

Developmental Disabilities Resource Board of St. Charles County
Board Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2024

The Board meeting was held at the DDRB Office, 1025 Country Club Road, St. Charles, MO 63303. The public was able to access the meeting in person or through the video conference link and conference call numbers provided on the agenda.

Dan Dozier, DDRB President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with a moment of silent reflection.

Members Physically Present:

Dan Dozier, Terry Elmendorf, Todd Gentry, Bryon Hale, Mike Mahoney and Sue Sharp

Members Absent:

Missy Fallert, Missy Palitzsch, and Connie Tan

Agenda Approval

Bryon Hale motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Sue Sharp seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The mission moment had not arrived yet. It was decided that the mission moment would be incorporated in the agenda when they arrived.

Bryon Hale motioned to open the hearing for public comment on FY2026 proposed Funding Priorities. Sue Sharp seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Roll call of the members physically present was taken: Dan Dozier, yes; Terry Elmendorf, yes; Todd Gentry, yes; Bryon Hale, yes; Mike Mahoney, yes; Sue Sharp, yes.

Public Hearing: FY2026 Funding Priorities

Denise Cross reviewed the summary of past Funding Priorities public hearings.

Public Comment was as follows:

Heather Lytle, Executive Director, F.A.C.T.

Heather thanked the Board for the market rate adjustment for FY2026, it will help FACT with the increasing cost to do business. This year FACT's health insurance quote came in with a 300% increase. FACT has grown to more than 50 employees, which changes the employment laws the agency is required to follow. Another reason for the large increase is because FACT hires parents of individuals with developmental disabilities which can lead to increased usage of the insurance benefits, usage rate is often a direct correlation to increases annually.

Sheri Wiltse, President & CEO, Community Living

"Community Living would like to thank you for allowing provider agencies to give you feedback on funding priorities for Fiscal Year 2026. We appreciate the fact that the DDRB has given Market Rate Adjustments (MRAs) the last several years which has helped us try to keep up with inflation. Below I will list our current issues and priorities for FY26.

Community Living struggles to keep up with other agencies' rates of pay for direct support staff. Many provider agencies wait anxiously for who will make the next jump in DSP wages. We are currently at \$18 per hour for some programs and \$20 for others, with differentials for certain shifts. Other agencies have already moved ahead of those rates of pay. Our hiring and retention are mostly stable for now, but we still have openings we never experienced before. The new normal for us is different. As a side note, we have increased our wages almost 100% since 2017. In

2017, our DSP hourly rate was \$10.50 per hour and now we start at \$20 an hour in most programs.

The DMH wait list has affected many of our programs. We had agreed to move as many Employment Services folks as we could to waiver retention services, per the DDRB request. Many people are now on hold for the move because they cannot access waiver slots. We are also having to use more DDRB funding for our BEST program clients because they cannot get waiver funding. Our agreement is to exhaust all funding prior to accessing DDRB funding for this program.

We currently have a wait list for our SOAR program with 40+ kids waiting for Teen Club, the after-school program. This is partially due to staffing and partially due to not wanting to provide too many units in a month and then run out before year end. The DDRB made it clear at our hearing last year that the DDRB cannot afford our growth due to how expensive program services have become. As we add more kids, our overall unit cost will go down, but we are held to the number of units we've been able to encumber funding for. We will gladly work with the DDRB to come up with an appropriate solution.

Our Adult Recreation program is bursting at the seams, but as with our SOAR program, we are held to the funding we have encumbered for this year. People were slow to come back after the pandemic but now they are returning, and we also have new referrals. We currently must limit the number of units each person can use so there are enough to go around for all members.

Community Living would like to encourage the DDRB to again do a MRA that helps us manage inflation.

Community Living would like the DDRB to focus on growth and strengthening existing programs so we can maximize our impact and ensure we are sustainable before consideration of expanding into new areas.

Thanks so much for your consideration."

