

**RCDSC Board of Directors
MEETING MINUTES**

#5 FY: 2024-2025

Wednesday, March 12 at 6:00pm

BY ZOOM:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84546142191?pwd=TZJSAlYlZDSCXw641ObMRxnuMNjul.1>

Meeting ID: 845 4614 2191

Passcode: 888824

Dial by phone: 1 669 900 6833

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Mike Sawyer (Acting President and Elected Vice President), Diane Larson (Secretary), Jorge Matias (Treasurer), Robert Taylor (Client Liaison), Allison Hillix, Teresa Schnacker, Tamera Leighton, Will Lewis, Haley French, Kendra Wiegand

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Dave Matson, Chris Nifong

FACILITATORS PRESENT: Mark Konkler (WL)

RCRC STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Kimberly Smalley (Executive Director), Amy Medina (Director of Administration), Heather Odle (Director of Community Services), Jonathan Padilla (Director of Client Services), Beth Heavilin (Director of Early Childhood/Intake and Eligibility), Dr. Jacinthe Roy (Director of Clinical Services), Nichole Haydon (Director of Human Resources), Sedona Bowser (Executive Assistant), Tim Mefferd, Cassandra Bostick, Alma Ingram,

OTHERS PRESENT: Jaclyn Balanay (Primary Liaison, DDS Office of Community Operations), Julie Eby-McKenzie (SCDD Northern California Regional Office Manager), Dolores Delgado (Spanish Translator), Emily Ockey, Shawn Abell, Joe Nelson, Juanita, Maribel, Angelica, Carben Baca, Valerio Baca, Adriana Diaz, Anne, Kristi, Kier Flicker, Lety Mendoza, Alinso Villa, Rubi Saldana, Suzie Carter, Yuly, Pamela Jensen, Cendy Topete

AGENDA:

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions:**
 - a. Meeting was called to order by Acting Board President M. Sawyer at 6:08 pm
 - b. S. Bowser conducted roll call and a quorum was present.
2. **Select Timekeeper/ Sharing the Vision:**
 - a. M. Sawyer agreed to be Timekeeper
 - b. Due to time constraints the Vision Statement was not shared during this meeting.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** M. Sawyer made an amend to the agenda adding a discussion about the closed session on the Client Benefit Fund and a discussion on community input. T. Schnacker motioned to approve the changes, D. Larson seconded the motion and **a roll call vote approved the motion.**
4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 8, 2025 Board Meeting:** M. Sawyer called to approve the meeting minutes and asked if there were any changes or corrections. Hearing none, **the meeting minutes were approved as presented.**
5. **Approval of the Client Benefit Fund Awards:** M. Sawyer shared that the Executive

Committee met to review the Client Benefit Fund applications and shared that there were 26 applications, 10 are recommended for approval for all or part of the requested amount for a total amount of \$1,724.62. **A roll call vote was held, and the Client Benefit Fund awards were approved as presented.**

6. **Approval of the RCRC Financial Statements and Tax Returns:** M. Sawyer shared that the Executive Committee met to review the RCRC financial statements and 990 tax returns. He called for any discussion, which clarified that the Executive Committee met and approved the statements and tax returns and are just seeking the board approval. **A roll call vote was held, and the financial statements and tax returns were approved as presented.**
7. **Approval of the Conflict of Interest Policy:** M. Sawyer shared that the Executive Committee met to review the RCRC Conflict of Interest Policy and shared that all changes to the policy were driven by DDS requirements. He called for any discussion, and T. Leighton clarified that the board is voting in the confidence they have in the Executive Committee. M. Sawyer added that any board member is welcome to attend the Executive Committee meetings, they just do not have a vote at that time. Only closed session meetings are exclusive to the Executive Committee. Members noted that they have not received the notification of such meetings and S. Bowser will notify all board members of future board meetings unless they are closed meetings. **A roll call vote was held, and the Conflict of Interest Policy was approved as presented.**
8. **Approval of the Personnel Policies Manual:** M. Sawyer shared that the Executive Committee met to review the RCRC Personnel Policies Manual and shared there were a couple of clarifying comments and updating to meet legal requirements. He called for any discussion, hearing none, **a roll call vote was held, and the Personnel Policies Manual was approved as presented.**
9. **Comments on Community Input:** M. Sawyer addressed the issue of the Chat feature during board meetings and reiterated that it is and will remain disabled for all ongoing board meetings. He indicated that this is a Board of Directors meeting and the chat feature is the equivalent of a conversation in the back of the room which has no impact on the board in conducting their business. The public has the opportunity to make a comment at two points during the meeting. If someone is unable or unwilling to make a verbal comment, then that person can email those comments to Sedona Bowser at sbowser@redwoodcoastrc.org **prior to the meeting** and the questions will be read during the meeting. If you would like to make a comment during the designated "Community Comment" sections of the meeting, please use the "raise hand" feature in Zoom and you will be called on. Once no further hands are raised, the comment session will end.
10. **Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for community comment/input:
 - a. **Community Member 1:** Julie Eby-McKenzie at the State Council of Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) shared that next Tuesday at the state council meeting they will be having a presentation from Executive Director, Aaron Carruthers, about the proposed cuts to Medicaid funding. We have been doing a lot of training on teaching people to tell their stories about the impact Medicaid cuts will have on their lives. SCDD is federally funded and they have really good information to share. If you are interested in attending a meeting you can contact Sedona Bowser at RCRC for the meeting link. The public is always invited to attend state council meetings, and you can find meeting information at <https://scdd.ca.gov/councilmeetings/>.
 - b. **Community Member 2:** Emily Ockey, Mendocino Client Advisory Committee (CAC) Chair Person and Member at Large – Tomorrow there is a CAC business meeting from 3:30-5:00 at the Mendocino County Office of Education in the Cedar Building. If you are or have a child ages 3-22 in Mendocino County, we encourage

