

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

Present: Tony Treanor, Jason Minor, Angela Poirier, Jim McMillan, Sara Kittell, Rob Hirss, Ken Gange, David MacCallum, Elaine Carpenter, Betty Charron, Carl Rosenquist,
Excused:, David Hutchinson, Meg Marshall,
Staff: Emily Richards, Todd Bauman, Stacey Remillard, Joe Halko, Derek Hoy, Danielle Mitchell, Steve Broer, Jessica Branon,

Minutes received and meeting called to order by Jim McMillan at 5:41pm.

Motion was made to approve August minutes as presented by Angela Poirier. Second by Betty Charron. All in favor.

Presentation

Workforce Update presented by Stacey Remillard and Jessica Branon

Executive Director Report

We talked last month about purchasing a property with a few different program options for the use of the space. One was for a micro residential home in DS and the other is a CYF stabilization bed that is currently being negotiated with the state. We did not end up putting a bid in on the property, there were two others, and we did not want to get into a bidding war. We are still looking and will keep the board updated as things develop.

Todd was part of a meeting with community partners that took place at Northwestern Medical Center. The focus of conversation was around COVID-19, where we are and where it looks like we could be going in terms of cases. We are currently wearing masks when indoors at all our locations. We continue to follow the guidance from the state and monitor the situation very closely. We feel like we are in a much better position than we were when we went into the school year last year. If schools start to close, we can keep them on whereas last year we had to lay them off.

The question was asked – If schools start to close, how many staff members could be affected. We currently have about 150 staff members that are involved with schools in some way. We could not carry them all but based on how things seem to be going there will not be full schools that are closed, more of a classroom here, a classroom there, for a week or two at a time. If that happens, we can keep the affected staff on and find meaningful work for them to do until their kiddo or classroom is back.

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Financial Report

We have closed our books through May, so we are on schedule. We are currently working on the FY22 budget and are very close to having it ready to be voted on and approved by the board. We will leave the month of June open for a little while longer, so we can reconcile any account and finish up the year. We will have a gain this year, but we are being very strategic with it. We have had a large amount of COVID funding that is a onetime thing that is affecting this gain. Another piece that is affecting the gain is the large number of open positions we have, so our payroll and other associated expenses are down. These are very unprecedented times, so it is hard to say where we are and where we are going to end up.

Last month we talked about wanted to increase the capitalization threshold amount. This month we would like to move forward with this and will need a board vote. We are currently working with a \$1000 capitalization threshold limit. We are very low compared to the other DA's that are similar in size and revenue to us. If we make this increase it would make it possible to expense more things which could help with a gain if need be. We did talk to KBS to get their option and they agree that an agency our size should have a larger limit and agree with the request to increase the capitalization threshold to \$5000. Derek is working on a detailed policy around this process.

Motion to approve the recommendation of the increase of the capitalization threshold to move from \$1000 to \$5000 made by Carl Rosenquist. Seconded Rob Hirss. All in Favor.

Behavioral Health

Thank you, Elaine, for challenging us to provide stories about the services we are providing. It has been a great way to look at our services and programs. Todd is advocating with One Care to help offset the cost of the high ED position that are currently at NMC. We are having great conversations with NMC about how we can be creative in providing our integrated health services.

Children Youth and Family

We have been focused on school relationships during this time it is so very important. We do have a new relationship with Northeast supervisory union. We are working with them on holding a position that will make director referrals to us for our services. We also met with DMH and DCF around the crisis stabilization beds and we got a promise that they will help pay for it. We had our annual BBQ which we were unable to have last year. It is a great event and staff were so happy to be there and be together.

Developmental Services

Division wide zooms opportunities have been a result of challenging our team to find ways to be creative and connect with people. These zoom times have been a great chance for Sam to get

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direct feedback from staff. September 13th is a national week to support and highlight our direct service professionals. It made Sam ask her peers why there is nothing for all service providers, and no one knew or had a good answer, so we are going to have a week to support and highlight them, it will be the week of October 10th.

Community Relations

September is suicide prevention awareness month. We will have a lot of publications, social media posts and our TV show that focus on awareness. We have decided to cancel to tournament due to the increasing cases of COVID. We are trying to model behavior to keep our community safe. We are currently working on a series in the Islander over the next year, the first article ran today which was an interview with Todd.

Operations

Derek, Todd and Kim went to Northeast Kingdom and did a lot consultations on many topics. All the DA's in the state are very tight but the relationship we have with them is really great. We are still doing some more work with them. The strategic plan is complete, and we will review it during this meeting next month. We have running security reports on our systems and are getting really great results. We are a leader in this area and have been offering help to other agencies.

Motion to go into executive session was made by Angela Poirier. Seconded Betty Charron. All in Favor. Staff will be leaving for executive session.

Motion to exit executive session was made by Carl Rosenquist. Seconded Ken Gagne. All in Favor.

Motion to adjourn was made by Carl Rosenquist. Seconded by Ken Gagne. All in Favor.

Meeting adjourns at 7:31pm

Minutes recorded by:

Emily Richards

Executive Coordinator