



**BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING**  
**Minutes of virtual meeting**  
**March 2, 2023**

**Call Meeting to Order**

President, Jane Shank, called meeting to order at 8:32 am.

**Attendance**

**Present:** Brian Calley, Marie Jackson, Tom Landry, Malkia Newman, Paul Palmer, Jane Shank, Mark Wiedelman

**Absent:** Hansen Clarke, Davin Hemmila, John McCulloch

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

**Guests:** Emily Henderson, McCall Hamilton, Mora Wilkevicz, Christina Agle, Jerri Nicole Wright, Judy Wood

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

President Shank asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Tom Landry MOVED to approve the consent agenda and Mark Wiedelman seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

**Ernie Reynolds Essay Contest winners**

Tom Landry indicated we had 21 submissions this year for the essay contest. The committee enjoyed reading all the essays but had a very difficult task in choosing the top three because they were all so good. The committee also suggested using some of the stories as a motivator for others and perhaps some of the clients we serve.

Tom thanked and congratulated the 3<sup>rd</sup> place winner, Judy Wood, and asked that she introduce herself. Ms. Wood thanked the Board and shared a poem she had written.

Tom thanked and congratulated the 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner, Joe Alice, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Tom thanked and congratulated the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner, Jerri Nicole Wright, and asked her to share a little about herself. Ms. Wright thanked the Board for choosing her story for the first place.

Michelle Roberts congratulated and thanked Ms. Wright and Ms. Wood for sharing their stories. Discussion was held on how their stories could be used to help others.

### **Executive Director and Staff Reports**

**Michelle Roberts**, Executive Director, referred to her written report and had one correction sharing Kyle will not be attending the NDRN in-person CEO meeting as stated.

Roberts reported on grievances and explained the process and indicated it is a PAIMI requirement.

Roberts was happy to announce that DRM is restructuring, and a new organizational chart will be distributed soon. She talked about the difficulty in finding people outside of the organization who are leaders and understand our work, so she is working to create an organization that offers opportunities for staff to advance in their careers at DRM.

**Sara Koroniotis** reported the Rep Payee Team is in their 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter and have done 46 payee reviews onsite. They are back on the road. As of today, March 2, they have completed 95 reviews for this fiscal year. They are on target to complete 135 reviews and will most likely exceed that target.

Sara shared a case involving a payee with several beneficiaries, some being out of state, and how one beneficiary was homeless and being scammed by their payee.

**Mark McWilliams** was happy to report the Vaccine Advocacy Team administered 1,138 COVID vaccines and 846 flu shots in the first quarter. He shared some other stats surrounding the vaccine clinics including 73% of the recipients were over 50 and 21% were African American. We drafted legislation to ban discrimination in the provision of life saving treatment and we are optimistic that bill will be reintroduced and moved forward.

Mark went on to say the team has administered 622 COVID vaccines in this (2<sup>nd</sup>) quarter including 111 first doses or primary doses. We have also administered 285 flu shots. Most of the clinics are at Homeless Shelters, Community Centers, Adult Foster Care and Nursing Homes and for folks who are unable to leave their homes.

Mark McWilliams is acting as interim Intake, Information & Referral (I&R) Director and stated in the first four months we received 1,386 calls, most of which were new calls and

those included education, housing, employment, institutional rights, social security, guardianship, and COVID.

**Rachel Huddleston** stated the Communications Team recently launched the litigation tracker, they constantly update DRMs website, and the transition page has been updated allowing folks to click on a box to have brochures emailed to them. They are looking to possibly work with local bike shops this summer on hosting an event for people who use wheelchairs. The voting team attended a meeting in Detroit and has been working on a "Know Your Rights Guide" and they are working on a new marketing tool many can use on future elections. They recently met with MDOS and have some new projects in the works as a result. She attended an event hosted by Delta Dental and made new connections and they look forward to partnering with DRM in the near future.

**Elham Jahshan** said the Employment Team has been working with a client who wanted to open her own salon. She had been working with Michigan Rehabilitation Services for quite some time and came to us for assistance. Due to a car accident, the client was unable to continue being a hair stylist. Our employment attorney, John Sloat, assisted her at an administrative hearing and we are waiting for the Judge to make a decision. The client has a salon but is unable to open it and pay rent without an income. DRM continues to work with MRS pending the outcome of the hearing.

