



**BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING  
DISABILITY RIGHTS MICHIGAN**

**Meeting Minutes**  
February 23, 2021

**Call Meeting to Order**

President John McCulloch called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

**Attendance**

**Present:** Melody Arabo, Hansen Clarke, Davin Hemmila, Tom Landry, John McCulloch, Malkia Newman, Paul Palmer, Mark Stephenson

**Absent:** Jill Busha, Brian Calley, Selena Schmidt, Jane Shank, Mark Wiedelman

**Staff:** Michelle Roberts, Michele Brand, Mark McWilliams, Kyle Williams, Elham Jahshan, Kris Keranen, Theresa Diebolt, Sara Koroniotis, Chris Davis

**Approval of Agenda**

Tom Landry MOVED to approve the agenda and Paul Palmer seconded.

**AYES:** Clarke, Hemmila, Landry, McCulloch, Newman, Palmer, Stephenson

**NAYS:** None Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

Malkia Newman MOVED to approve the minutes from the December 15, 2020 meeting and Tom Landry seconded.

**AYES:** Clarke, Hemmila, Landry, McCulloch, Newman, Stephenson

**Abstain:** Palmer

**NAYS:** None Motion carried.

## President's Report

President McCulloch congratulated the winners of the annual Ernie Reynolds essay contest and asked each of them to introduce themselves and share something if they chose to do so. Board members, DRM staff and guests were pleased to meet the top three winners of the contest and congratulate them. Certificates and checks were mailed to each of them.

## Executive Director and Staff Reports

Executive Director Michelle Roberts began by introducing the new Director of Advocacy, Rebecca Kasen, who moved to Lansing from New Jersey with her family.

Roberts shared that staff remain on telework status for the most part with about 10 people in the office daily. She hopes to phase back into the office before May 1<sup>st</sup> but of course that will depend on the state orders. We are still trying to get a vaccination clinic in the office however a lot of staff have already received a vaccine or are scheduled to get it.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was discussed at the recent board retreat and as Roberts has mentioned previously, we are committed to this within the organization and have been doing some work to identify a plan. We have been interviewing outside consultants who can provide training to management and staff.

Roberts stated we have received some referrals on financial exploitation as a result of her work with the Attorney General's EATF. Their Health Care Fraud Division investigates and prosecutes cases of financial exploitation that are either particularly egregious or involve large amounts of money. She has made a couple of new connections with people within this division over the past few weeks that are proving positive, and the Task Force is now considering how the EATF can make an impact at the state level to address abuse/neglect by rep payees.

We have completed interviews for the Quality Assurance/Data Integrity Specialist position and second interviews are being scheduled for the attorney posting. We have had a pool of highly qualified and diverse candidates which we have not seen before which is very exciting for DRM.

Mark McWilliams reported on the Public Policy and Media Relations indicating he has started measuring advocacy work not only by how it affects people with disabilities but how it affects black individuals, indigenous people, and people of color. He deferred his public policy report to the committee report.

Sara Koroniotis reported on the Rep Payee team stating her team initiated 68 reviews in the last quarter which affected 1,964 beneficiaries. Even though they only look at samples for each payee, all the beneficiaries are impacted by the payees reviewed. Since they are doing their work remotely, they are working at a faster pace and have had to request additional work from SSA. Koroniotis indicated they submitted 2 referrals to the Attorney General's office regarding 2 representative payees who are also serving as legal guardians for some of their beneficiaries. The Attorney General's office was given enough information to do an investigation into those matters.

Kris Keranen reported on the Education Team saying most schools in the state are offering some in school services which impacts a lot of the kids we work with who are learning remotely. Keranen indicated they are working with the Board of Education to make them more aware and responsible and have had some success. They have started working to address issues related to the care of children in the state child caring institutions.

Elham Jahshan reported on the Employment Team stating they continue to work with leadership from Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) to discuss issues people call us about regarding their services. They have been working with several state agencies to develop a state model for secondary transition, and to provide professionals working with students with disabilities in higher education with information about what appropriate transition services entails. Jahshan also mentioned they are working with Michigan Employment Clinic (MI-EC), a new initiative connected with Michigan Diversity Education Center, to support individuals with disabilities and/or a criminal history who are seeking employment by reaching out to potential employers.

Chris Davis gave a report on the Intake, Information and Referral team stating they took in about 900 calls last quarter. We have seen a drop in calls due to COVID-19 especially regarding education and housing however they are starting to pick up again. We recently assisted in developing a veteran's guide for persons with disabilities which was put out by the legal team and is on our website. The team had a training on Medicaid and the different programs around the state. Also, had training on children's' special health services. Davis did a training on self-determination and the different Powers of Attorney.

Rebecca Kasen reported on the CAIR team and began with praising her team for being very passionate about the work they are doing. Virtual monitoring visits have continued, and they did 21 visits this past quarter. They continue to work on systemic projects and will have a completion of the investigation of deaths in psychiatric hospitals. They are looking at the use of administrative segregation among individuals with disabilities in Michigan prisons. They recently began a systemic initiative to review the barriers to discharge for individuals with

intellectual and development disabilities who have been identified as “discharge ready” although remain hospitalized in a state psychiatric institution.

