

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

MAY 6, 2020

Present: Tony Treanor, Jim McMillan, Rob Hirss, Meg Marshall, Carl Rosenquist, Elaine Carpenter, Anjanette Watson, Sara Kittell, Jason Minor, Jeff Moreau,

Excused: David MacCallum, Dan Thompson, Betty Charron, David Hutchinson

Staff: Emily Richards, Todd Bauman, Tim Gallagan, Kim McClellan, Steve Broer, Stacey Remillard, Joe Halko, Danielle Mitchell, Jess Irish

Minutes received and meeting called to order by Jim McMillan at 5:37pm.

Motion was made to approve April minutes by Jason Minor. Second by Carl Rosenquist. All in favor.

Executive Director Report

Tim Gallagan has given his notice and will be moving on; we will miss him and the wonderful contributions he has made to the agency. While we find our new CEO, we would like to welcome Jessica Irish who is our controller. She will be stepping into the meetings while we find our new CFO.

There has been a lot of talk of the federal help bill that has been passed. It was passed as federal funding to help business with COVID related expenses. We want you all to know that we were not eligible for those funds because they are designated for business with less than 500 people. We have heard that there may be a second round of money, which we will keep an eye on, because we will need any money to help with our info structure. We will keep everyone posted as new items come up.

Financial Report

We have a condensed version of our finances this month. The billing during this time has been very difficult and Kim's team is doing a great job. However with the difficulty they didn't get to close March until today. Days of cash on hand are up a bit and we are at 38.5 days without the restricted funds and about 76 days when we include the restricted funds. Our cash conservation mode has impacted out cash positively by between two to four weeks. We will keep the agency in cash conservation mode at least until we have clarity on school contracts and the budget. Tim has advised that we stay in cash conservation mode until at least October. We will be using some of our capital funds to repair the roof of 107 FPR.

Jason thinks that October is a good idea and wanted to thank the agency leadership for acting quickly. Rob is wondering how much the roof will cost and who will doing it? The budget is \$181,000 and we are still waiting on bids. We did talk about this a lot and whether this is the right time to do it or not. If we do not do it now, it will cost us much more later. There is already

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some damage so we need to get a head of that. It is also a very loud job and if we do it now it will be much less of a disturbance to our clients and staff. The company can also work during the week vs the weekend.

Executive Committee

During the executive committee meeting we talked about everything that has been addressed above. Jim would like to also say how well the leadership team did in taking action including our finances.

Behavioral Health

Our standing committee is still meeting. We are working on clinical practices document that will help define what high, moderate and low restrictions by program would like as we hope to start seeing more clients. We want to have this defined so we have specific guidelines. We are still conducting some face to face services, mostly in crisis. Outpatient is mostly remote, the nurses are working on site 2 days a week to help with medications and residential. We are starting to look at what reentry will look like. We are still working on projects, like the hospital's emergency department re model, and re doing our good grief protocol knowing that in the aftermath of all this we will need it. The question was asked – Has there been any indication that we have been in this long enough that we can see an increase in suicide? We do not think so yet, but there been in increase in the severity of cases. Numbers are normally high in the spring. Our life line is seeing more activity, but with zoom as an option our no show rate is down. The question was asked – How are we adapting our embedded staff in the primary care offices? We have them working remotely, they are using zoom and it is working well.

Child Youth and Family

We are looking at engagement strategies for staff and clients. We want to make sure we are still connecting with everyone even if we are working remotely. We are looking at funding streams that are different than what we are use too. One of the new funding streams we got is for the PPC to help proved food, formula and diapers. Soar is still serving 78 students, they submitted and were approved on the first try for their Continuity of Learning Plan for Remote Education We have continued to do IEP and elevations through zoom. We have been working on getting location business to donate supplies (art and sports) to help families with the remote learning. Danielle wanted everyone to know how very impressed with her teams she is. There are some kiddos who need the face to face, so we have been working on what the protocol around this will be. Schools are invested in our relationship; it is just a matter of how we will make those services happen. The question was asked – Are we working with DCF or anyone on wellness checks for kids? We have not done wellness checks per say, but we are getting more referrals. We are working on ways to be creative and make sure we are still providing services.

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Community Relations

We have been increasing our messages around COVID but have made them broader and started talking about other mental health information. It has been an opportunity to talk about how important mental health is. March was DS awareness month, April was Autism Awareness and May is Mental Health Awareness Month. In April we worked with our autism teams to create contact for our Facebook page. We were disappointed that we had to cancel the walk, but the team came together and created great content from books to read to activities to do. Now we are in May which is mental health awareness month. We have a lot of communication that is planned to go out all month long. Anjanette asked the question, How we are sharing information with those that do not go on Facebook? Joe sent her a packet of the information we have been sharing. She made the suggestion that all board members should have the packet. So Joe will be sending it out tomorrow. Angie was very impressed with what Joe sent and everyone should take a look. We are also looking into platforms for younger people. We also post a lot of information on our website.

Human Resources

We are using Facebook a lot more to and trying to engage more with staff even those that are laid off. Business is as usually minus the people in the office for human resources. Payroll has been hard and Lynn has done a great job with it. As we work on our reentry plan we are working on a plan to have a health officer at each location. We got our first unemployment bill for April and it was about \$200,000 we normally are at about \$50,000. We are hoping that there will be funding that will come in to help with this, but will keep everyone posted on that. We are trying to keep our wellness strong during this time, we are doing mindfulness groups through zoom, and we had a virtual walk a lunch week with 17 people who shared pictures. We recalled 15 people this week which was very exciting. The question was asked - What has experience been with people who have been laid off and how long it has taken to get in touch with unemployment? Stacey and Lynn have taken part in all the webinars to help the staff, what we have done is help them to be less frustrated, we have access to an employee portal. We are trying to just be a resource and a helpful hand.

Operations

March billing was closed today. All the state agencies and all the private companies had different ways they wanted the billing done, which made it very difficult. We tried to have the end user not have to deal with it, and had the entire cleanup done on the back end. Reception who is working from home has been helping. The unified EMR project has not skipped a beat. The build is being moved into our live environment and we are scheduled for final review the first week of June, Final review normally happens as a live event, but it looks like it will be a virtual training so this will be different. We are now working on training and sustainability plan. We will start our training of staff in early August, with our planned go live in early Sept.

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New Business

Do we need to give public access to our meetings? Public is always welcome, and there is space on the agenda for public comment. We will keep it as is, the public know this is our meeting and if they want to come we can give them access. Jim would like to thank the leadership and front line staff, they are putting our community first and doing great work. We do not need to have a two week update, unless something critical comes up. Should reach out to people that are laid off as well and thank them for the scarifies they have made for the agency. We need to make sure that they know they are vital to the agency.

Motion was made to ajourn by Rob Hirss. Second by Tony Treanor . All in favor.

Meeting adjourn at 7:00pm

Minutes recorded by:

Emily Richards

Executive Coordinator