**Kris Keranen** reported the Education Team took a trip to Washington D.C. to attend the hearing at the Supreme Court on the Perez case. We are very optimistic for the outcome and if we get a favorable decision, it will have an impact across the country, and people could take Section 504 and ADA claims to court without having to exhaust IDEA claims by going through a lengthy hearing process if they are on different issues. We will know the outcome by June.

Kris shared updates on a couple other cases against the Michigan Department of Education.

**Michele Brand** reported on health benefits stating we moved from a PPO to an HMO saving staff increased costs for benefits. Working with IT department to reduce outside contract services to save money while maintaining security. She has been working on the 990s and will get them to Board members soon.

**Kyle Williams** reported on the KB lawsuit saying they continue working on negotiating the terms of the settlement. Lawsuits like this take a long time as bureaucracy can move slow but we are hopeful that moving slow will make it effective so we can come back and share with you the progress at the next meeting.

Kyle spoke about the Waskul case, the case targeting the direct care worker crisis the state's been experiencing for the last decade. They had their first mediation session and while Kyle cannot share many details, he can say they stayed the case until April 21 and litigation is

ceased while they continue to negotiate and hopefully resolve the case without going to trial. This is a very complicated case for the legal team.

Kyle gave an update on the case they are working on involving a 22-year-old who is entitled to receive Medicaid-funded home and community-based services. He took the case to the Court of Appeals and should have oral arguments set by the next board meeting.

### **President report**

President Shank applauded and thanked DRM staff and the work they do.

Jane went on to inform that Davin Hemmila has been appointed to the Audit Committee and Malkia Newman has been appointed to the Public Policy Committee.

Jane then discussed the roles of board members and stated we are going to have a retreat and have Latoya Blizzard from NDRN will provide training at that retreat. She asked board members to please complete the poll that was sent out. She also mentioned recruiting new members and how we go about it.

Paul Palmer nominated Malkia Newman to be Secretary of the Board of Directors and carry out the current term.

Paul Palmer MOVED to approve Malkia Newman as Secretary and Tom Landry seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

### **Public comment**

A public comment was made involving a complaint being filed with the Department of Civil Rights after a traumatic experience at a local hospital. They were told their case was being closed because MDCR does not substantiate claims of discrimination based on disabilities in healthcare settings. They are asking DRM to look into MDCR.

### **PAIMI Advisory Council update**

President Shank shared Marie Jackson was unable to attend the meeting and asked if anyone had any questions of the minutes from the last PAIMI Advisory Council meeting.

### **Committee reports**

#### **Audit Committee**

Michele Brand stated the audit went well and the committee met. The report was sent to board members, and she asked if there were any questions.

Tom Landry MOVED to accept and approve the Audit Report and Malkia Newman seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

### **Budget & Finance Committee**

Michele Brand stated money came in this week. For almost every grant we received an increase. We are ahead approximately \$216,000 and are within budget in most programs and overall.

Tom Landry MOVED to accept the Budget & Finance Committee report and financial statements the Audit Report and Malkia Newman seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

### **Public Policy Committee**

Emily Henderson began with the biggest priority being the budget and the Governor introducing her executive recommendations and historic budget of \$79 billion. In her recommendations was an increase in the school aid budget including special education.

On the policy side, the events that took place at MSU have changed the dynamics of the legislature and their policy priorities dropped drastically. Gun reform packages have taken priority. Other bills regarding mental health include SB28 which would ban chemical restraints in Michigan and SB29 would allow a certain number of excused mental health days for students.

### **Old Business**

There are still a few members who have not returned their annual forms.

### **New Business**

There is no new business.

### **Executive Session**

Tom Landry MOVED to go into executive session and Paul Palmer seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned to executive session at 10:48 am and executive session adjourned at 10:57 am.

Minutes prepared by: Theresa Diebolt  
Theresa Diebolt, Executive Assistant

Minutes approved by: Malkia Maisha New  
Malkia Newman, Secretary