Michelle Peters, Chief Operating Officer, Emmaus Homes

"My name is Michelle Peters, and I am the COO at Emmaus Homes, based in St. Charles County. As you likely know, we have primarily provided residential services to adults with developmental disabilities over the years. Most recently though, thanks to the DDRB and the generous ARPA funding, we have been able to transform a good part of our administrative office into a "learning lab" where we have started offering courses to other community providers that cover the basic DMH requirements such as CPR- First Aid and Medication certification. We plan to also offer a variety of Leadership Development opportunities, Behavioral Support courses, Dementia education, and most excitingly we plan to offer training to the larger community in our adaptive equipment room. This room allows individuals to utilize equipment such as track lifts, shower seats, walkers, and even accessible van tie downs to gain a level of comfort and confidence before actually supporting a client.

We also have the opportunity before us to make a powerful impact on the lives of those we serve and offer a variety of advocacy courses for clients, their family and friends. I could stand up here forever and describe the vision, but ultimately the goal is educating people to become stronger advocates, fully understand their rights, and ensure they have a seat at every important table.

Over 3 years ago, Emmaus began investing in a full-time advocacy position to build our grassroots base and get more clients, self-advocates, staff, family members and guardians involved. With this dedicated position, we have implemented what we call "Coffees for Change" where we gather and educate participants on what is going on in the state legislature and help them feel comfortable getting involved by practicing their skills. We have also helped increase the presence of self-advocates in the state Capitol as well as the amount of monthly visits during the legislative session. We have partnered with other agencies, our trade associations, and the Coalition to advocate for DSP wage increases and other issues such as avoiding personal property tax cuts and increases in TCM rates. We have also helped launch key communication pieces with internal and external audiences and maintained a consistent presence on X/Twitter where all the legislators still hang out. All this work is being supported by robust software that helps us make data-driven decisions about where we are getting the biggest bang for this advocacy investment.

There is still so much work to do. The issues we are trying to make an impact on affect all adults with developmental disabilities in our region, and really across the state. The majority of non-profits would be doing more in terms of advocacy and education efforts if there were not such tight budgetary constraints.

We appreciate the work of the DDRB to already fund advocacy efforts regarding IEP support, the justice system, and more. We are excited about your new strategic plan and the many other creative ways you could fund advocacy efforts for this community. The potential is endless. We look forward to continuing our partnership and helping to increase inclusion, amplify voices, get people at the right tables, and make real changes in the lives of people with disabilities.

As always, we are grateful for all you do and your support. Thank you for your time tonight."

Lori Kohrs, Vice President of Administration, United Services for Children

Leslie Tucker, Director of Programs, United Services for Children

Lori and Leslie thanked the Board for their ongoing support of United Services for Children. Leslie gave an overview of United Services' Early Intervention program for the Board. Leslie informed the Board that United Services currently has a waitlist for Early Intervention services. There are 81 slots available, and they are full. There are 61 children on the waiting list. United Services has seen an increase in referrals from First Steps. Unfortunately, the timeline for early intervention is a short window at United Services, 18 months to 3 years old. Lori and Leslie also thanked DDRB staff for their support.

Bryon Hale motioned to close the hearing for public comment on FY2026 proposed Funding Priorities. Terry Elmendorf seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Roll call of the members present was taken: Dan Dozier, yes; Terry Elmendorf, yes; Todd Gentry, yes; Bryon Hale, yes; Mike Mahoney, yes; Sue Sharp, yes.

