

## Meeting Minutes

### REDWOOD COAST DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Meeting of the Board of Director by Zoom

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 – 6 p.m. by Zoom Video/Teleconference

#3 FY: 2023-2024

**Directors Present:** Beverly Fontaine, Haley French, Allison Hillix, Bill Lacy, Diane Larson, Tamera Leighton, Will Lewis, Dave Matson, Chris Nifong, Mike Sawyer, Robert Taylor,

**Directors Absent:** Jorge Matias, Cassandra May, Teresa Schnacker, Kendra Wiegand, Debra Zeno

**Facilitators Present:** Mark Konkler and Michele Rice

**RCRC Staff Present:** Nichole Haydon: Director of Human Resources, Alma Ingram: Diversity Outreach Specialist, Amy Medina: Director of Administration, Kim Orsi: Executive Assistant, Jonathan Padilla: Director of Community Services, Dr. Kimberly Smalley: Executive Director

**Others Present:** Jaclyn Balanay: Primary Liaison, DDS Office of Community Operations Community Programs Specialist, Enrique Ulloa: Spanish Translator, Julie Eby-McKenzie: Manager of the North Coast Office of the SCDD.

- 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 6:10 p.m. K. Orsi conducted roll call and a quorum was present. K. Orsi read the Electronic Recording Disclaimer and RCRC Executive Staff were introduced. M. Sawyer read the Points of Order for Board of Directors' Meetings.
- 2. Select Timekeeper/ Sharing the Vision:** M. Sawyer asked T. Leighton to be timekeeper and M. Sawyer shared a portion of the Vision: *"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 September 16, 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: J. Eby-McKenzie from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities provided information regarding Emergency Preparedness trainings and Go-Bag backpacks for

RCRC clients and families who complete the trainings. J. Eby-McKenzie is working with A. Ingram, RCRC Diversity Outreach Specialists for Lake/Mendocino Counties to provide this training in Spanish (no translation) on November 15, 2023. Please contact J. Eby-McKenzie if there is a need for additional Emergency Preparedness trainings at [Julie.Eby-McKenzie@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:Julie.Eby-McKenzie@scdd.ca.gov) or by phone at 707-463-4700.

**6. Executive Director's Report:** M. Sawyer called on Executive Director, Dr. Smalley who provided the following updates:

- **Santa Claus** will be visiting RCRC offices in December and information that includes dates, timelines and locations will be forthcoming.
- **Staffing Updates:** RCRC is currently filling several vacant service coordination positions as well as the position for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing specialist. RCRC is recruiting for an Employment Specialist for the Community Services Department and recruiting for a new Directors position for Early Childhood (early intervention) and Intake. This position will work closely with RCRC's Director of Client Services, M. Block, and will focus on intake and children age 0 to 5. RCRC has received additional funding from DDS that will allow us to hire additional service coordinator positions and continue to improve our overall caseload ratios.
- **Staff Trainings:** RCRC staff attended trainings that were presented by the California Tribal Coalition. One training was held in Eureka for Humboldt/Del Norte staff and another was held in Redwood Valley for Lake/Mendocino staff. There will be additional trainings that will begin in November that is a statewide effort by DDS regarding Implicit Bias. These trainings will include online, in-person and workshop sessions. These trainings are required by DDS for any regional center staff who hold management positions, intake positions and provide assessments which includes contractors. Additional trainings with Dr. Carter are also being planned for 2024.
- **Quality Incentive Measures:** DDS is reviewing six measures for regional center performance and Dr. Smalley was pleased to report that RCRC has done well based on our first performance report including Child Find and Identification, Equity & Cultural Competency and Person-Centered Training.
- **Governor's Budget:** Parent fees are still on hold through June 2024. Additional funding is included for individuals with complex needs. DDS and ARCA are working with all regional centers to assure uniformity throughout the state, including consistency with forms, packets and structure of each regional center websites that, in the future, will include a client portal to obtain records.
- **IDEA Specialist:** A. Bone is regularly visiting all four counties of RCRC's catchment, attending various school and school board meetings and providing in-house trainings for service coordinators and parent/family groups as well as demonstrating AACAT equipment.
- **DSP Staffing Shortages:** There is a nationwide shortage in our service field for Direct Support Professionals (DSP) which has also made the national headlines on Good Morning America (internet link in Dr. Smalley's report). There is a call for the Department of Labor to review and classify these positions as professionals, including how they are paid for providing services.

- **Thank you:** Dr. Smalley thanked Jim and Jack Bruno who recently donated a number of laptop computers for RCRC clients.

