



Board Meeting Minutes

HYBRID MEETING ON ZOOM / AT UNITARIAN CHURCH

MARCH, 13 2024

IN ATTENDANCE IN-PERSON: TOM VAN METER, DOUGLAS LAPOINT

IN ATTENDANCE REMOTELY: MICHELLE JOHN, KIRSTEN MURPHY, JESSE SUTER, AMEY DETTMER RACHEL SEELIG (DLP), JIM PONTBRIAND, MARSHA BANCROFT, CHARLEA BAKER, DANIEL BURCHARD

DRVT STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: LINDSEY OWEN, NICOLE CHICOINE, LAURA CUSHMAN

GUEST SPEAKER: LATOYA BLIZZARD (NDRN)

QUORUM PRESENT? YES

CALL TO ORDER - TOM VAN METER 10:06 AM

Introductions

No Adjustments to the agenda 10:13 am.

Motion to approve 12/13/2023 board meeting minutes. Motion made by Doug, Marsha seconds 10:14 am. Minutes approved.

BOARD UPDATES - TOM VAN METER 10:15 AM

- Lindsey shared an update that she will be going to the White House on Thursday to attend the Communities in Action event with Jesse Suter.
- Lindsey wants to add – anything for Lindsey to share with the White House please put it in writing or share it now and it will be added to the minutes.

PRESENTATION: BOARD BASICS: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES AS A BOARD MEMBER PRESENTED BY LATOYA BLIZZARD

- What does success look like?
- Discussed strategic planning and including the board in this process.
- *NDRN Conference in June – session about strategic planning for the board. June 3-6th in Washington DC. Also, another session about Board and PAC members to discuss that partnership.
- LaToya suggests looking up what board webinars in the State, National Council for Nonprofits, NDRN, etc. to share with other board members.
- LaToya asks how do you feel as a board?
 - Tom and Doug, Kirsten adds board diversity goals and different perspectives and agrees with being more involved in the strategic planning.
 - Jim has seen many of these issues throughout the years of serving on the board, feels very comfortable with this particular board, and agrees that more interaction with the staff would be helpful.

- Lindsey adds – Rachel puts together a great report for the contracted money to DLP – Lindsey will be working on creating DRVT services reports per quarter to provide to the board.
 - Rachel also adds that the reports help with PPRs and also they are trying to make them a bit shorter.
- Doug does more administrative work in this board member position, vs having more staff interaction. He really enjoys reading the DLP reports for the reason of seeing these more individualized services (casework).
- Discussed priority setting process and listening sessions and doing more outreach in community settings this year. Multi-year plans are not unreasonable, having a plan – but think about the public input piece ongoing – suggested an email set up so that any input could be provided online at any time. Rachel discussed PADD work and doing more of a 5-year robust review, much of the systemic work is longer.
- Latoya suggested that the Executive Committee meet more regularly.

LUNCH BREAK 11:40AM – 12:10 PM

CONTINUED PRESENTATION - 12:12 PM

- Discussed diversity of the board and what that looks like for Vermont.
- Discussed recruitment and helping to ensure there are members to take your spot if you are ready to step down from the board.
- Thinking about recruitment – inviting people to attend committee meetings as guests to see if you want to extend an offer for them to join the board.
- Discussed committee purposes – gathering the information for complex topics and strategic goals and educating the full board. Utilizing Action Items.
- Creating a pitch or story to share in public with your community and talk to people. Many people don't know Disability Rights Vermont exists, spread the word and be an ambassador.
- Laura asks – if we are providing testimony on a bill we have a strong opinion about – should we be asking the board to reach out to legislators etc.
 - Yes, if there is something we are watching closely, definitely send it out to the board and let them know here's what's happening, here is our stance on it. Board members are their own people, they may or may not agree, but you can inform them and have them provide an ask of our legislature.
- Anastasia does lobbying and tracks bills in the legislature.
- Charlea mentions it would be helpful to have a clear picture of ways she can guide people in the community.
- Way to donate – suggests making a once pager with bulleted points on specific causes to donate to. Need to do more proactive outreach with stakeholders. Would love to brainstorm ways to increase unrestricted funds.

- The first step is awareness and getting out in the community.
- “Help us do more”, uses causes based on the work we do that people can support.
- Resource development – not just fundraising. People may not always be able to give money but maybe their company can help in some other way, printing or services, etc. What are other things you can then ask for?
- Jim – do you have instructions for Lindsey on how to apply for federal campaigning funds that are available nationwide? Every year there is a fund drive – interview and make recommendations. Wonders if P&A systems are not on that list.
 - Check with the state of Vermont to see what they have for state employees – DRVT may be able to get on that list. LaToya will check on the federal level to see if it would be possible to get on that list.
 - Suggested checking with restaurants – some do donation nights.
 - Rachel asks about 5k walks/run/roll events – are these fruitful? Most partner with other organizations/corporations, partnering with someone who has the resources. Lake Monsters, Vermont Adaptive Sport. UVM. Many corporations have a “fundraising arm” so they want to do these types of events. Joked about the “Flannel Gala”.
 - Set up and logistics take time – and we would need the help of the board. Committing to the event yearly – maybe this year is not as fruitful but the more awareness you bring the event could get bigger.
 - LaToya cautions – you have to be mindful of the restrictions for some donations – you may seek out money but it may be that they are asking for something particular and question if it will pull you away from the mission or if it is helpful.

