



Disability Rights

Michigan

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Corrected minutes of virtual meeting February 25, 2025

Call Meeting to Order

Immediate Past President, Tom Landry, called the meeting to order at 8:35 am and it was noted there was a quorum.

Attendance

Present: Amanda Bouwman, Brian Calley, Jacqueline Cuevas, Hansen Clarke, Dom Evans, Veronica Ibrahim, Tom Landry, Trina Tocco

Absent: Daniel Bartz, Amanda Davis-Scott, Teddy Dorsette III, Malkia Newman, Vincent Pinti, Jane Shank

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

Guests: Emily Henderson, McCall Hamilton, Katie Curnow, Sue Franklin, Mora Wilkevicz, PAIMI Advisory Council members

Applications for new board members

Applications were submitted by Dom Evans and Trina Tocco and upon review and recommendation from the Development/Nominating Committee, they were emailed to board members prior to this meeting.

Tom Landry MOVED to elect Dom Evans and Trina Tocco to the DRM Board of Directors and Hansen Clarke 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.

Hansen Clarke MOVED to approve the consent agenda and Lois Shulman seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

Ernie Reynolds Essay Contest winners

Tom Landry reported we had 16 stories submitted for this year's essay contest and he considers them all winners. The committee enjoyed reading the essays and had a difficult task in choosing the top three.

The top three winners, April Thurston, Breana Demaray, and Amber Manitowabi, were invited to the board meeting, however only the 2nd place winner was able to join the meeting. Tom thanked and congratulated Breana Demaray, who shared a few things about herself and thanked the Board for choosing her story to win. Each of the three winners were presented with a certificate and a check from DRM.

Executive Director and Staff Reports

Michelle Roberts, Executive Director, congratulated Trina Tocco and Dom Evans DRM and welcomed them to the Board of Directors.

Since Mark McWilliams retired the end of January, Sarah Palacios is now serving as the Director of Advocacy and Rachel Huddleston is now overseeing the supervision and reporting responsibilities of the vaccination advocacy grant which will end next quarter. Additional staff changes include the Rep Payee Team hiring a program assistant, Andrea Allen, who will start once suitability and clearance are successful.

The National Spring CEO and Legal Director meeting will be held the first week of April which will include Hill visits with the Michigan delegation. Kyle Williams will be attending this year, and he will be presenting the new Legal Director's Orientation and Training. Also, NDRN's annual virtual conference will be held June 2-5 which will be open to all board members, PAC members, and DRM staff. We will have three staff presenting at the conference this year including Rachel Huddleston, Simon Zagata, and Jen Baker, CAIR Team Advocate.

Michelle shared our annual fundraising letter, which was sent out in December, has resulted in donations over \$2,700 as of today.

Michelle gave an update on the case involving a guardian who filed a petition to remove her son's right to vote stating the judge issued an order denying the

guardian's request. The Attorney General's office was involved as well as our advocacy partners, and we were all pleased with the judge's decision.

Michelle reported we had five grievances filed since the December meeting, one from our Client Assistance Program (CAP), three from our individual rights (PAIR) program, and one from our mental illness (PAIMI) program. Three of those grievances were appealed to the board level and have all been responded to and closed.

As of right now, the P&A programs are on the list for federal review and our federal officers for each of our federal programs have been asked to submit and answer a select number of questions to submit to the administration. Additionally, any work related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as well as gender identity questions are currently being reviewed and will be modified accordingly. Michelle has been working to identify action plans as to how to respond to issues that may arise.

Rachel Huddleston reported on the Vaccine Team with Kristen Milefchik as the remaining advocate, and there were 355 COVID vaccines administered in the first quarter as well as 436 flu shots at 16 events. She gave a few updates on our transportation map, which is on our website, and Kristen will be doing a couple presentations showing effects and data.

An update on voting involves the Michigan Secretary of State's office reaching out to us regarding the Dominion Voter Assist Terminal (VAT) and to require proof of citizenship for people to vote. They are working with Dave Foster at MDOS on some issues.

Sara Koroniotis shared her team conducted 50 payee reviews last quarter which impacted a total of 1,957 beneficiaries. She submitted the semiannual report and stated they made 99 referrals during that reporting period, the majority of which went to our Information & Referral Team. Sara gave some examples of what some of those referrals entailed.

Elham Jahshan shared the Employment Team has been working with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and The Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) to ensure they are following federal regulations. They are working on some strategies to improve vocational rehab services and are focusing on making sure MRS follows the Rehab Act by attending legal hearings for issues with MRS and currently have three pending hearings. One of the issues is MRS does not share the hearing decision with Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services (MCRS) as they are required to do.

Sarah Palacios stated the Information, Referral and Data Team responded to over 1,200 calls in the first quarter. In October, Disability Network Capital Area came in and did a training for staff on Freedom to Work.