Kyle Williams gave an update on the litigation starting the KB case stating they are setting target dates for June to have a completed expert report on the case which will give the department some recommendations which will hopefully be incorporated into an implementation plan and final settlement agreement. He further stated that integrated healthcare will be back on the table and referred to section 298. They have been speaking with experts regarding integrated healthcare and the difference between care for adults and kids. Williams stated we are in discovery in the Waskul litigation regarding the way self-determination budgets are calculated. This case could play a substantial role in how we decide in how we fund those community-based programs. With the problems with provider agencies with low pay and availability, this case could play a substantial role in how we decide how we fund those community based programs so people can get the services they need to stay in the community. We spoke with the press and Crain’s will be running a column on the case. Williams stated they will be meeting with the AG’s office and the attorney for DHHS to discuss due process issues. We are continuing on with the NGRI issues and hopefully by the next meeting we will have a work product to share.

Williams added there are more appropriations for the KB settlement that have been made by the department and that funds will be used to increase contract enforcement between the department and PIHPs and increase accountability. He also stated we have some great candidates, and he is looking forward to adding a strong litigator to his team which will help get more cases in court.

Paul Palmer MOVED to receive and file the executive director and staff reports and Tom Landry seconded.

AYES: Clarke, Hemmila, Landry, McCulloch, Newman, Palmer, Stephenson

NAYS: None Motion carried.

### **Audit Committee**

Michele Brand indicated the audit report and 990 was sent to the board back in January for review and acceptance and referred to President McCulloch to what his recommendation was regarding a presentation and/or audit report from the auditors. President McCulloch stated he attended the committee meeting and as a CPA did not see any issues and recommended that the audit report be accepted as presented.

Paul Palmer MOVED to accept the audit report and Malkia Newman seconded.

AYES: Hemmila, Landry, McCulloch, Newman, Palmer, Stephenson, Clarke

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

### **Public Comment**

There was one member from the public who spoke to the board.

### **PAIMI Advisory Council Report**

Malkia Newman presented the approved minutes of the November 17, 2020 and December 9, 2020 PAIMI Advisory Council meetings.

President McCulloch asked for a motion to receive and file the PAIMI Advisory Council Report. Malkia Newman so MOVED, and Mark Stephenson seconded.

AYES: Clarke, Hemmila, Landry, McCulloch, Newman, Palmer, Stephenson

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **1. Budget & Finance Committee – Mark Stephenson /Michele Brand**

Stephenson referred to the written report and did not have any concerns.

Mark Stephenson MOVED to receive and file the Budget & Finance report and Malkia Newman seconded.

AYES: Hemmila, Landry, McCulloch, Newman, Palmer, Stephenson

Abstain: Clarke

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

#### **2. Public Policy Committee –Hansen Clarke/Mark McWilliams**

Mr. Clarke further commended Michelle Roberts for recognizing that many people who are home bound do not have a caregiver to get them access to the vaccine if they wanted to get it. The area agencies on aging are in desperate need in getting the vaccine to the home for seniors. He has been in contact with organizations who want to start a pilot program to administer the vaccines to those who are home bound identified by the area agencies for aging. He will get the contacts to Michelle and Mark.

Mark McWilliams referred to his written report and followed up with expressing some of the issues people with disabilities are facing related to

COVID. In addition to access issues for people who are aging who are homebound and have disabilities, people who have disabilities in general lack priority to the vaccine and stated some are not eligible to receive it. We have been working in coalition with community partners to try to get those individuals bumped up on the priority list to get access to the vaccine. Some people do not have access to the internet to register and some don't have transportation to get the vaccine.

McWilliams also mentioned that we have reserved the Capitol for events in October 2021 and February 2022. At this time, we are not sure what type of events these will be.

There was some discussion regarding people who are reluctant to get the vaccine and how to better educate and encourage those people to get vaccinated. We are a member of the disability subgroup of the Protect Michigan Commission whose purpose is to get information out there about the vaccine. McWilliams believes we should continue reposting what the state posts on vaccinations, and work with our partners to share in their efforts in getting people vaccinated.

Hansen Clarke MOVED to receive and file the Public Policy Committee report and Malkia Newman seconded.

AYES: Clarke, Hemmila, Landry, McCulloch, Newman, Palmer, Stephenson

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

## **Old Business**

Old business – none

## **New Business**

A member of the board asked a couple questions regarding public comments and a discussion was held.

President McCulloch mentioned the workgroups created at the recent board retreat and stated that each workgroup will hopefully be reporting at future board meetings as to their progress and recommendations to the full board.

Mark your calendars with future meeting dates!

## **Executive Session**

No executive session was held.

## **Adjourn**

Tom Landry MOVED to adjourn the meeting and Paul Palmer seconded.

AYES: Clarke, Hemmila, Landry, McCulloch, Newman, Palmer, Stephenson

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Theresa Diebolt, Executive Assistant

Minutes approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Paul Palmer, Secretary

**Next Meetings**  
**(Please mark your calendars**  
**and note the change in location)**

**Tuesday, May 11, 2021**

**Tuesday, September 7, 2021 (Annual meeting)**

**Tuesday, December 14, 2021**