RCDSC Board of Directors

MEETING MINUTES

#2 FY: 2026-2027

Saturday, September 12, 2026, at 9:00am

Hybrid (In-person: The Light House Inn, Crescent City, CA and Zoom)

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Mike Sawyer (President), Robert Taylor (Vice President), Samantha Bond (Treasurer), Matt Melvin (Secretary), Will Lewis (Client Liaison), Teresa Schnacker, Debra Zeno, Trixie Galletti, Diane Larson, Rebekah Wilson

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Dave Matson**,** Haley French

FACILITATORS PRESENT: Jayson Alvarez (RT), Kristi Patterson (TG), Mark Konkler (WL), Arleeth Torres (DZ)

RCRC STAFF PRESENT: Jonathan Padilla (Executive Director), Amy Medina (Director of Administration), Heather Odle (Director of Community Services), Lori Gutierrez (Director of Client Services), Claudia Gomez (Associate Director of Client Services), Dr. Jacinthe Roy (Director of Clinical Services), Nichole Haydon (Director of Human Resources), Susan Villa-Alvarez (Executive Assistant), Maritza Villa (HR Assistant), Alex Garcia (Service Coordinator)

OTHERS PRESENT: Jaclyn Balanay (Primary Liaison, DDS Office of Community Operations), Julie Eby-McKenzie (SCDD Northern California Regional Office Manager), Dolores Delgado (Spanish Translator), Annie Horne, Robbie New Dawn, Brian Payton, Erin Brende.

AGENDA:

1. **Call to Order / Roll Call / Introductions:**
    a. Meeting was called to order by Board President M. Sawyer at 9:01 am
        i. S. Villa-Alvarez conducted roll call, and a quorum was present.
        ii. M. Sawyer read the Points of Order.
    b. Select Timekeeper/ Sharing the Vision**:**
        i. J. Roy agreed to be Timekeeper
        ii. S. Bond shared the section of the Vision Statement that reads: “We also subscribe to a vision which represents the highest commitment to excellence. We envision a commitment to honesty, compassion, trustworthiness, flexibility, responsiveness, accountability, accessibility, creativity and a passion for community service.”
    c. Approval of Agenda:
        i. M. Sawyer called to approve the agenda and asked if there were any changes. Hearing none, the agenda was approved as presented.
    d. Approval of Meeting Minutes from 07/08/2026 Board Meeting**:**
        i. M. Sawyer called to approve the meeting minutes and asked if there were any changes or corrections. Meeting minutes were approved with changes.

2. **Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for community comment/input: None

3. **President’s Report – Mike Sawyer:**
    a. Executive Committee Actions:
        i. ARCA Delegate: M. Melvin is the new ARCA Delegate starting in October. He will be attending the ARCA meetings in September and October with

Mike for a smooth transition.

b. Executive Committee Recommendations – Board Vote Required
    i. RFP Procurement Policy (Heather O): The Executive Committee team met with Heather to review the updated policy and approved the updates made. **The Executive Committee motioned to approve and seconded the motion; S. Villa-Alvarez conducted a roll call vote and the motion passed.**
    ii. CPA Independent Audit Firm (Amy M): By policy, RCRC cannot use the same audit firm more than 5 times in a 10-year period. Amy recommends moving forward with AGT as our Audit Firm. **The Executive Committee motioned to approve and seconded the motion; S. Villa-Alvarez conducted a roll call vote and the motion passed.**
    iii. CalPERS/Salary Scale (Nichole H): R. Taylor asked what changes they are to approve. Nichole informed the board that they are only approving of the grammatical changes made and not the dollar amounts. **The Executive Committee motioned to approve and seconded the motion; S. Villa-Alvarez conducted a roll call vote and the motion passed.**
    iv. Annual Personnel Policies (Nichole H): This policy was previously approved in March however; it was not properly documented. **The Executive Committee motioned to approve and seconded the motion; S. Villa-Alvarez conducted a roll call vote and the motion passed.**
c. Closed Session Briefing: M. Sawyer shared a summary of the closed session discussion regarding the Executive Directors Evaluation
d. Health Net made the decision to no longer conduct business in California. This will not affect the regional center, but it may affect the providers.

