HAMPTON 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 404 enacted 11/22/2020)

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Nestor Melnyk, President
Dr. Andy Magenheim, Vice President
Mr. Stephen J. Jones, Secretary
Mr. Alan Abes
Dr. Tasha Faruqui
Ms. Deana Taylor

ABSENT: Ms. Rene Eisele

Dr. Magenheim called the June 8, 2021 meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

Dr. Magenheim asked for approval of the minutes of the May 11, 2021 meeting. **Mr. Jones moved approval of the minutes of the May 11, 2021 Board meeting as presented. Mr. Abes seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.**

HEARING THE PUBLIC – By Email
None

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

A. Graduations and Alice’s House Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Ms. Snyder thanked everyone who worked hard to make the school graduations such a great success. She also thanked everyone who worked on the Alice’s House ribbon cutting ceremony. The event went very smoothly. It received great media coverage that we will share once it has all been posted.

B. Welcome Ashley Jackson

Ms. Snyder introduced Ashley Jackson. Ashley is the agency’s new assistant budget director. She previously worked at Northern Kentucky University and at the Family Nurturing Center.
C. COVID Data

This may be the last time that we share COVID data updates.

D. HCDDS Return to In-Person Services and Activities

As we continue to see progress in reducing COVID-19 cases and as health orders are being lifted, our leadership team developed a plan to guide us as we resume in-person operations. We have provided many in-person services to people we support throughout the pandemic, especially when necessary for health and safety. We will start phasing in additional in-person services in June with the goal to have all staff transition to a full return to a pre-pandemic service delivery model by July.

Our plan mirrors current federal, state and local health orders and safety precautions related to COVID-19. Returning to in-person services does not mean all employees will be required to return to working in the office or that we will stop using technology for many meetings. We will continue to use the lessons learned from the pandemic to improve our flexibility and efficiency.

E. Changes to COVID-19 Related Orders and Impact on Waiver Services

The extension of the public health emergency until July 20, 2021 means that Appendix K (which allows the state of Ohio to provide many rule exceptions during the pandemic) is also extended to the same date. There is a six-month “wind down” period, which means that the rule exceptions in place currently will remain until at least Jan 2022.

We are also planning for changes to the acuity payment rates for adult day services. Day services were funded at a higher acuity level during the pandemic due to the restrictions on numbers in attendance, staffing ratios and other requirements. This arrangement falls outside of Appendix K but is related to the pandemic and the restrictions ADA providers have operated under since the start of the pandemic. DODD has announced that the restrictions on day service attendance is lifted effective June 2. The acuity B payment rates will return to normal on Sept. 1, 2021. DODD will be providing additional guidance for day providers on safe operations.

DODD has also committed to using lessons learned during the pandemic to simplify services and keep in place some of the rule changes that positively impacted people receiving services.
F. State and Federal Budget Updates:

State Budget Bill

The Ohio Senate recently released their version of the budget. Testimony is occurring now with a vote in the Senate expected on June 10th. The bill will then move to conference committee with a deadline of June 30. The Senate version did include a state-funded rate increase of 2% each year of the biennium. We will continue to follow developments and share information once the budget is finalized.

American Rescue Plan Act

Last week, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released long-awaited guidance for states seeking to claim the 10% supplemental enhanced FMAP (EFMAP) included in the American Rescue Plan Act (the federal COVID-19 relief bill) that was passed earlier this year. The guidance addresses questions that have kept some relief recipients from using the funds, and its issuance is likely to encourage states to spend the relief dollars now that CMS has shared how they can be used.

Restrictions have been placed on the federal money, including a requirement that it must be used to supplement rather than replace funding for existing HCBS services. Last week’s guidance provides a list of acceptable expenditures for the federal dollars. While expenditures not included on CMS’s list will not qualify for the EFMAP, DODD Director Jeff Davis shared with OACB that all options the department is considering are included and will qualify. DODD anticipates receiving more than $200 million in relief funding.

Among the options DODD is considering are direct relief payments to providers, options for 24-hour telehealth support, and better integration/utilization of technology in the system. Once the state has determined how it will spend the funds, it must submit an initial spending plan to CMS and follow up with quarterly reports until all the relief funds are spent. States are permitted to adjust their approved plans through this quarterly reporting process. States are already receiving payments as result of the relief bill and will continue to receive funds through March 31, 2022. Funds received through the bill must be spent by March 2024.

G. Salary Increase for Employees

At our upcoming board meeting, I will be sharing information with you about a salary increase for employees. Effective in July, all HCDDS employees will receive a $1 per hour salary increase. Because this is different than our typical percentage increase and was not initially included in our 2021 budget, I wanted to provide some background and more details.

Our strategic leadership team is currently working on our compensation procedures. This work will take us time to complete, but we have recognized there are some positions where we will need to adjust pay ranges upward. We are basing this on statewide salary data from OACB as well as some other local organizations, and we have identified salary as one of the reasons we are having difficulty recruiting and retaining employees in some key areas. Structuring our adjustment as a flat, per-hour raise will help bring the pay for some of those positions closer to the required levels. This will not be our usual method of implementing increases in the future, but we believe it is a good option to address this issue in the short-term while our long-term work continues.

