HAMILTON COUNTY DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES

Our Mission: Promote and support opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to live, work, learn and fully participate in their communities

VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING
(per provisions within House Bill 197 enacted 03/27/2020)

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Nestor Melnyk, President
Dr. Andy Magenheim, Vice President
Mr. Stephen J. Jones, Secretary
Ms. Rene Eisele
Ms. Deana Taylor

ABSENT: Dr. Tasha Faruqui
Mr. Alan Abes

Mr. Melnyk called the April 14, 2020 meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

Mr. Melnyk asked for approval of the minutes of the March 10, 2020 meeting.
Dr. Magenheim moved approval of the minutes of the March 10, 2020 Board meeting as presented. Ms. Taylor seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

HEARING THE PUBLIC – By email

None

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – Reported by Ms. Pavey

A. HCDDS efforts regarding the pandemic: The way we do business has drastically changed with the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. We have found numerous ways to adapt to our new reality and provide the necessary services to the people we serve. Listed below are a few things we are doing:

- Numerous conference calls with Hamilton County Commissioners, County Administrator, County EMA, County Public Health department, DODD and Director Jeff Davis’ strike call with state agencies, OACB Bridget Gargan, Region 3 Superintendents, etc.

- School closed on March 6, 2020 – teachers and therapists working with students remotely, keeping a log of every family contact they make during the shutdown. Staff delivering food to families. Pasta dinners have been canceled and graduation has been postponed.
- Extra sanitization in all of the buildings in March because of possible exposure to COVID-19. Surfaces were wiped down and sprayed.

- All but a couple dozen staff already used laptops, so our IT department quickly put together laptops and scanners and some printers for the rest of our support staff to work remotely. The IT Help desk is open all day to assist staff working remotely. We also had to increase the number of licenses in order to accommodate all.

- IT Remote Access: During this crisis, Nick Pearson and Brian Knight noticed a potential threat to our ability to connect to the network. Our current VPN device is a single point of failure. Should it fail, our entire organization would no longer be able to connect to internal systems. Unfortunately, the device and licenses we purchased in its current configuration will not allow us to create a redundant system. If we were to attempt to do so, we would lose the $10,000 purchase we made to increase the logon licenses. After talking with the manufacturer, we discovered another solution. We will purchase a virtual VPN device and insert it into the DMZ. The appliance comes at a much lower cost, as it is subscription based. We can have it in place for the duration of the current crisis and move people over to it should the current hardware fail. In a year, we can opt out of renewing the subscription. We can renew the subscription should a similar problem ever occur again.

- The quality team developed the HCDDS Provider Support during COVID-19 document (a copy in your packet), which outlines how we are helping providers support those they serve. There is also a document of our nurses’ consultation with families and providers during this time.

- With the current COVID-19 situation, our staff are all working remotely and people are very busy. We are working with providers to revise authorizations to ensure individuals get the services they need during this time and that providers receive timely payment for services provided. We have received more than 800 revision requests in the past two weeks. We expect this volume to continue until the situation is over. We have expedited processes in place to make this as easy as possible for our providers, SSAs and funding specialists.

- SSAs are reaching out to individuals and families on a regular basis to check on them. We are putting a formalized schedule in place to ensure that our contacts are consistent and documented.

- To address the needs of individuals and families served who are in need of emergency food, we purchased Kroger gift cards. We have a review process in place to ensure that only essentials are purchased. We have divided the county into four geographic regions and a team of SSAs is available to get the emergency food orders and deliver them to the doors/porches of the people in need. The response to these efforts has been very positive.

- Dawn Freudenberg and her team, Jennie Flowers (MUI), and Jen Meadows have been on calls at least twice per week with our providers. This contact has been very beneficial for them and for us. We have a good sense for how things are going for them and they know we are here to support them. Our providers have told us that they appreciate all that we are doing. We are lucky to have a dedicated provider community; this crisis has shown us how dedicated they are to the people they serve.
• Early Intervention: Everyone is working remotely and it seems to be working okay. Staff is using the technology to conduct service planning assessments with completing the routine-based interventions and IFSP information, virtual home visits, and reaching out to families to address their concerns and priorities. We are conducting trans-disciplinary meetings through ZOOM or SKYPE, which has worked so far and we will continue this practice for some time to come.

• All scheduled meetings for the SW Ohio Children's Services Association, EI committee and EI regional representatives have converted to ZOOM meetings this month.

• The COVID-19 crisis has caused many individuals to be laid off. Our benefit representatives are working with people to file for unemployment.

• Behavior support specialists are calling and consulting with individuals and providers/families in a variety of methods to support people during this time.

• Eligibility specialists developed tools to assist with administering C/OEDI evaluations remotely. These include digital clocks and coin sheets that would allow them to assess an individual’s ability to tell time and count money.