Mission Moment:

Laura Taylor introduced DDRB Case Manager, Margret Piper-Zamudio. Margret introduced her consumer Nathaniel who was accompanied by his family, to show his use of the DDRB Adaptive Equipment grant. Nathaniel needed a reliable source of transportation to and from his work at Schnucks. Due to Nathaniel's needs, he was not able to get a bicycle for transportation, as he needed a more stabilized mode of transportation. After evaluation, it was suggested that Nathaniel get a motorized tricycle. Nathaniel rode his tricycle to the meeting and was able to show the Board his new tricycle. The tricycle allowed Nathaniel a

level of freedom and responsibility that he had not typically experienced. Nathaniel's family reports that he has increased independence and is very responsible now at planning his day and making sure that he is at work on time. The family also reported that Nathaniel now has confidence they had never seen before. Nathaniel showed the Board the equipment and safety features of his tricycle. The Board thanked Nathaniel and his family for sharing their story.

Public Comments and Announcements:

None

Executive Director Report

Denise Cross's Executive Director Report included the following:

Strategic Plan Update

The Organizational Assessment (6.16.1) is on track to be completed by the end of this month. The objective of this assessment is to ensure the DDRB is organized in the most efficient way possible to fulfill our mission and meet the goals outlined in our strategic plan. The leadership team will make recommendations based on the results of this assessment, which is being conducted by an external consultant from AAIM.

There are strategies requiring scheduled reporting to various board committees, and actions that need the full board's approval. Processes to ensure this is done are being created.

County Executive's Office Visit

The Executive Director and Interim Finance Director met with members of the County Executive's staff. The meeting was successful in strengthening our working relationship with the County Executive's office. Additionally, we discussed the DDRB's future needs and gained valuable insight into the county's business office structure.

RFP Update

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the renovation of the property at 615 Knaust has been published in the Business Journal and on the DDRB's website. A pre-bid walkthrough at the property attracted an expected amount of interested parties. Based on feedback, the proposal deadline has been extended, and some changes have been made to the scope of work. An addendum reflecting these changes has been issued. The new proposal deadline is November 6, and the Property Committee will open bids shortly afterward.

The Learning Lab at Emmaus (ARPA Project) – Open House

Representatives from the DDRB attended the Open House and Ribbon Cutting for The Learning Lab at Emmaus. This project was partially funded by ARPA dollars and managed by the DDRB. The Learning Lab offers unique, hands-on training opportunities for the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce. More information about the lab is available on the Emmaus Homes website, www.emmaushomes.org.

MACDDS Membership Meeting and Conference

The September MACDDS Membership meeting took place in Madison County. These meetings rotate across the state to highlight best practices. MACDDS also hosted its Planting the Seeds of Change Conference from October 9-11. The DDRB was able to send staff members to the conference, thanks to vouchers from MACDDS and the Productive Living Board. This event offered an excellent opportunity for professional development, networking, and skill-building.

Denise, along with the Executive Director of Platte County Board of Services, led a session on preventing creativity burnout in compassionate fields. Denise also participated with FACT and People First to share the success of our county's partnership. Additionally, Laura Taylor and other case management providers led discussions on innovative practices, including the role of the Shift Navigator at the DDRB.

Congratulations to Laura Taylor!

Laura Taylor was honored with the Bill Knittig TCM Award at the MACDDS Conference. This prestigious award recognizes individuals who advance the provision of quality case management services in Missouri. Award recipients are nominated by case management providers statewide.

ERA Update

Work is underway to prepare the Partner Funding Manual for the FY26 funding cycle. The Executive Directors, Finance, and Agency Relations teams are meeting regularly to refine processes and plan agency reviews. Additionally, the ERA has formed a committee to explore ways to use collected data to display the success of the region's collaboration.

Upcoming Meetings

Staff have discussed the holiday schedule and suggest canceling the December board meeting. The business to be addressed in December is minimal and can be managed during other months. It is also suggested that the December Finance Committee meeting be canceled, with the date and time adjusted to an Executive Committee meeting instead. The new Strategic Plan includes governance-related goals that the Executive Committee will review. Finally, the Program Committee meeting for December will also be canceled. These changes aim to alleviate some of the workload during what is always a busy time of year.

