



BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of virtual meeting
December 10, 2024

Call Meeting to Order

Immediate Past President, Tom Landry, called the meeting to order at 8:32 am and it was noted there was a quorum.

Attendance

Present: Daniel Bartz, Amanda Bouwman, Brian Calley, Jacqueline Cuevas, Hansen Clarke, Amanda Davis-Scott, Teddy Dorsette III, Veronica Ibrahim, Tom Landry, Malkia Newman

Absent: Paul Palmer, 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, Karrie Jo and Carmen, Interpreters, Sharon Storch, PAIMI Advisory Council member

Application of Lois Shulman presented

Lois Shulman submitted an application which was emailed to board members, and the Nominating Committee recommends Lois Shulman be elected to the Board of Directors.

Tom Landry MOVED to elect Lois Shulman to the Board of Directors and Brian Calley seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Tom Landry asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Brian Calley MOVED to approve the consent agenda with removal of the acceptance of the PAIMI Advisory Council meeting minutes and Teddy Dorsette III seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

Executive Director and Staff Reports

Michelle Roberts, Executive Director, thanked Lois Shulman for her interest in DRM and welcomed her to the Board of Directors. She also introduced Sharon Storch who is a new PAIMI Advisory Council member.

An update on staffing changes includes Rachel Prevatt taking on the newly developed outreach and partnerships coordinator role as well as serving as the Voting Engagement Specialist. The CAIR Team had hired advocate Zaina Holcomb who started and left DRM in a short time, and then hired a gentlemen named Dee who started as an investigator-advocate.

DRM has had an offsite storage unit that holds client-related records and files dating back to 1986. Since there was not a destruction policy in place, those files cannot be destroyed or thrown out without notice being given to those clients. A plan has been devised to preserve those files electronically which will save DRM approximately \$19,000 per year.

Our annual fundraising letters are being prepared and will be mailed out before our holiday break. The Program Performance Reports (PPRs) have all been submitted except one which will be submitted this week, and we are ahead of our December 31st deadline. Michelle reminded everyone that DRM offices will be closed from December 24 through January 1st.

We have four new PAC members, three of whom have already had their orientation, and the fourth one is being scheduled. Veronica Ibrahim is the new Chair of the Council and is automatically a member of the Board of Directors, and Sharon Storch was nominated and appointed as Vice Chair of the PAC.

Michelle shared information about a case out of Oakland County involving a guardian, a parent of an adult son with developmental and intellectual disabilities, who has petitioned the court to specifically remove his right to vote. If you are under guardianship in Michigan, you have the right to vote. We are very concerned and will be paying close attention to the outcome. An amicus brief was filed by the Michigan Elder Justice Initiative (MEJI), which DRM signed on to, in an attempt to educate the judge in making a decision in this case. Discussion was held.

There are several Elder Abuse Task Force bills and packages scheduled for hearings and votes, and we are hoping to see movement yet this year.

Kyle Williams is heading to Detroit tomorrow, December 11, 2024, to appear in court on behalf of the plaintiffs in the Waskul litigation. The Waskul litigation started in 2016, and the settlement hearing is tomorrow, and we will keep everyone apprised of the outcome.

Another case we recently settled is what we refer to as the CB2 case. It is an extension of the CB1 case involving a young man who didn't receive services for over two years. We settled that case for six figures to compensate him for damages caused from not receiving necessary services. Shortly after that case was settled, he stopped receiving services. We filed a temporary restraining order, went back to court and once again settled the case.

Kyle is hoping to have a substantial update on the Children's class action at the next board meeting as they are currently in negotiations.

Rachel Huddleston shared they have been dealing with guardianship issues throughout fiscal year 2024. Rachel Prevatt has been promoting voting rights including posters created to promote the voter assist terminal (VAT) which provided a great resource for clerks.

Attorneys Mitch & Erin, on our Education Team, sat on the 866 Our Vote Election Protection hotline that ran on election day. They assisted many individuals who faced issues regarding voting. The Bureau of Elections has asked DRM to participate in a stakeholder group in 2025 to address issues with the VAT machines.

The Disability Justice Alliance hired a consultant out of Ann Arbor, and we are hoping to launch the initiative in February. Rachel Prevatt serves as the coordinator on that coalition.

DD Council reached out to us regarding their annual Disability Pride month in July and asked DRM to partner with them. The event will be held at Jackson Stadium, the ballpark in Lansing, on July 26 which will end the month's celebration. Further details will be provided as they become known and will be posted on our website.

The 50th anniversary of the Protection and Advocacy's is in 2025, and Rachel will be busy planning and preparing for highlighting the great work of the whole Network as well as looking for ways to continue promoting our work.

Mark McWilliams gave his last report to the board before retiring from DRM. He reported in fiscal year 2024 we administered 1,845 COVID shots and 1,099 flu shots. These shots were given to individuals who are hard to reach mainly due to

transportation issues. We did have some funds leftover from our state grant and got some clinics scheduled in the first quarter of this year and provided 355 COVID and 436 flu vaccinations. We still have a little bit of money left and have until the end of June 2025 to spend it. We also received a no cost extension from the USAging grant and an additional \$8,000 to do flu shots. That project is wrapping up by the end of January. We are hoping to continue with our transportation landing site which has gained some national interest.

Mark thanked board members for their support and serving our clients. Board members thanked Mark for all his years of service and congratulated him on his well-deserved retirement.

Sara Koroniotis shared her team had a busy quarter and conducted 58 representative payee reviews which impacted a total of 2,591 beneficiaries. As a result of their reviews, they developed 50 corrective action plans which included record keeping deficiencies, bank account corrections, and annual accounting errors submitted to Social Security. They made 53 referrals, 40 of which were made to DRM's Information & Referral department.

