

**Minutes of the
Board of Directors' Meeting
Rocky Mountain Development Council, Inc.
December 21, 2017**

Members present include: Bob Mullen, Mike Delger, Debbie Havens, Susan Geise, Mark Young, Angel Kramer, Helen Fandrich, Bruce Day, Trever Kirkland, Lois Steinbeck and Daniel Pocha.

Members absent include: Maria Pace, Akilah Lane, Jerome Loendorf and Rebecca Blend.

Guests include: Linda Nolan, Jacque Smith, Kathy Marks, Rod Applegate, Shawna Donaldson, Liz Mogstad, Chrisy Ire, Ashley Peña-Larsen, Jaymie Sheldahl, Leslie-Cochran Olson, Joan Anderson, Sam Hall and Gale Anderson.

Daniel Pocha announced that tonight is the longest night of the year and there will be a dedication for the eight homeless who passed away in Helena over the last year. Daniel asked for a moment of silence for those who died on the streets; to keep them in our hearts and also remember those who are close to being the next homeless individuals.

Call to Order/Roll Call: Daniel Pocha noted that there was a quorum present and called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Susan Geise made the motion to approve the November 30, 2017 Board of Directors' meeting minutes and the October 26, 2017 Finance Committee meeting minutes. Debbie Havens seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Helen Fandrich mentioned Lori's Director's report in the Board minutes, commenting that she didn't recall the Board being supportive of moving forward with the housing project discussions. Discussion followed. Daniel commented that since this is not an agenda item, it can be discussed at the end of the meeting under public comment.

Director's Report – Lori Ladas

Lori reported that she was just in Washington D.C. for five days attending a NeighborWorks Training Institute. Lori attended the Affordable Housing Development Training. She received a scholarship from NeighborWorks, which included the cost of her hotel.

Staff has been working on revisions to RMDC's personnel manual, which was sent to RMDC's Human Resource consultant last week for review. A Personnel Committee meeting to review the revised manual is tentatively planned for February.

Regarding the Head Start Valley Center, the architect is working on obtaining bids. This is a bit of a challenge because the project is small and contractors are really busy right now. Lori will provide updates as the project moves forward.

Program Directors Walter Hanley and Jerilee Wilkerson have resigned and will be leaving in January. An interview for Walt's job was completed, but RMDC and the applicant were unable to come to an agreement on salary. The positions, especially Walter's, are hard to fill with low unemployment rates in Helena and the

current pay matrix. Interviews for the two positions are currently on hold. Options to gain operational efficiencies with possible reorganizations involving those two programs are currently being evaluated. By early January, there will be more information available and plans can move forward. Lori will be appointing Interim Directors for both programs in the meantime. Lori will report about Walter's retirement party next month. Clarification was requested about which two programs were being affected; the programs are Senior Nutrition/Senior Transportation and Area IV Agency on Agency. Lori said that Linda Nolan will be retiring this spring, and the Senior Corps programs will be included when looking at the overall Senior programs area, to determine where things could be adjusted in terms of personnel and budget.

RMDC sent out year-end appeal letters and received a good response. In December, including the checks and cash that Daniel donated prior to today's meeting, a total of \$9,355.00 was collected through the appeal and unsolicited donations.

Finance Report – Chrisy Irely

Chrisy reported that the fiscal staff is currently working on projections and hope to have the "crystal ball" ready to bring to a meeting soon. Cash balance is \$505,590 and accounts payable balance is \$38,513; both amounts are current.

A question was asked about the variance in cash balance from last month to this month, wondering what causes that kind of difference month to month. Chrisy replied that today is payroll and next week our Budget Analysts will draw cash for their grants. Payroll is approximately \$200,000 and Head Start is a big part of that; we will draw Head Start cash next week for their payroll.