DLP REPORT - RACHEL SEELIG - 1:16 PM

- Staffing – continue to have 8 which represent 5.9 Full Time Employees. Reassigned work to make sure Workforce Funds are being spent. Share staff with other projects within Vermont Legal Aid. Rachel feels it has been helpful for clients, they get multiple angles and perspectives and get more services.
- Cases – so far this FY opened an additional 182 cases – 132 are funded by DRVT funding sources. So high is because DLP has had 87 PADD intake this year – an increase each year. Financial Exploitation, 59 education cases, 16 employment cases, 9 guardianship, 31 health cases (includes public health workforce)
- No formal grievances – one person considered, that they felt the process took too long and they were not aggressive enough. Some things could have been done differently, which they shared with the advocate. Wasn't a grievance.
- Systems – worked closely with LTO to provide comments on assisted living regulations – discriminatory admissions and improper discharges. No Home and Community-based services are available to people. Not federally regulated – so it makes it more important for DLP to have a say.

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT – TOM VAN METER - 1:05 PM

- Education – 1/3 of local budgets were rejected by voters due to major changes to the funding formula. We don't want kids receiving services to be scapegoated. Increase of kids out of school due to a lack of placement. Tutorial programs for entire school years – many individual cases are being taken on. Just got a favorable recommendation from HRC recommendation on a case they had last week. Will meet later this month to see if they will approve reasonable grounds. Experiences included an inaccessible fire alarm system during a fire drill. Refusal to get an accessible system.
- Developmental Services Clients who are in a position who need their parent paid to be their provider. Also have clients who are super opposed to their parents being their paid provider.
 - Conflict-Free Case Management – Vermont is not in compliance with HCBS – a solution that was proposed is not helpful. DLP is worried that there will be too many entities for one person for the current workforce shortage and from the client's perspective.
 - Kirsten – also concerned about losing free Rep Payee services for people – has been working with the state to encourage the state to offer rep payee services and charge less on a scale.
 - Settings Rule complaints - Reviewed the state's model agreement for a rental agreement.
- FMAP funding from the state to get an ombudsman project up and running - BDAP monitoring investigation type work.
- Successful transitions for folks coming out of guardianships.
- Benefits – case pending unemployment compensation standard for being “able and available” – only part-time and are being told they are not eligible.
- Supported the designated agencies' request for a 6.5 increase in their rates.
- Public Health Workforce work – continuing to see clients with the highest level of need with the least amount of support – wondering if they can shift the strategy to advocate for triaging for these folks. People who have services may see a shift in their services to allow others to receive services. Would that diverge from the mission?
 - Kirsten – doesn't feel there is a strategy in the field for agencies – it is a mess.
 - Rachel – the reason being folks who are “easier to work with” have been more successful receiving assistance. Experienced enough or trained enough to provide this type of assistance.
 - Doug wonders if there are other ways – wonders if there is a mentorship opportunity or something to that effect. Companionship, aging population who are retired.
 - Independent contractors (like DRVT does with VCSP) from state agencies could commit to providing services or mentorship for people with fewer needs.

BOARD BYLAWS AND TERM LIMITS - 1:45 PM

- Separated them – Bylaws are one document and Policies and Procedures manual. In doing that work, looking at the code of federal regulations. PAIMI requires the board to have 4-year term limits – but didn't give us a number but we chose 3 years. Keep 3 consecutive terms. Will update the term sheet
- LaToya – PAIMI review – what they are going to ask is about work with the PAC – is the PAC involved with the priority setting and that the PAC is meeting separately but connected to the board. Documentation, etc. particularly around priority setting.

PUBLIC COMMENT - 1:55 PM

- Lindsey and Rachel met with Marj Berthold – Marj has had more physical health issues in the last couple of years, she has had issues falling. Started to think about moving to assisted living and asked for her options and recommendations. Wanted Rachel and Lindsey to mention her story with the Vermont Health System. She also won't be going to the NARPA conference. Wanted to share her frustrations about having to retell her story each time she goes to the hospital if it is with unknown service providers.

OTHER BUSINESS - 1:58 PM

- Housing – people with disabilities – hotel program – what do we know about it and what is their current situation for getting services?
- The Poverty Law Project has taken the lead on this project. The Budget Adjustment Act passed – a new maximum nightly rate – many noticed they were going to get kicked out but the state negotiated rates. Did not see a “mass exodus”. There is still currently no plan to develop enough units of affordable accessible housing. The current recommendation is 30 million dollars above what the Governor recommended to keep folks still in hotels because there is still no plan.
- Kirsten – has been getting texts all morning at the statehouse – press conference call – about 500 people will be exiting the hotels on Monday, but have been given until Friday to get a doctor's note. DD Council has been working hard on developing a pipeline for funding that will stand up other supportive housing models to rely less on shared living. Did get promising news last week – a requirement that some portion of VT housing authority funding will go towards that. Have been trying to get a block of money to fund alternative supportive housing models, roughly 10 million dollars is needed. Program the state runs that allows homeowners/landowners to renovate spaces and if they use that loan to help certain situations – they have added language to expand to HCBS recipients.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Doug, seconded by Dan.

MEETING ADJOURNED - 2:06 PM