

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

MAY 4, 2022

Present: Jim McMillan, Tony Treanor, David MacCallum, Dan Thompson, Rob Hirss, Jason Minor, Meg Marshall, David Hutchinson, Sara Kittell, Ken Gange, Elaine Carpenter, Betty Charron

Excused: Anjanette Watson, Carl Rosenquist, Angela Poirier

Staff: Emily Richards, Todd Bauman, Kim McClellan, Steve Broer, Joe Halko, Derek Hoy, Danielle Lindley, Sam Thomas, Randy Lizotte

Minutes received and meeting called to order by Jim McMillian at 5:34 pm.

Motion was made to approve April minutes as presented by Dan Thompson. Second by Rob Hirss. All in favor.

Presentation

Looking Through Our Eyes – Presented by Randy Lizotte

We will be sharing the upcoming full trainings with the board.

Executive Director Report

Legislative update, last month a vote was taken to give a COLA increase to staff as soon as the FY23 budget is approved and passed by the state. The state is still working on the details of this. It is looking positive, and we will keep everyone posted as it moved forward.

We have talked about applying for the CCBHC grant, which is the national model that would certify us a certified mental health center on the federal level. The grant just came out and is due on May 17th. After Derek, Kim and Steve went to the National Council conference and learned more about it, we have decided that we would not apply for it this year. We are going to be moving in the way of the structures that are required within a CCNHC, so we are in a good place to go after the grant next year. We have heard that it is a very competitive grant and very few agencies in Vermont will get it.

Steve Broer is leaving the agency. Steve has been a pillar for our agency, his roll is in behavioral health, but he brings so many things to the whole agency. This has been a developmental decision for Steve, he would like to be able to focus a little more on family. He says that this job deserves a certain amount of energy and effort, and I can't give it that anymore. We have a plan in place for the transition. He has informed his staff and they are happy for him but will miss his leadership. He has done great work in his division, and we will strive to keep the things going that he has in place, no big changes need to happen. The board wishes Steve the best of luck and we know your shoes will be hard to fill.

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Financial Report

We have closed a total of 3 months in April. Billing is continuing to close months; we are catching up and moving in the right directions.

We are closing on the property on Route 7 this coming Friday. This is so important to the programming we are offering. We have a few clients that will really benefit from this. It will offer our clients the ability to stay in their own community, so thank you to the board for approving the purchase.

We have the appraisal scheduled on Home Health Circle next week. We will hopefully be coming back to the board to get approval to purchase this building next month. This will bring us other resources to continue to offer our clients the care they need.

We are working hard on righting our AR. It is decreasing and we are making great progress with it. Most of the oldest AR we have is VT Medicaid, in the past the state had a timeline that if we did not bill within the range, we could not bill for the service at all. They have now changed that so we can bill for past services, and we are working on that.

Our profit margin is trending lower, and this is due to the corrections we are doing to our right our systems. Revenues are being impacted by historical adjustment on claims within the EMR. The health insurance is seeing a sharp cost increases as well as staff training, advertising and supplies are on the increase. Our operations and cash flow remain strong.

The question was asked - Cash flow has not been affected but receivable and billing issues and is that because of lump payment? Yes. The question was asked - The state can wave the amount of time that is required to bill, are they? We have requested that they look into it and they are working with us in a couple ways. The question was asked - How is the new GL coming along? It has been very inspiring; it is going to give us more detail and easier flow of things. Our team is young and this has been helpful because we are asking questions on how we could be operating better and more efficient since we do not have ties to the old system.

Behavioral Health Report

A long-time staff member of the agency, Bridget Archambault, started in children, went to crisis and has now taken on a leadership position in CRT. This has been very positive for her and the agency. This year we are having the ice cream social in person again!!! It will be tomorrow on the lawn at 130 Fisher Pond Rd, from 2pm – 4pm, please join us. Our outpatient caseloads are so large due to the need out there, we have created a part time program that will help with the current staff members with their caseloads, staff are helping from all divisions in the agency.

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Children Youth and Family Report

MHFA trainings have happened with the BFA tech center and there was a presentation at the Vermont family network conference. We are continuing to expand our HEART program; we are working on an overnight doula program. We will have staff that can spend the night with a new mom who is transition home if they need support. We held our first CYF leadership group which is peer lead. It was a great opportunity to heard from direct service about what is working and what is not. Board member Carl Rosenquist wanted to recognize Amy Johnson for the great job she did when testify for the S91 bill.

Developmental Services Report

Working on supporting all the folks who have been selected by the state to participate in the SIS assessment. Once this is complete there will be a group that will talk about how this will benefit the individuals we serve. There is already a second version being worked on that will better serve folks who have higher behavioral and medical needs. We have seen an uptick in hiring for community supports which is so wonderful. DS staff are navigating some really hard situations lately and Sam is so proud of them and their commitment to our clients and community. As well as their ability to do the tough work. Sam has also met with a few of her teams and has gotten some really good feedback.

The question was asked - 7 North how many clients do we anticipate being able to serve? It will be able to house 2 clients. We are very mindful as a system of congregant care, so there are regulations that come with multiple clients. The question was asked - What are the rumors on the H7-20 bill? There is a lot of discussion about this at the director level across the state and we are all trying to think through the impacts this can have.

Community Relations Report

The work that Steve has done in our community and state with suicide awareness is nothing short of amazing. And deserves a thank you for that. The rotary was at a meeting which was held at the NWTC and there where many times that NCSS was recognized for the collaboration we have with them. May is mental health awareness month. We are getting together again in person, for the autism walk which is June 5th. The CPC Golf Tournament is June 17th, don't forget to register your team.

Human Resources

The last few new hire orientation have felt like old ones. We are down to about an 18% vacant rate from 24%, which is good progress. It is slow process but seems to moving in the right direction.

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Quality and Risk Management Report

The redesignation process is going on currently. We have completed and received the certification for ADAP which is good through March 2024. The commissioner of DMH was at the conference that Steve, Derek and I were at, which was a first. Derek and his peer put a proposal together to ask that payment reform be put on hold while we are looking into the CCNHC. They said yes, with some asterisks.

New Business

Some board members would really like to get a book group started and start with the book Anjanette suggested. If you would like to join reach out to David Hutchinson or Anjanette Watson.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dan Thompson. Second by Carl Rosenquist. All in Favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm

Minutes recorded by:

Emily Richards

Executive Coordinator