**7. Director of Administration's Report:** M. Sawyer called on A. Medina who provided the following report:

- **Page 9:** There is a correction to the data for clients count in the Director of Administration Report as the graph duplicated the fiscal year. The corrected packet can be accessed on RCRC's website.
- **2023-2024 Budget:** RCRC has received its E-1 allocation as follows:
  - Operations (OPS): RCRC received \$19.7 million which is an increase of 6% increase to include funding for additional service coordination positions, Home and Community Based Services and IT related projects (UFS/SANDIS). This budget pool is specifically for staff and operating RCRC offices.
  - Purchase of Services (POS) RCRC received \$178 million. This budget pool is specifically for the purchase of services for RCRC clients.
- **Client Benefit Fund:** The Client Benefit Fund, Policy #10 was updated by the board during the September board meeting and going forward will base the annual awards on 4% of the account balance. The upcoming 2024 cycles ending February 28 and June 30 will award grants up to \$1,655 per cycle or a maximum per client of \$827.00.
- **Website Updates:** As Dr. Smalley reported earlier, DDS and ARCA are working with regional centers on statewide consistency including our websites and RCRC is creating a new Transparency page that will be consistent with all other regional centers including the placement and color of the button to access this information on RCRC's website.

M. Sawyer commented on the Budget update and the two pools of funding for clarity purposes as well as the Client Benefit Fund, Policy #10 changes which is to protect the fund and to do as much good as possible for clients based on the balance of the fund.

**8. New Business:** M. Sawyer shared the proposed Board of Directors' Meeting and Training Schedule for 2024 with four Zoom meetings and two hybrid meetings (in person or Zoom) planned for the coming year. M. Sawyer called for questions or comments. T. Leighton proposed changing the locations for the hybrid meetings to encompass the counties where meetings were not held this year. The Ukiah meeting in May will be changed to Lake County (location to be determined) and the Eureka in September will be changed to Del Norte County (location to be determined). Only locations will be changed which does not affect the proposed meeting and training dates. M. Sawyer called for additional comments and a motion to approve the updated Meeting/Training Schedule for 2024.

**M/S/C: T. Leighton (B. Fontaine) motioned to approve the updated meeting/training schedule for 2024. 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 Advisory Committee:** M. Sawyer provided an update as D. Zeno has stepped down from this position and from the board. The Client Advisory Chairperson will be elected during the January 10, 2024, meeting. Client board members were asked to notify M. Sawyer and K. Orsi if they are interested in the chairperson position. W. Lewis volunteered to help until the chair position is filled.
- **Vendor Representative Update:** M. Sawyer called on H. French who provided the following update:
  - **Minimum Wage Increases:** The next minimum wage increase will take place on January 1, 2024, which is great news for vendor staff and clients. The increase does impact vendors' costs and regional centers do adjust rates based on these increases; however, the increases are paid in areas which can put a strain on the vendor community.
  - **Burns Study Rate Adjustment:** Even though rates were adjusted based on this study, the rates that are paid to vendors are still not enough to keep up with inflation.
  - **Concerns:** There have been community concerns related to a mental health provider in Mendocino County and RCRC is currently working with this provider to address the concerns.

M Sawyer reported that such concerns should be directed to Dr. Smalley and her staff to assure that they are aware of complaints related to a vendor as it is not a function of the board.

**10. ARCA Report:** M. Sawyer and Dr. Smalley provided the following update:

- **Membership Application and Agreement with ARCA:** ARCA is a lobbyist group that advocates for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and works closely with regional centers and DDS. ARCA hosts monthly and quarterly meetings for groups that includes a Board Delegate (usually the Board President), the Executive Directors, Directors of Community Services, Directors of Administration, and Chief Counselors/Directors of Client Services to make sure that regional centers are up to date on legislative business. Now that COVID is behind us, ARCA is putting business in order by developing a Membership Application and Agreement for each regional center that wishes to continue its membership that is also tied to paying dues. ARCA is currently updating its Bylaws and strengthening its relationship with regional centers by developing these agreements that will now require board authorization. Any regional center that does not wish join ARCA will no longer be allowed to attend ARCA meetings. M. Sawyer called for questions and a motion to authorize RCRC's continued membership with ARCA.

**M/S/C: T. Leighton (W. Lewis) motioned to authorize RCRC's continued membership with ARCA. K. Orsi called a vote by roll call (A. Hillix abstained) and the motion carried.**

**11. County Liaison and Connection Reports:** Both T. Leighton (representing Del Norte County) and A. Hillix (representing Lake County) commented on how well RCRC IDEA Specialist, Annie Bone has done building and strengthening relationships with local school districts within their counties.

M. Sawyer commented that the RCDSC Board will be losing board member, B. Fontaine who will complete her term limit of 7 years on December 31, 2023. M. Sawyer added that B. Fontaine has served on many committees of the board including the Executive Committee and Client Benefit Fund Committee and that she is an active community member whose valuable knowledge and influence will be missed by the board.

**12. Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for community comment/input:

- Community Member: I have a comment and a question: Meetings are open to the public and we would like to see the agenda during the meeting to track the discussions. Dr. Smalley mentioned that two parents can go to Sacramento and would like to know who they are and who is paying for it. I would also like to recommend changing the time for public comment to be longer than 3 minutes as it opens up the conversation for the community.
- Community Member: My son is a regional center client and we have struggled for a long time and would like more information that the department is making things better.

**13. Close the Meeting:** Meeting closed at 7:10 p.m.

The next board meeting is January 10, 2024, by Zoom at 6:00 p.m.



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Mike Sawyer, Board President  
RCDSC Board of Directors'