Kyle Williams was happy to report they appeared in federal court on December 11, 2024, for an approval hearing in the Waskul settlement, which was approved by Judge Parker. The Order was issued and everything we sought was granted. The Waskul litigation started in 2016, it was in the 6th Circuit Court twice and it has been a very time consuming and expensive litigation. We filed a petition for attorney fees and are seeking to get reimbursed for all the time spent on this case. We are now in the process of implementing the components of that settlement.

The Litigation Team has also been very busy working on another large lawsuit, the Children's Class Action, which was filed in 2018. The settlement process is similar to the Waskul settlement process in that it has to be approved by the Judge. Kyle expects the settlement to be approved by the end of the year.

Kyle shared some of the other cases the team is working on, including an investigation against Network 180, which is the Community Mental Health (CMH) that serves Kent County.

Simon Zagata was pleased to share the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced in November they were opening an investigation into the delayed discharges from state psychiatric hospitals in Michigan and a lack of availability of community-based services. The DOJ set up a separate line, so clients can now call the DOJ directly to report their stories.

Simon shared an update on the investigation into Pontiac General, Harbor Oaks and Stonecrest stating the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) has pulled their contract agreement with Pontiac General so they can no longer get reimbursed through Medicaid or Medicare for providing services. Pontiac General is appealing it. They recently monitored at Pontiac General where there were only four patients, and renovations were being made. The team is collecting data to create a report on all psychiatrists who work there and those contracted with the local CMH.

An update on the prison work includes a compilation of data from surveys they have received regarding segregation and seclusion. Over 80% of the individuals have severe mental illness when MDOC has stated they do not put individuals in segregation and seclusion with mental illness. They will be sharing results once the report is completed.

Another case the CAIR Team is working on is a case at Women's Huron Valley where there are not enough wheelchair pushers. They have received calls stating

individuals are missing meals as well as other activities because they do not get assistance with their wheelchair.

Kris Keranen discussed the changes to the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights and said education calls have significantly dropped which is very unusual for this time of year. They had a meeting with NDRN to discuss issues with the Office of Civil Rights and what to do with open cases that are in the middle of being investigated.

President's report

Brian Calley thanked DRM staff and had nothing to report.

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 gave a brief explanation on what transpired at the last meeting.

Committee reports

Audit Committee

Michele Brand apologized and explained the reason for the delay in getting the audit report to board members was due to her receiving it that morning and agreed to board members having additional time to review the report and vote by email if necessary.

Tom Landry pointed out the opinion is unmodified on both federal funds and overall audit which is the highest you can get. He also stated the auditors were very complimentary of both Michele and Michelle in terms of accuracy of information, the ease of working with the organization and the overall policies enacted to ensure clean audits.

It is a practice of DRM to change audit firms every ten years, and last year we extended that by a year. Landry asked if anyone has recommendations for an audit firm, please forward them to Michele Brand.

Tom Landry MOVED to receive and accept the audit report and Brian Calley seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: Bouwman, Calley, Cuevas, Evans, Ibrahim, Landry, Tocco

NAYS: Clarke

Motion carried.

Hansen Clarke asked if the audit report received this morning was the exact report accepted by the Audit Committee. Hansen had reservations about the substance of the report and the scope of the audit since accounting standards' definition of materiality is much different than the legal standard. Hansen asked whether there is a way to get an assessment of DRM's legal compliance since the audit scope doesn't include this, and wondered whether a different firm might offer or incorporate this in the scope of services under our next contract.

Budget & Finance Committee

Hansen Clarke stated we are in good shape and are slightly over budget by less than 1% in the first quarter. He commended Michele Brand on being diligent with the feds, especially the Department of Human Services on getting a new indirect cost allocation rate. Michele Brand explained the few items over being insurance and maintenance and computer services as payments are made upfront. Also, a few grants were slightly over being PAIMI, PAIR and CAP which will continue to be monitored.

Hansen Clarke MOVED to receive the budget and finance report, and Tom Landry seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

Public Policy Committee

Emily discussed the House and Senate majorities, and stated the Governor recently gave her presentation on the budget, which will result in a lot of negotiations in the legislature. She discussed some of the Governor's recommendations. Policy initiatives that DRM has been working on are in the works, but it has been a slow start to the year.

Brian Calley brought up restraint and seclusion and the close call of allowing nurse practitioners and physician assistants to authorize non-emergency restraint and seclusion. He has been working with leadership at ACLU in an attempt to get them to partner with us on restraint and seclusion issues along with Autism Alliance.

Old Business

Tom Landry mentioned board members volunteering to serve on committees and discussed recruitment of new members.

New Business

None.

Executive Session

Brian Calley MOVED to move into executive session at 10:55 am and Tom Landry seconded.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.

Minutes prepared by:



Theresa Diebolt, Executive Assistant



Minutes approved by:

Daniel Bartz, Secretary