you to attend the meeting. Please spread the word and we are recruiting.

M. Sawyer called for additional public comment and hearing none, continued to the next item.

11. **Executive Director's Report:** M. Sawyer called on Executive Director, Dr. Smalley who provided the following updates:
 - a. March is Social Worker Appreciation Month. RCRC's theme this year is social work equals compassion plus action. What we do is a verb, an action, intentional and mindful. RCRC staff, regardless of their position, live by this every day.
 - b. ARCA-Regional Center Budget and Demographic Information (shared screen but also provided in the Board packet): This was shared at Grassroots Day, where people go to the capital to meet with their legislators. On the graphic it shows what the regional center does and what we are comprised of. Looking at the source of funding statewide, the little brown piece of pie is how much runs the system, the larger green piece of pie is what is spent in purchases. The next graph shows where DDS gets the money, and the green bar comes from the state, and the brown bar comes from the feds. The potential Medicaid funds come from the 35% brown bar. It is important to recognize how the cuts to Medicaid (including MediCal, MediCare, etc) affect our funding. Further down, there are slight changes in the demographics (language, age, race, ethnicity, population, etc) but more will be available during the Purchase of Service meeting next week. This graphic was shared with legislators. In addition to our services, the same source of funding is shared with the IHSS side. An interesting point is that besides all those who are receiving services from either regional center or IHSS sides, 33% of those providing services are also receiving funding themselves, which means both clients and support staff are affected by these cuts.
 - i. Our Client Advocates (Elizabeth, Alex and Lex) represented the community at the state and did a wonderful job. You can view the poem that Elizabeth read to the public on RCRC's Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/redwoodcoastregionalcenter/videos/a-poem-about-regional-centers-healthcare-rally-3425-elizabeth-hassler-rcrc-clien/1189514705926446/>.
 - c. Our Purchase of Service (POS) Expenditures Presentation POS is on March 18th for English and March 20th for Spanish, so please attend that if you are interested. The department is still seeking feedback from families with complex needs, so if you or someone you know meets those criteria, please let us know.
 - d. Traditionally RCRC has been given half a day of paid leave on Christmas Eve, but this year we have officially added a full day holiday for Christmas Eve, followed by the existing full day holiday on Christmas Day.
12. **Director of Administration:** M. Sawyer called on the Director of Administration, Amy Medina who provided the following updates:
 - a. The Governor's Budget includes positions to support regional centers' staffing for work with the Public Records Act. We'll know more when we get the May revise.
 - b. DDS is postponing the POS Expenditure Projection due to rate reform. We don't know when that will be picked up again, but it is possible not until next year.
 - c. We're still waiting on our A2 allocation (the first year of the five-year contract with DDS, 2 is the number of allocations we have received). We are currently projecting to end in a surplus
 - i. M. Sawyer was reminded of W. Lewis's question about our line of credit, why we have it and did we use it. Mike shared that we spent \$117 on interest which showed how little it was used.
13. **Standing Committee Reports:** M. Sawyer called on committee chairs for their reports.
 - a. **Self-Determination Advocacy Committee (SDAC):** R. Taylor shared efforts to increase the capacity of the FMS and IF positions. Three more FMSs have been

added in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, and we now have 16. We have nine IFs available, one in Humboldt also supporting Del Norte; four in Mendocino, one on the coast but is willing to travel to Lake County. Rhiannon Morsch will help mentor and provide services for IFs. We are seeking bilingual IFs. We have funding for two new people to receive training, one who is bilingual. Starting tonight we will have testimonies at future board meetings.

