



**Disability
Rights**
Michigan

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of virtual meeting
February 20, 2024**

Call Meeting to Order

President, Paul Palmer, called the meeting to order at 8:37 am. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Attendance

Present: Daniel Bartz, Amanda Bouwman, Brian Calley, Hansen Clarke, Amanda Davis-Scott, Teddy Dorsette III, Tom Landry, Malkia Newman, Paul Palmer

Absent: Jacqueline Cuevas, Davin Hemmila, Chris Land, Vincent Pinti, Jane Shank

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

Guests: Emily Henderson, McCall Hamilton, Interpreters Laura and Lisa, Mora Wilkevicz and Christina Agle, PAIMI Advisory Council members, Laura Doty and Betty Ruoss, essay contest winners

Approval of Consent Agenda

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

Tom Landry MOVED to approve the consent agenda and Malkia Newman seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

Ernie Reynolds Essay Contest winners

Tom Landry reported we had 29 submissions for this year's essay contest. The committee enjoyed reading all the essays but had a very difficult task in choosing the top three as they were all good stories.

Tom thanked and congratulated the 3rd place winner, Betty Ruoss. Ms. Ruoss introduced herself, thanked the Board and shared she has written three books and some articles.

Tom thanked and congratulated the 2nd place winner, Laura Doty, who introduced herself, thanked the Board and shared a few things about herself.

Tom thanked and congratulated the 1st place winner, Alex Ford, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Michelle Roberts congratulated and thanked the winners for sharing their stories.

Executive Director and Staff Reports

Michelle Roberts, Executive Director, reported on staffing changes since the last meeting include three resignations, a new hire for the support staff position for the Representative Payee Team, and a new hire for the CAIR Team advocate/investigator. Sara Koroniotis is looking for a Rep Payee Specialist, Kris Keranen is looking for a new hire for the Marquette office to replace Judy Lindstrom who just retired. Also, Sarah Palacios has been promoted to a Director of Information, Referral & Data.

Michelle reminded everyone about the site review with SAMHSA who funds our PAIMI program which will be the first week of May. We will be having meetings with the board and PAC to prepare everyone for that review. The reviewers are planning to attend the May 7th board meeting and meet with just the board members after the meeting from 11:00-12:00 as agreed upon by board members.

Michelle stated there were two requests for grievance packets since our last meeting, one being PAIMI (mental illness) related and the other being TBI (brain injury) related. She further stated no grievances were submitted.

Rachel Huddleston shared the Communications Team has been busy with voting projects and Rachel Prevatt, the Voter Engagement Specialist, has been in contact with Disability Network and Detroit Disability Power to work on additional accessibility assessments for polling locations since it is an election year. She's still working on the "Know Your Rights Guide" with Promote the Vote. They will be presenting at the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks in June. The presentation will focus on everything you want to know about accessible elections.

Rachel went on to share updates to our website has kept her busy as well as our social media platforms. She continues to participate in the Michigan Legislative Disability Caucus monthly meetings and workgroups. They are also part of the Disability Justice Alliance, a new coalition that started last fall.

Sarah Palacios shared the Information, Referral and Data Team reported they had the highest number of calls this quarter since 2020. They took over 1,100 calls with the highest percent being education related and institutional rights calls being a close second. Sarah further indicated her team of two advocates took approximately 407 calls or 37% of the total calls.

Sara Koroniotis was happy to say a program assistant has been hired for the Representative Payee Team. She went on to state they have conducted 46 reviews in the first quarter. As of this meeting, her team has completed 105 representative payee reviews and are on target to complete 135 reviews for the fiscal year. Sara reminded everyone what is involved in conducting payee reviews.

Michele Brand reported on a few things the HR/Administration Team has been working on including processing new hires, performing exit interviews, open enrollment for benefits, and a huge IT changeover first quarter.