• Customer guides rotate going to the office twice per week to obtain mail (typically medical records and intake documents). This will help eliminate any potential gaps in services for those who do not have access to email.

• Waiting list specialists continue to complete waiting list assessments remotely, as well as new referrals, emergencies and re-assessments.

• We have been communicating non-stop will all of our staff and stakeholders about our agency’s response to COVID-19. Publicly, we share updates both in English and Spanish using our website, our staff, email, and social media. We update providers through regular emails and weekly video provider forums. We have also set up a dedicated section on our website’s Provider Resources page to support providers during this time.

• Ryan Braun was interviewed by WCPO to discuss the governor’s order closing adult day centers. The interview aired on Saturday, March 21, and provided an opportunity to discuss our proactive work in responding to COVID-19.

• The A-LIFE team started a “Friendly Call” phone line which any family and persons with DD we support to call Monday – Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. This is a non-emergency line for any child (permitted by parent), adult, or family member that is simply needing a friendly voice, wanting to be cheered up, looking for ideas about activities, or similar needs.

• All A-LIFE team members are also reaching out to people with DD referred to us or whom we know via frequent contact, etc.

• Community navigators are continuing to keep outreach appointments via phone and video sessions whereby they do their usual discovery work (of the person, their gifts, interests, and communities). The navigators share ideas about what to do while staying at home, including visual tours of museums, activities, etc. They continue to offer personalized lists of inclusive opportunities for fun and valuable connections as soon as the “stay at home” rule is lifted and as is advisable.
• Advocates are now conducting daily research and documentation of the current experiences (good and concerning) of people with disabilities and their families as relates to the COVID-19 era. From that work, advocates will create weekly reports for trend gathering and response.

• MUI has been working to secure personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to be able to support providers and individuals affected by this pandemic.

• We are participating in meetings twice per week with various members of the Gold Standard Group to share what is occurring at the various sites/locations, share ideas, resources, etc.

• We participated in a Strike Call with ODH, Medicaid, DODD, EMA, and various other entities regarding a particular provider and positive COVID-19 results.

• We are working with the local EMA to identify needs, secure resources, etc.

• As of 04/06/2020, COVID-19 data that we know regarding people we serve as follows:
  20 tests completed:
  7 positive COVID-19 results
  9 pending results
  3 negative COVID-19 results
  Unfortunately, there has been one death reported at this time.

B. Waiting List Update –
   a. 11 emergency referral assessments
   b. 17 immediate needs
   c. The transitional waiting list has been completed ahead of schedule!

C. Housing Project:
   We have secured the Bramble property (see video presentation in the board packet) and we have updated the Commissioners and the Madisonville Council about it.

D. Future Events:
   Uncertain when event schedules will resume.

E. Board in-service: There will be no in-service this month.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

FINANCIAL REPORT – Reported by Mr. Ratterman

Mr. Ratterman reviewed the financial report for March 2020.

Approval was requested for actual operating expenses of $2,817,334 for the month of March 2020 with cumulative totals amounting to $30,625,957 as confirmed by the Hamilton County Cash Disbursement Journal.
Mr. Jones moved that the Board approve the actual operating expenses for the month of March 2020. Ms. Taylor seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Approval was requested for estimated operating expenses of $14,099,195 for the month of May 2020, subject to final approval by the Board upon confirmation by the Hamilton County Cash Disbursement Journal.

Mr. Jones moved that the Board approve the tentative operating expenses for the month of May 2020. Ms. Taylor seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Bobbie B. Fairfax School Graduation has been postponed until further notice so this will remain an unfinished item until we know more. Margaret Rost School does not have any students graduating this year.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Ms. Pavey requested approval to enter into multi-year contracts with the following staff:

   Susan Peters, Service and Support Supervisor

   Dave Buchanan, Contract Manager

   Kevin Maue, Facilities Manager
   2-year contract: 5/15/20-5/14/22

   Mr. Jones moved approval of the request to enter into the multi-year contracts as presented. Ms. Taylor seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements

   None

INSERVICE

   None

ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Melnyk announced that the Board has no further public business and at 5:26 p.m. made a motion to adjourn into Executive Session per Section 121.22 (G) (4) Preparing for, or conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment.
Mr. Jones seconded and so moved that the Board move into Executive Session per Section 121.22 (G) (4). A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

At 5:51 p.m., Mr. Melnyk made a motion to end the Executive Session and return to the public record.

Dr. Magenheim seconded and so moved that the Board end the Executive Session and go back on the public record. Ms. Pavey did a roll call vote and the motion passed unanimously.

At 5:52 p.m., the Board went back on the public record.

Finding no further business, Mr. Melnyk asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting and Dr. Magenheim so moved. Mr. Melnyk declared the meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Mr. Nestor Melnyk
President

[Signature]

Mr. Stephen J. Jones
Secretary