Finance Director's Report:

Joyce Eichelberger's Finance Report included the following:

Finance Reports:

DDRB Statement of Revenues and Expenses

The YTD percentage of taxes received is low, as expected at this time of year. Real and property taxes collected by 12/31 are reflected in our January 2025 and February 2025 statements.

Case Management Statement of Revenues and Expenses

TCM revenue recorded in September is for August services, therefore YTD actual is for only 2 months.

Administration Statement of Expenses

Quarter 1 July-Sept Agency and Other Operating Expenses

On this report there are a few agencies that have not billed; however, they have submitted bills in October.

Checkbook Balance Inquiry Report – September 2024 Transactions

ARPA Update Report

FY24 Audit:

Per the auditor's request field work began October 7.

FY26 Budget Planning:

The Finance Committee reviewed tax revenue history and FY26 budget scenarios at their Oct 1 meeting. The committee will again review FY26 funding priorities at their next meeting and present a recommendation at the Nov 21 Board meeting.

Sue Sharp motioned to accept the September 2024 and 1st Quarter Finance Reports as presented. Bryon Hale seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Case Management Director Report

Laura Taylor's Case Management Director's Report included the following:

Case Management Program Overview

The Case Management Program is currently serving 1,419 individuals. This represents an increase of 18 customers since last month's report.

The hiring process has been underway for two Case Manager positions. One vacancy is to replace Marcia Bucher, who resigned in September. The second position is to address the lack of capacity within the current caseloads to accommodate new intakes. The program is pleased to announce that Raylah Pillar has accepted one of the positions and will start on October 21. Interviews for the second remaining position are currently taking place.

Two Supervisors from the Case Management Team participated in the BCI Transition Planning Conference on September 27. This marks the second year that Case Management has been represented at the event as part of the resource fair. The Supervisors disseminated information about DDRB Case Management and provided guidance to individuals needing to navigate the intake process.

Technology Updates

The transition to SETWorks for all case notes/billing occurred on October 1. All licenses with the former database, moediweb, are being adjusted accordingly. Access to moediweb will be maintained by 5 key staff on the Case Management Team to allow continued access to historical records and to maintain the ability to back bill. All licenses to the former electronic filing database, Laserfiche, have been fully terminated.

FY2024 Strategic Plan Report

Denise Cross presented the FY2024 Strategic Plan Report.

Bryon Hale motioned to approve the FY2024 Strategic Plan Report as presented. Terry Elmendorf seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Missy Fallert joined the meeting.

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes of Board Meeting – September 19, 2024
2. Minutes of Finance Committee – October 1, 2024
3. Minutes of Program Committee – October 4, 2024
4. 2025 Case Management Policies Approval
5. 2025 General Operations Policies Approval
6. 2025 Human Resources Policies Approval
7. FY2026 Partner Funding Manual Approval

Bryon Hale motioned to approve the consent agenda as presented. Sue Sharp seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

None

New Business

1. Draft FY2026 Funding Priorities & Timeline

Kathy Robb reviewed the draft FY2026 Funding Priorities & Timeline. The FY2026 Funding Priorities & Timeline will come before the Board for approval at the November 21, 2024, Board meeting.

No motion needed.

Closed Session

Bryon Hale motioned to go into closed session, announcing the intent to discuss Legal: (S.B. 2, Section 610.021 (1) RSMo) as presented. Sue Sharp seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. A roll call of the members physically present was taken: Dan Dozier, yes; Terry Elmendorf, yes; Todd Gentry, yes; Bryon Hale, yes; Mike Mahoney, yes; Sue Sharp, yes.

Open Session

Sue Sharp motioned to end the closed session and return to open session. Bryon Hale seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Roll call of the members present was taken: Dan Dozier, yes; Terry Elmendorf, yes; Todd Gentry, yes; Bryon Hale, yes; Mike Mahoney, yes; Sue Sharp, yes.

Adjournment

Bryon Hale motioned to adjourn. Sue Sharp seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted: *Nikki Rogers*