4. **Executive Director's Report:** M. Sawyer called on the Executive Director, J. Padilla, who provided the following updates:
    a. Redwood Coast Regional Center has grown over the last 15 years. We are currently at fifty-eight hundred clients, including those in intake and early start provisional eligibility. Forty-eight hundred of those clients are eligible under the Lanterman Act.
    b. J. Padilla took a moment to acknowledge that S. Villa-Alvarez has accepted the Executive Assistant position permanently.
    c. There has been increased control that has been put in place by the federal government around fraud and abuse. DDS secured a data sharing partnership with the Department of Social Services as it relates to Medi-Cal. This data sharing partnership enables the data to automatically be shared with the Medi-Cal office to prevent requests for redetermination or verification of employment for our clients that fit the exemption requirements. If our clients do receive a work requirement verification form, they are to inform their service coordinator as well as the Medi-Cal office so they can verify the information in their system.
    d. The Department successfully renewed their Self Determination Waiver for another 5 years as well as expanded the number of individuals that can be enrolled on the Self Determination Waiver.
    e. In July, Redwood Coast Regional Center held a Disability Pride event in all four counties. Jonathan gave his appreciation to our Diversity Outreach Specialists, A. Ingram and S. Hernandez, for organizing and connecting with several individuals in all four counties to make these events happen. In our September edition of the Newsletter, there were two articles regarding the Disability Pride Events that were written by two of our Client Advocates, E Hassler and T Coleman, as well as our Quality Assurance Specialist, N. Andre.

5. **New Business**: M. Sawyer called for any new business.
    a. **Strategic Planning**: Over the past 40 years, RCRC has created three strategic plans. For RCRC to create a viable strategic plan, it should be carefully thought out and not rushed. The process would also involve sending questionnaires and surveys to employees, clients,

state holders, and board members. RCRC is currently working on this process and should have more information at future meetings.

b. **Client Benefit Fund – August Grant Cycle:** The Client Benefit Fund started in 1993 with a forty-thousand-dollar donation by the Earl Trust Fund. The regional center ensures that the items requested cannot be purchased by another program as well as providing clinical support/feedback to the committee. The committee then reviews all requests and goes through the approval/denial process to take to the board of directors for final approval. For the August cycle, we received a total of 10 submissions that included 17 items. One of the submissions was withdrawn as the item requested was purchased through another program. The rest of the submissions were reviewed by the committee, and they approved a total of 9 items that came to a total of $830.79. **Will motioned to approve; Teresa seconded the motion; S. Villa-Alvarez conducted a roll call vote and the motion passed.**
    i. The Client Benefit Fund has a guardrail in place regarding the amount of money available. The funds are to be at a minimum of seventy-five hundred dollars and maximum of 100 thousand dollars. Since we are currently above the maximum, the committee will need to discuss next steps.

6. **Affiliate Reports**: M. Sawyer called on committee chairs for their reports.
    a. **State Council (Julie Eby-McKenzie):** September is National Emergency Preparedness month, and State Council will be holding statewide virtual training for advocates and family advocates. The next trainings for family advocates will be on September 16th and on September 30th in Spanish. There will also be a training for advocates in Spanish on September 23rd. October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. State Council, RCRC, EDD, DOR and Pinoleville Pomo National Vocational Rehabilitation will also be hosting a few job fairs that is focused on helping individuals with disabilities get employed. The first is on October 6th at Konocti Vista Casino from 12-2pm and the second is on October 21st at the Conference Center in Ukiah from 10-2pm. Julie also mentioned that on October 9th Aaron C, the ED at SCDD, will be holding a community conversation from 1:30-2:20pm at the Sequoia Conference Center to discuss what is happening at the State and Federal level and things that we can do in response to what is happening. Elizabeth H and Sheila K have been a part of the economic development effort for Redwood Region Wise. They have been working with facilitators to put together materials for employers about employing individuals with disabilities.
    b. **Vendor Advisory Committee (Haley French):** Not present.
    c. **ARCA (Mike Sawyer and Jonathan Padilla):** Mike reviewed information from the August meeting. The Client Advisory Committees (CAC) are now justifiably becoming more active, influential and more involved in the process. All Regional Centers and ARCA have their own Client Advisory Committee that work independently. One of the challenges moving forward is how to get the synergy out of the ARCA CAC meetings and bring it to future Regional Centers meeting. The ARCA CAC have already completed many surveys and will be routing the information to all Regional Centers to review. Mike also reviewed some of the major DDS updates: Working on identifying generic resources, standardizing intake and eligibility process across the 21 regional centers and implementation of standard respite tools. ARCA approved the July financial report as well as their 3 budget items for the next year. 1) Creating benefits counseling service to help people work with unnecessary fear of how employment can affect benefits. 2) Secure funding that rewards DSP training and encourages workers to remail in the field and 3) continue to purse adequate funding under the new regional center allocation methodology. ARCA also approved joining other disability organizations in pursing California protection or community integration in response to concerns that federal protections associated with the Olmstead protection could be weakened. Jonathan mentioned the upcoming ARCA Academy that will be hosted in Torrance, CA on September 25-26th. There will also be another ARCA meeting in October that

