

NORTHWESTERN COUNSELING & SUPPORT SERVICES  
107 FISHER POND ROAD  
ST. ALBANS VT 05478

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

**MARCH 3, 2021**

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**Present:** David MacCallum, Tony Treanor, Jason Minor, Angela Poirier, David Hutchinson Jim McMillan, Meg Marshall, Sara Kittell, , Elaine Carpenter, Rob Hirss, Ken Gange, Betty Charron, Greg Sargent, Carl Rosenquist, Greg Sargent

**Excused:**

**Staff:** Emily Richards, Todd Bauman, Steve Broer, Stacey Remillard, Joe Halko, Derek Hoy, Danielle Mitchell, Jessica Irish

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**Minutes received and meeting called to order by Jim McMillan at 5:36pm.**

**Motion was made to approve February minutes as presented by Ken Gange. Second by Angela Poirier. All in favor.**

### **FY20 Audit Presentation**

The audit was present by Greg Sargent of KBS. We have issued an unqualified single audit. This means that is it a clean audit. The management letter that will be submitted along with the audit will talk about the plan to work on the communication and cohesiveness of the finance and billing team. This year has been tough year for everyone. To compare us to our peers, not many other DA's have submitted their audit to the state. There were some difficulties within this process for us. The COVID relief funds, payment reform and some trouble within the accounts receivables were challenging. The lack of a CFO and the relative inexperience of the team made for a perfect storm this year. Now that the audit is over we will start to work on the systems within our finance and billing teams. The question was asked – What is the status of our receivable now, half way through this fiscal year? We are working on this, all billing is now closed through January. We are moving in the right direction. The question was asked - What is the best guess on getting caught up? Of goal is to be completely caught up by the end of FY21, the state has given us two years to re-bill, but we would like to get this completed. With the audit done we are working on the connection and interface of myAvatar and the GL. The question was asked – Is the problem with the interface a lack of time and resources or with the program itself? It is just part of the process, connecting them and making sure everything flows well. We are working on this with the other three agencies and now that the audit is done it can be more of a focus for us.

The executive committee did vote and recommends the full board approve the audit as presented.

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**Motion to authorize approval of the audit as presented was made by Daivd Hutchinson, Seconded Tony Treanor. All in Favor.**

Todd wanted to give a shout out the Derek, Jess, Kim and their teams. They have worked so hard and have the right people in place to move forward.

**Executive Director Report**

Sam Thomas is out on medical leave. She is in Boston receiving cancer treatments. The treatment is going well. There was a big win this week, when the Governor opened up vaccine opportunities for people ages 16-65 with preexisting conditions. People with disabilities were not included in that, but we have been advocating that guidance be changed to include them and we think the recommendation will be accepted. We are also advocating with the state to get a COLA increase for staff. It is in with the legislative committee now. The question was asked – Would this be for all staff? We always work the COLA out for all our staff no matter where the funding stream comes from. The question was asked – IS this for NCSS or all designated agencies? It is for the designated agencies.

**Financial Report**

We need to submit the audit by March 15<sup>th</sup> for bond compliance, so we are in a great place for this. We need to have our 990 filled by May 15<sup>th</sup>. Our cash on hand is in a healthy position and it does not include success beyond six or Medicaid funds. The COVID relief funds are what is keeping these numbers healthy right now.

**Behavioral Health**

The division has enjoyed working on the stories to be given to the board. This has given his team chances to look at the systems with in his programs. Our latest story was on access of services. We are seeing higher demands right now. Steve and his leadership are looking at contingency plans to be able to provide the needed services and the staffing it will take. The national suicide line has included us in the conversation about changing the number to call which will happen in July 2022. There has been a rise in involuntary hospitalization and some of those are with kiddos. They question was asked - Can we share data on this, including the ages? How many? Some are known to us and others are not, so it is hard to say. There are a lot of system failures that contribute to this.

**Children Youth and Family**

Danielle wanted to comment on how impressed by our staff and the work they are doing with the community, schools and families she is. All supervisory unions have been asked to submit a recovery plan and we have asked that one of our leadership be part of all those meetings. The question was asked – Was the agency included in the decisions to ask schools for this? No, but

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when AOE rolled it out, Vermont Cares Partners reached out and asked us to reach out to schools and off help. There are funds included for the schools for them to offer the services we provide and we want to make sure we are not creating a duplicate system of care. The question was asked – Are we working with the new Spectrum St. Albans? There has been as task for them and we have been at the table for the conversations. We will be providing case management services for the kids, but it will be an evolving process.

### **Community Relations**

March is intellectually disability awareness month. It is also social worker month. April is Autism Awareness and Counseling awareness month. Since we can't have an autism walk this year we are doing a virtual awareness week. This will be the first week in April and we will have events every day offered virtually for kids and caregivers. May is Mental Health awareness month.

### **Human Resources**

The tobacco funds from 2018 that the state has been trying to figure out what to do with has finally been determined. They will be giving some to all the designated agencies for workforce development. We have gotten some of that money; we just are waiting on what the requirements will be to use it. There will be an application submitted to the state so it is out of our hand, but it will be used for DA's across the state and their employees. We spend a lot of time of figuring out how to support staff and still give quality care. We are having a [WE] Thrive Together tomorrow at 4pm. This is "group" for staff to come and share some quality time and talk about struggles, strategies and many other things. The question was asked - Have we been looking at our staff and getting prepared for our staff crashes? It is already happening, our teams and programs have been very creative with ways to keep people engaged, together and supported.

### **Old Business**

Stacey would like to thank you to Tony Treanor for joining the pension committee.

### **New Business**

There is open position on the BH standing Committee. If anyone is interested please reach out to Steve. They meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 4:30 – 6:00. Please do not forget to that the survey that was sent out, it is was helps inform our strategic plan.

**Motion to adjourn was made by Rob Hirss. Seconded by Sara Kittell. All in Favor.**

### **Meeting adjourn at 7:04pm**

Minutes recorded by:

Emily Richards

Executive Coordinator