This increase is manageable within our current budget. Employees received an increase in January 2020, but no increase was budgeted for in 2021. During the pandemic, we were cautious as we did not fully know the financial impact, but we have used funds effectively and remained financially stable. In addition, we had positions budgeted that we were not able to fill over the past year. The reduced expenses from unfilled positions
alone will more than cover the cost of the first year of this increase. Please let me know if you have any questions.

H. Facilities
We are in the process of contracting with Beck Consulting, an appraiser, to provide us with a fair market value of the Northside property in anticipation of selling the warehouse. We met with Beck Consulting and reviewed the property. They should have a report available by the middle of June.

Holmes Concrete and Paving is repairing concrete sidewalks and the driveway apron and should be done by the end of May. They are also contracted to sealcoat the parking lot. This work should be completed by the end of June, weather depending.

Work is scheduled at Kidd to repair concrete curbs and sidewalks and to repave the parking lot. It should be completed by the end of June, weather depending. We continue to work on the 2022 capital budget.

I. Diversity and Staff Development
We recently requested a proposal from The Eastledge Group, LLC for Cultural Intelligence training for management staff. We modified the scope of work and have now entered into an agreement for the training, which is tentatively set to occur in July/August. The Diversity Council met to finalize and schedule dates for employee resource groups (ERG) and weekly gatherings for staff to address some stressors from the pandemic. We also have representation on the DODD Diversity and Inclusion Workgroup. This workgroup continues to develop training and policy for other counties and organizations. We are also exploring having Marcel Baldwin, from the EEOC to present to management staff regarding COVID and the American with Disabilities Act.

J. Annual Report
The 2020 Annual Report is live at annualreport.hamiltondds.org. We will be promoting the report extensively in our publications and on social media. We will make a printed copies available soon.

K. Digital Divide Solutions Task Force Completes Plan for Implementation
The HCDDS Digital Divide Solutions Task Force completed its work to develop a comprehensive draft Information and Communications Technology plan. HCDDS has a long history of providing good, working technology to its staff to ensure quality support to people it serves. As well, HCDDS has a long history of working to find and help people acquire assistive technology. However, in a world where now most people are reliant on technology for varying aspects of their daily routine, their health, their connections, appointments, and livelihood, it was time to create an overarching plan committed to these areas for everyone served.

- **Assess** what people truly need in the way of technology
- **Means to acquire** technology affordably (identify available funding and affordable options)
- **Training** to know how to use this technology (may include training for the family and support staff)
- Reasonable means of necessary and timely updates and repairs

The plan does not require HCDDS to pay for and repair technology for every person and family. It takes a common-sense approach to modernizing HCDDS' perspective around technology and creating a way people we support get the technology they need, get the support services they need, and ensure its ongoing operation through available, affordable, and/or blended funding. COVID-19 was difficult and terrible for those impacted
by the illness and all the related effects; however, it provided us with examples of how technology can improve lives in ways we rarely or never imagined. HCDDS hopes to bring the plan to the board no later than September 2021 for a related policy approval.

L. School Updates
Both schools are out for the summer. In addition to preparing for summer activities, planning is already underway for the 2021-2022 school year. Both schools are receiving and processing referrals for services.

The staff, families and students did a remarkable job being flexible and making the most of a difficult situation this year. Thank you to all our employees who made this school year a success!

Graduation ceremonies for both schools have occurred and were a wonderful recognition of the accomplishments of our graduates. The graduation for Rost was May 21, and we had five graduates. The graduation for Fairfax was June 2, and we had three graduates. Thank you Andy Magenheim and Deana Taylor for joining us and speaking in the ceremonies!

M. Future Events
06/09/21 – Home Think Tank, 10 a.m.
06/18/21 – Juneteenth Observed-Agency Closed
06/21/21 – Bramble House Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, 10 a.m.
06/25/21 – Visionaries & Voices Double Vision XII, 6:30 p.m.
07/22/21 – TechSummit 2021, 9-12 p.m.
No Board Meeting in July

N. Board In-Service
The in-service this month will include a presentation on our Cybersecurity Strategy by Brian Knight.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

School Updates
- Graduation last week at Rost went great. The ceremony went smoothly. It was held outside and we had beautiful weather with no cicadas. Wednesday, June 2 is graduation day for Fairfax.
- July 6 begins our summer program. It ends July 29 and will run 3 days a week for 4 weeks. Summer camp goals are on recoupment and retention of skills from the IEP. We are waiting for guidance on whether or not we can go maskless.
- 71.5% of our staff are vaccinated. We do not know what percent of students are vaccinated.
- No staff have been exposed or tested positive since Feb. 4.