- i. **Shawn Abell:** Shawn shared the impact of Self-Determination on their lives. Her daughter has Cerebral Palsy (age 35, using a wheelchair) and they live on the coast. They have been able to create a life with freedom and independence and she is blossoming. Parents get a break and feel like they can support their daughter emotionally and develop their relationship better. It's been a growing process, and they are so grateful for this program and the team at RCRC that have helped them with this process. Their first FMS (Aveanna) was pretty dysfunctional but now they have Mains'l and they've been fantastic and responsive. Their flexibility gives her enough assistance to create a life where she can access normal things and develop empowering skills that she can use for the rest of her life. The parents feel confident about her future.
- ii. **Joe Nelson:** Joe shared he was one of the first people from the Self-Determination pilot and he still loves it. He shares about the program with people and recommends it to others. He talks with a lot of the staff at RCRC. He shared something he wrote about Self-Determination: "It allows me to live in a place of my choosing making my home life happy. I am able to have a cell phone for communication. I feel comfortable having a phone for emergencies. It makes me happy to be able to visit with family and friends. It has improved my health..." He's doing really good and hopes it continues and adds more clients and families to this program.

14. **ARCA Report:** K. Smalley shared the DDS All Californian's statement (included in the board packet). She then read Elizabeth Hassler's emotional poem that she spoke at the rally in Sacramento. M. Sawyer added the delegate side is continuing their work on a board member education packet to make a more uniform way to teach new board members. Once it is finalized we will share it with our board members.

15. **County Liaison and Connection Reports:** M. Sawyer called on board members from counties. No reports were shared.

16. **Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer reminded the public that this is a meeting for board business and the chat function is disabled and there is no intention to turn it back on. The conversations that take place are a distraction to the meeting, are not part of the board doing its business and do not have translation capabilities. If you want to make comments, please raise your hand and you will be called on. If you cannot speak, please submit your questions to Sedona prior to the meeting at sbowser@redwoodcoastrc.org. He then requested that the public consider joining the board or share information with someone they think would be a good member. Please contact Sedona for more information. M. Sawyer then called for community Input.

- a. **Community Member 1:** Maribel – Her son is a client of RCRC. How is the Board of Directors helping and serving their clients? Why is the chat not open? Other regional center's Board of Directors have the chat open for their community. It is important that the meetings be held both in person and by zoom. What is RCRC doing to inform Latin families of Self-Determination?
- b. **Community Member 2:** Carmen Baca – She has two children at RCRC. She supports Maribel's comments. We ask questions but nobody answers the questions. At the last meeting we asked for the chat to be opened but were ignored. We understand that the board serves the community. How are we getting families the information? I never get emails with information. We need the board of

directors to serve the community.

- c. **Community Member 3:** Emily – She has a son on Self-Determination. She found out about the program from an interim service worker and wanted to keep him. The process was difficult without an IF and does not recommend doing that. Self-Determination provides better access to services. The FMSs need regulation; they receive the money ahead of time then receive interest on the monies they are holding, yet they delay access to the funds. She is planning to switch her FMS, but she has not yet because the vendors went through so much to get set up with the FMS in the first place, but she is planning to switch.
- d. **Community Member 4:** Lucero – Support Carmen and Maribels comments about access to chat so they can talk about their concerns. Please take it into consideration.
- e. **Community Member 5:** Lety – Support what Emily says regarding FMS, that the process is very difficult to go through, which is a barrier. Self-Determination is a wonderful program to find vendors and providers. She requested ways for Self-Determination to be shared with families.
- f. **Community Member 6:** Juana – She has two children at RCRC. She would like the board to have a good relationship with the community and it is not personal for the chat to be opened. Many Hispanic families cannot move to Self-Determination because we do not know about it. We are learning about it from different places but not from here. Our loved ones have the same rights that the white people have.
- g. **Community Member 7:** Valerio – He acknowledged that Mike will not open the chat but that is not reasonable. He believes the board is working for the community. The community is requesting the chat to be open, and it should be considered. Sedona should be tech savvy and be able to copy and paste and be willing to do it. Regarding Self-Determination, Juana is on point, RCRC does not give the community the information so loved ones can switch to Self-Determination. Something needs to change, RCRCs and the board need to be reshaped and redirected.

M. Sawyer called for additional public comment and hearing none (nor raised hands), moved to closing the meeting.

17. Close the Meeting: M. Sawyer adjourned the meeting at 7:29 pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Sedona Bowser, RCRC Executive Assistant

Draft Minutes reviewed and approved by:

Mike Sawyer, Acting Board of Directors President

March 23, 2025

Board approved: May 17, 2025