Committee Reports - None

Reduce Senior Companion Program from 80 VSYs to 60 VSYs - Chrisy Irely and Linda Nolan

Chrisy reported that last month, there was some really good discussion at the Finance Committee and Board meeting about both of RMDC's stipend programs (the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs) regarding the struggle with recruiting and the desire to reduce the Senior Companion Program (SCP) volunteer service years (VSYs) from 80 to 60. This reduction equates to \$77,000 in Federal dollars lost, including \$22,000 in administrative money and \$55,000 in stipend money. The current stipend money won't be spent based on recruiting struggles. The goal is for the program to be more manageable for staff regarding recruiting efforts in the tri-county area. At a recent program budget meeting, the November 2017 projection for SCP was discussed, and with the proposed reduction it appears that by June 30th the program will be right where it needs to be for this grant year. Lois asked if the \$22,000 needs to be covered; Chrisy replied yes. County Mill and/or CSBG funds will be used to make up that difference. Also, looking at the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) in conjunction with the Senior Companion Program, the net impact is an approximate increase of \$10,000 of County Mill money required. \$7,000 of indirect costs is included in the FGP administrative funds total. As we move forward in looking at FY18 budget projections, the indirect cost rate charged to all programs may need to increase to cover indirect cost pool charges, if necessary. (Note: This is no different than in prior years and is something we monitor throughout each fiscal year because program spending has a direct effect on indirect costs being recovered.)

Daniel clarified that the only action item regarding this topic involved the Senior Companion Program, not the Foster Grandparent Program. The Senior Companion Program is the only program on the agenda because the Foster Grandparent reduction is already approved by the Federal grants officer and resulted in a net loss of approximately \$400 in Federal funding; that change didn't come to the full Board because it is so small. The SCP

overall loss of Federal funds is \$77,000; it was brought forward because of the dollar amount and Board's by-laws.

Helen Fandrich moved to approve right-sizing the Senior Companion Program as presented. Lois Steinbeck seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Head Start Update:

a. Policy Council Update – Mark Young

Mark reported that at the Head Start Policy Council meeting last week, they discussed losing a few Policy Council members due to lack of attendance; those members needed to be excused because of the by-laws, so a quorum will be present every month. The Policy Council also discussed recruiting for more participation in Policy Council. An introduction letter will be sent to all families to introduce the Policy Council, explaining what the Council does and how the Council tries to help Head Start families. Ashley is creating another letter about the importance of volunteering with Head Start, and how that helps the program. Some volunteer hours are not being recorded as in-kind, and those must be noted going forward. A Facebook group has been organized to make communication easier; Information will soon be sent out about a fundraising event in February.

b. Director's Program and Budget Report – Ashley Peña-Larsen

Ashley referred to her handouts and started her report by replying to some questions that were asked at last month's meeting. Forty-two of the 57 IEPs have social-emotional goals; another 15 students have social-emotional plans in place, but are not on formal IEPs. Head Start is losing money in Best Beginning scholarships right now, because not as many families are using that scholarship. The goal is to increase that amount, but even at current levels Head Start will still see a surplus at the end of the year. The budget shows \$233,889.95 to spend each month; the majority of that goes to salaries. There is currently one Teacher vacancy and will be one Teacher Assistant vacancy after the start of the year. A new Teacher in Boulder was recently interviewed and the Policy Council will be asked for approval of her hire today.

Head Start has been busy with holiday concerts, Winter Wonderland, giving trees, family adoptions for the holidays, food baskets, and they gave 133 turkeys to families. Staff is officially on holiday break until January 2nd, except for one off-site classroom that will return January 3rd. Daniel commented that it is nice to see that 104 kids have been screened for lead; Ashley agreed, as that number sat at zero for many years in the past.

Ashley reported that Head Start has received bid commitments from three companies (Dick Anderson Construction, Golden Eagle and Diamond Construction) for work on the Valley location. They will be submitting bids tomorrow. All are willing to work with Head Start, which is nice because the project is a small one.

Helen Fandrich asked for an update on the Whitehall Head Start classroom. Ashley reported that the site was down five children at the beginning of the year, but five more children were found to attend. Currently, Whitehall has five over-income children, and no children on the wait list. The site is on the verge of losing two more children, and there are five children who are under 80% attendance; all those are on an attendance plan. It has been a bit of a challenge to get the families and kids in school. In February, Head Start will have a better idea of Whitehall's status to bring this forward for discussion again. Trever commented that there isn't Policy Council support from the parents there either. A little bit of in-kind is coming in from families in Whitehall. Ashley said budgets are now being tracked by site.

The Teacher in Whitehall is a strong asset for the site; she is new to Head Start but had experience with Family Outreach.