focuses on strategic planning.

d. **Client Advisory Committee (Will Lewis):** W. Lewis held his first meeting in August where they discussed client rights and the importance of voting. W. Lewis would like to discuss the grievance process for clients during a board meeting, M. Sawyer will connect with him and set time aside for this discussion. A comment was made regarding the Lanterman Act Book and if copies were still available to clients and families. J. Padilla stated that copies can be obtained online or you can request for your Regional Center to print sections or the full book.
e. **Self-Determination Advisory Committee (Robert Taylor):** R. Taylor requested to work with A. Ostell and S. Keys to review the next steps with the 5-year plan that DDS approved. R. Taylor reviewed a discussion about the difference between self-determination and traditional services from the last board meeting. S. Keys informed R. Taylor that there is no set threshold that DDS has implemented. He also discussed the directive regarding self-determination funds that can be used through June 30, 2030. These funds can be available for statewide standardized training and local community resource fairs in all four counties. The remaining funds can be used to send individuals to self-determination conferences. R. Taylor mentioned that Kayley from Disability Voices United created a presentation regarding support groups for the committee and shared what Disability Voices United does.
f. **Self-Determination Testimony (Erin Brende):** E. Brende shared her PowerPoint that can be found in our board packet at https://redwoodcoastrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2026.09-Board-Packet-Eng-Spn-Revision.pdf. R. Taylor asked "why the education surround the employer readiness is important. E. Brende stated it is important for employers and employees to know their processes to ensure a smooth process for everyone.
g. **County Information Sharing**:
    i. R. Taylor: Shared information from Watch Duty regarding the Lucus fire that is currently at 15% contained.
    ii. S. Bond: S. Bond has been working with the Office of Education to run a campaign called "Safe Communities Stronger Choices." The intent it to de stigmatize the badge and to get the badge the information and resources need to help during emergency situations with individuals who may have different reactions during crisis times. There were two events in May where local first responders worked with the school district to learn about car safety and water safety. Law enforcement received sensory bags and communication tools to keep in their vehicles.
    iii. N. Haydon: RCRC will be sending information regarding the Blue Envelope meetings in October. Ron lee is the Emergency Coordinator at RCRC. Regarding the fires, Ron pulls information through Everbridge and Genisis to identify what clients, families, vendors and employees are in the mandatory and/or warning evacuation zones.

7. **Community Comment/Input**: M. Sawyer called for community Input. None

8. **Appreciation:** All board members can serve on the board for 7 consecutive years before taking a year off. They are more than welcome to come back after their yearlong break and serve on the board for another 7 years. M. Sawyer expressed his appreciation to D. Larson and D. Matson for serving on the board for the last 7 years and presented them with a plaque and redwood box.

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

9. **Close the Meeting:** M. Sawyer adjourned the meeting at 10:25 am

The Diversity, Linguistics and Cultural Competency training session for board members immediately followed the Board meeting.

The next Board of Directors meeting is November 4, 2026.

Respectfully submitted by:
Susan Villa-Alvarez, RCRC Executive Assistant

Draft Minutes reviewed and approved by:
Mike Sawyer, Board of Directors President 10/02/2026

Minutes approved by the Board on 11/04/2026