Annual Plan Update- Service Quality & Fiscal Responsibility Area
Goal- Evaluate impact and benefits of remote work and use of technology to make strategic recommendations
A remote work survey was completed by all staff. The majority find they have the support, equipment, and efficiency/effectiveness to support families and administration. Leadership team is reviewing results to make both short term and long-term recommendations. We will phase back in to the office in June and will be back to in-person services in July.
Goal: Modernize My Plan form and processes to be entirely digital and streamlined for providers, SSAs and families
- We adapted our existing template in Gatekeeper to include a placeholder for all sections of our My Plan. The SSA pulls in the applicable documents that we previously printed and attached in our paper process.
- We implemented a fully-electronic My Plan submission and supervisor review process using customized SharePoint libraries.
- We encouraged individuals/families to receive their My Plan via email as possible. This is a significant cost savings for the agency. From Jan 1 - Apr 30 we processed 2195 plans and 1163 of those plans were emailed which is 53%. Average cost of printing and mailing a plan is $2.75. 1163 x $2.75 = $3198.00 savings for the first four months of 2021.
- SharePoint libraries allow Supervisor/Manager to virtually monitor the workload of each staff person and provides a way to track plans to monitor timeliness.

Goal: Offer advanced cultural competency training for HCDDS staff to manage unique pandemic and social stressors
Scheduled Cultural Competency Training for managers July/August and the rest of the staff in the following months. Also, we are reaching out to Marcel Baldwin of EEOC to cover ADA and COVID for advice as we plan for staff to return to workplace and to in person supports. Finally, Diversity Council and the ALIFE team will be sponsoring Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) for support of people through stressors of the pandemic including sibling support and elder support.

Goal: Invest in Northstar trainings so more providers are able to support people most impacted by mental health and DD and to best help staff through COVID.
Four-part series will be offered to all providers beginning in August with topics customized to operating a mission driven business as we emerge from the pandemic. Northstar is facilitated by a HCDDS/Provider team.

Goal: Implement plan for ongoing education of county administrators and commissioners about HCDDS’ budget, finances, and long-term plans.
Updated budget has been completed and submitted. Neil and Leia met with Jeff Aluotto, Hamilton County Administrator, last month and will be meeting quarterly for ongoing communication. Ryan, Neil, and Leia also met with county budget analyst and Tax Levy Review Committee as we prepare for mid-levy updates. Finally, Leia met with two commissioners for introductions and brief overview of HCDDS.

Goal: Evaluate recommendations from IMPACT report to simplify agency position descriptions and modernize pay schedules.
Strategic Leadership Team is actively evaluating and making recommendations from the IMPACT report to simplify position descriptions and modify pay schedules. Discussion has been lively and productive. SLT hopes to have final plan for implementation completed by the end of 2021.

Vaccination Policy
Employees can choose whether or not to share their vaccination status with the agency. At this time, employees who are not vaccinated or those whose vaccination status is not known will be required to continue to wear masks and socially distance in accordance with CDC guidelines.
Employees who would like to follow the CDC guidance for those who are vaccinated need to disclose with HR that they are fully vaccinated. We are not however requiring employees to be vaccinated at this time.

A recommendation was made to consider requiring employees to be vaccinated and to offer staff an incentive to get vaccinated. Ms. Taylor reported their incentive program has been very successful.

Staff will continue to wear masks and use PPE, regardless of vaccination status, at the request of families and to protect medically fragile individuals when necessary.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Townsend reviewed the financial statement analysis for May 2021.

Approval is requested for actual operating expenses of $13,339,998 for the month of May 2021, with cumulative totals amounting to $50,324,216 as confirmed by the Hamilton County Cash Disbursement Journal.

Mr. Jones moved that the Board approve the actual operating expenses for the month of May 2021. Ms. Taylor seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Approval is requested for estimated operating expenses of $3,609,790 for the month of July 2021, 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 July 2021. Dr. Faruqui seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Approval is requested for estimated operating expenses of $3,275,618 for the month of August 2021, 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 August 2021. Mr. Abes seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

none

NEW BUSINESS

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

   Shawn Garver, Human Resources Director
   2-year contract: 6/19/21-6/18/23

   Robert Moody, Educational Administrator
   2-year contract: 6/18/21-6/17/23

   Latrice Smith, Eligibility & Waitlist Manager
   2-year contract: 6/18/21-6/17/23
Ms. Taylor moved approval of the request to enter into the multi-year contracts as presented. Mr. Jones seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements

We have no meeting in July. The board plans to meet in person at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, August 10. The public will be notified if things change and the meeting needs to be virtual.

INSERVICE

Brian Knight and Nick Pearson presented on the agency's cybersecurity strategy. Our security strategy includes, but is not limited to, several backup systems, security software for a variety of hardware systems, storage/disaster recovery site, network security programs and file level encryption. We also employ periodic user awareness training and threat assessment campaigns. We reevaluate our overall cyber security plan annually.

Ms. Taylor recommended the agency increase the frequency of cyber security training for staff.

Finding no further business, Mr. Melnyk asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Magenheim so moved. Mr. Abes seconded the motion. Mr. Melnyk declared the meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Respectfully,

Mr. Nestor Melnyk
President

Mr. Stephen J. Jones
Secretary