of time, updates will be provided during the November 8, 2023, board meeting.

- 12. Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for community comment/input and noted that any questions related to regional center services or funding will be forwarded to Dr. Smalley to answer outside of the board meeting. Any Chat questions will be translated from Spanish to English and also forwarded to Dr. Smalley.

The following questions were translated during the meeting by the interpreter:

- Valerio: There are questions in the chat and asking the board to answer them. Dr. Smalley reiterated that any questions related to RCRC services and funding will be answered outside of the board meeting.
- Juanita: Good afternoon to the board and everyone here. You mentioned you support those who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, I have a nephew who is hard of hearing and has never received services from the RCRC. We also had less services during the pandemic and our community suffered. You also spoke of children who still live with families and let's hope this one-day changes because I feel those who are left with their families will not be taken care of other than their families. We spoke of no services in our community, I would like Dr. Smalley to show the list of services we have seen because regional center is always saying there are no services available here like there are in Los Angeles. We would also like to see the Policies. Dr. Smalley replied that a list of services and Policies are posted on RCRC's website. [www.redwoodcoastrc.org](http://www.redwoodcoastrc.org)
- Leti Mendoza: Good afternoon. I have some questions regarding different vendors and services. When RCRC can't provide services because you don't have vendors or therapists, what happens with those funds? RCRC community it's very difficult to find vendors and I agree with Ms. Juanita. Dr. Smalley, we would like a list of all the vendors and if those services cannot be provided and vendors do not exist, why is there a list? Please explain to us.

- 13. Close the Meeting:** M. Sawyer adjourned the meeting at 10:57 a.m. A training for the board on Intercultural Competence immediately followed the meeting.

The next board meeting will be held by Zoom on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 6 p.m.

*Cassandra May*

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Cassandra May, Secretary  
RCDSC Board of Directors'