Elham Jahshan stated the Employment Team focuses mainly on vocational rehabilitation and issues with rehabilitation services. This quarter they have been very successful with an ongoing systemic issue involving the Client Assistance Program (CAP). With the help of Emily Henderson, they submitted comments about Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) changing their rules. They attended a public hearing and during the hearing, MRS accepted DRM's revisions to their rules.

Elham discussed another project they are working on involving vocational rehabilitation counselors and ensuring they are explaining the process to their clients.

Mark McWilliams referred to his first quarter written report and stated the Vaccine Team administered over 1,260 COVID vaccinations making it the busiest quarter for the team. A grant was leveraged from a group call US Aging which is a trade group for Area Agencies on Aging and home providers to administer over 840 flu shots. We also released our health equity report which is a summary of the project. He further stated we received notice of a no cost extension on our state grant which will extend the grant through the end of September.

There has been work done on drafting legislation on banning discrimination in the provision of life-saving treatment as a result of the pandemic and people not having access to ventilators and other lifesaving treatment or medical equipment. Suggestions were being sent to Senator Chang with Detroit Disability Power taking the lead on this legislation.

As a result of transportation being a major issue for people with disabilities, a new public transit landing page was created. This is an interactive page so anyone can find information about public transit anywhere in the state. Michelle Roberts

congratulated Mark and his team and emphasized there is no other state that has a transportation site like this.

Kyle Williams gave the litigation update sharing DRM is finally negotiating a settlement agreement with the State of Michigan on the Waskul case after eight years of litigation. This is about a 22.1-million-dollar commitment just in the base level relief and it could end up being considerably more than that. This will result in over 100 million dollars going directly to individuals with disabilities to obtain community-based services and supports.

Kyle also mentioned the settlement in the Court of Appeals case as a result of our client winning an administrative appeal. Our client went over two years without receiving services that CMH was ordered to provide but were not provided due to the shortage of direct care workers. The client received a favorable result and was compensated for all the time he went without services.

Simon Zagata stated the CAIR Team has been working on a project involving deaf and hard of hearing individuals in prisons. A survey was developed to assist these individuals so they can let his team know if they are not receiving accommodations and how they can file a complaint and/or appeal.

Simon shared that Senator Weber called for an audit of Hawthorn and there is going to be an audit of the entire state psychiatric hospital system. His team will be meeting with Senator Weber to ensure they are aware of issues DRM advocates see and hear about as a result of monitoring hospitals.

Kris Keranen stated the Education Team continues to work on issues involving kids being pushed out of school and have focused some of their work on kids in foster care and in child caring institutions. She discussed the Kalamazoo school system and how the Michigan Department of Education found them out of compliance again and again.

President's report

President Palmer thanked Michelle and staff for their reports.

Public comment

No public comment was made.

PAIMI Advisory Council update

The Chair and Vice Chair were not at the meeting and there was no update.

Committee reports

Audit Committee

Tom Landry stated the Audit Committee met with the auditors on January 17th and approve the audit report.

Tom Landry MOVED to receive and accept the audit report and Malkia Newman seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

Tom Landry further stated we have a recommendation from the office of Management and Budget to change auditors every nine or ten years. Due to the COVID funds, our revenue has been higher than it has historically been and will be back to normal after this year, so it is recommended by the committee to extend the current auditors for one more year.

Tom Landry MOVED to extend the auditors for one more year and Brian Calley seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

Budget & Finance Committee

Hansen Clarke reported on overages in some of the program areas but overall, as usual, Michele Brand has kept us under budget by 1%. Michele Brand referred to her narrative and the financial documents and asked for questions.

Public Policy Committee

Brian Calley mentioned legislation to improve access or require access to education for kids who are in foster care and not receiving an education due to moving from home to home. Especially kids with disabilities tend to fall through the cracks when they are removed from their homes. He also mentioned an expansion of the scope of practice for nurse practitioners and physician assistants to include them under the definition of mental health professionals. This addresses who can authorize restraint and seclusion or involuntary treatment.

Emily Henderson discussed the election of all 110 House seats and a special election in April for the two vacant seats with the House being at a 54-54 split.