Susan Giese moved to approve the Head Start Director's report. Helen Fandrich seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

c. Transportation Services – Ashley Peña-Larsen

Ashley referred to her handout in the Board packet and mentioned one error on the first page. The second page splits out the cost of bus services. The total cost of the bus service is \$83,348.75 which includes taking out some salaries that will be staying. Head Start received quotes on two smaller busses, and needs to get information on one more. The busses were worth \$3,500 and \$5,500 each which were quoted from pictures, which was less than expected. Head Start doesn't want to lose the option to have field trips, and First Student is willing to do this transport for \$46/hour with a three hour minimum, and an additional \$1.00 per mile. This would lead to a cost of approximately \$200 per field trip per classroom. Field trips never last more than three hours. First Student has the training they need and would just have to sign confidentiality agreements; the busses already have harnesses. Next year, each classroom will have 3 field trips throughout the year; classrooms also still do walking field trips in rural areas. Leslie will continue to organize field trips.

Helen Fandrich moved for approval to drop transportation services for RMDC's Head Start classroom in East Helena. Mark Young seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

d. Mental Health Proposal – Ashley Peña-Larsen

Ashley referenced her handout and explained that this model is very widely used outside of Montana. RMDC Head Start would be the first program not owned by a mental health facility to implement this in Montana. The proposal includes four main goals:

- Hire a mental health consultant, with up to \$20,000 in in-kind funding and an additional \$30,000, working at all sites. The consultant would be training and educating the Head Start staff, not working one-on-one with children.
- One staff member will be hired to focus on the child consultation piece. This position will involve individual child observation, one-on-one modeling, will support staff in child behavior and management, and will design individual strategies for the child.
- Head Start will still do referrals. The program will continue working with families and making any needed referrals.
- Transition into kindergarten. This year, 10 Head Start kids were expelled from kindergarten during the first week of school. The goal is to support school districts in making sure children are not left out of school at this age.

The consultant would be a half-time position, and the staff member in the classroom would work full-time. Discussion followed about the importance of these positions for classroom staff and the qualifications needed for the new positions. The hope is that the consultant will be a Licensed Clinical Therapist. Part of \$20,000 of income is some billable hours with family therapy. Head Start will track how much the program is paying and how much the consultant is billing, and those numbers will be useful to evaluate the positions in a couple years. These positions would begin in September with the new school year. Qualifications for the full-time employee were questioned. Ashley reported that most schools use some Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT) Mental Health Specialist (MHS). The position would require a High School diploma; Ashley would like to require an AA, and noted that lots of training will be provided. The issue is the salary that can be paid. Head Start has put

out a training module for this type of program, as they recognize that the program can't generally fund and require a BA. A Teacher wage may be an option for the position. Trever commented that Head Start programs in other states use this model, except for Montana. The employee will have the support with the Licensed Clinical Therapist, and Head Start can look at requiring a BA. Lois mentioned concerns about the CSCT program, which has a lot of debt. She commented that if RMDC does mental health programs, we have to do it right. The outcomes would need to be the priority. Ashley clarified that the model is not CSCT, but the educational requirement is what Head Start looking at to compete in the job market. The union has to be considered regarding wages, along with RMDC's pay plan.

Susan commented that this topic has been discussed for a long time at RMDC, and there is a huge lack of people who are performing these services. Though she doesn't think a High School diploma with training is in any way sufficient, it may be the best that can be done. She supported Ashley's proposed plan, with the idea to moving that up as quickly as possible. Ashley said she would look at listing the job with a Bachelor's Degree preferred, that the applicant must qualify as a primary care giver, and see what applications arrive. It will all happen in stages. All three companies will do a presentation to a small committee and the Board will be invited to be part of those conversations. Hiring will not happen until the summer. Trever confirmed that today's vote is just to approve the formal proposal to request formal bids. Helen asked if this proposal has been discussed with any other Head Start Programs in the state. RMDC is the first Head Start in the state to attempt to implement a program like this, and hope to be the model for others. Mark commented that Ashley has talked to Head Starts in other states, including Pennsylvania and Texas, to monitor how is it working there.

Debbie Havens made the motion to approve the mental health proposal as presented. Susan Giese seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Daniel Pocha asked for any public comment. Daniel asked Helen Fandrich to meet with him so that they could add an agenda item for the next meeting, as previously requested by Helen. Daniel and Helen will meet after the first of the year. Daniel said that based on the minutes of the last meeting, a straw poll was taken to allow Lori to move forward to obtain additional details.


Debbie Havens made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Trever Kirkland seconded. Daniel wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Respectfully submitted,

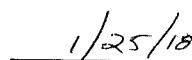


Gale Anderson

Human Resource Director


Lois Steinbeck

Secretary/Treasurer


Date