Simon Zagata shared an update on the investigation into not following proper involuntary treatment processes at Pontiac General, Harbor Oaks and Stonecrest. We got news the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) was pulling certificates from Pontiac General under Medicaid and Medicare and now Pontiac General is laying off 150 employees. After November 27, the hospital would not receive payment for services from Medicare or Medicaid. This was the result of licensing investigations and Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services investigations finding numerous violations of patient rights, safety, and at least one death. We will continue to monitor Pontiac General as they have 30 days after November 27 where they will receive payment for those admitted prior to that date. We have concerns when employees learn of the layoffs and how they may react. We will also be monitoring what transition plans look like for patients to ensure they continue getting necessary services.

Simon updated members on the investigation of delayed discharge from state psychiatric hospitals. The Department of Justice is opening an investigation into Michigan's system, and we will be in communication with them as issues arise.

The documentary film project will be under way shortly as we met with a professor from MSU and her team, and they want to film it for us. We will be doing interviews with individuals regarding their psychiatric hospital stays, community-based services and possible failures that led to hospital stays. The goal is to reduce the stigma of people receiving mental health treatment in psychiatric hospitals and to show the importance of proper community-based treatment to avoid unnecessary hospitalization.

Sarah Palacios stated while she usually reports on how many calls the Information, Referral and Data Team take each quarter, she wanted to take this opportunity to boast about I&R advocates. They take a tremendous number of calls and while some of those calls are short and resolved immediately, many others involve serious issues. The big litigation cases Kyle talks about started with a call or an email to the I&R department. Sarah also mentioned the fact that her team must stay up to date on changes in policies, laws, and ways of doing things that affect advice advocates provide.

Elham Jahshan shared highlights of the work the Employment Team has been doing including working with Michigan Rehabilitation Services or The Bureau of Blind Services on systemic issues to ensure services are being received. They have been meeting and working with agencies to ensure their manual aligns with the Rehabilitation Act and Rules. They have also been working with people with severe disabilities to ensure individuals receive necessary services through support or customized employment so they can accomplish their employment outcomes. The Employment Team also works with social security work incentive to ensure individuals can be successful at being self-sufficient and not lose their medical insurance. They see a lot of overpayment cases and assist with addressing the issue and making payment arrangements.

Kris Keranen reported they are continuing with litigation against the Department of Education for their failures to ensure special education law (IDEA) is enforced throughout the state. Every student is entitled to a free and appropriate public education by virtue of being eligible for an IEP. The department is responsible for making sure noncompliance is identified and corrected as soon as possible but in no case more than a year after being identified. We assist parents in filing complaints so the department should have a record of where the districts are falling short.

The Education Team continues to hear about push out issues and kids being disinvited to school. A new one is the school says they didn't suspend them, they put them on virtual or sent them home with a parent because they weren't ready to learn. School threats also continue, and kids are being put on code of conduct. We are keeping an eye on legislation regarding school safety as well.

Kris also mentioned it being difficult to assist kids in foster care who move around a lot, so they are doing some outreach to foster care workers in hopes of reaching more kids to ensure they continue to get an education.

President's report

Tom Landry thanked DRM staff, on behalf of the board, for all the work they do.

Public comment

A public comment was received by fax at DRM and emailed to board members prior to the meeting. No one from the public attended the meeting.

PAIMI Advisory Council update

Chair Ibrahim thanked DRM staff for all their work. She mentioned the newly appointed members and feels they will be an excellent addition to the council.

Committee reports

Budget & Finance Committee

Hansen Clarke thanked Michele Brand for continuing to do an excellent job at handling the finances for DRM. We are under budget by over 2%.

Michele Brand reported on the IT department stating she added Proof Point which adds a monthly expense, but it will be added on top of our Cisco cybersecurity which will add security and hopefully block a lot of the spam emails.

Michele reported a little over \$41,000 in interest was collected on investments in CDs, around \$36,000 in fundraising which included around \$20,000 from the Rockin 4 Rehab event and around \$16,000 from donations.

We are under budget overall. The PAIR grant was over budget however we were able to use carryover to cover it which was mostly due to litigation. The auditors are reviewing the books, and the Audit Committee will meet in January for a presentation before it goes to the full board for approval.

Tom Landry MOVED to receive the budget and finance report, and Malkia Newman seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

Public Policy Committee

Brian Calley mentioned a couple guardianship bills that DRM supports and will continue to watch them. He added that we need to continue to educate people on things they have never thought about and help them understand why they are so important.

Emily began with Michigan being the only legislature nationwide to flip majority. House Republicans will take majority by six seats starting in 2025. With a

Republican-led House, a Democratic Senate and a Democratic Governor we are hoping a lot of good policy can get done between the three groups. There are around 200 bills with five session days left in the year and a lot of those must make it through the House in some capacity. We are not expecting to see most of those bills move with only five days remaining in the year, so they will have to be reintroduced in the new year.

Old Business

Tom Landry reminded board members to complete their annual forms and get them to Theresa as soon as possible. These forms are due in September and are a requirement of our federal funders.

Tom discussed the board self-evaluations and the executive director evaluation and reported that only six board members completed the documents. Board members need to be more accountable by showing up and participating.

New Business

Amendment to Bylaws – Tom Landry stated we have had board meetings where we have not had a quorum and therefore it is recommended that we change Section 4.2 in the Bylaws to a minimum number of members from twelve (12) to nine (9).

Tom Landry MOVED to approve the change to the Bylaws and Hansen Clarke seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

Ernie Reynolds essay contest committee selection. Tom Landry, Amanda Bouwman and Malkia Newman volunteered to serve on this year's committee.

Executive Session

Landry adjourned the meeting at 10:48 am to move into executive session.

Adjourn

Minutes prepared by:



Theresa Diebolt, Executive Assistant