

Developmental Disabilities Resource Board of St. Charles County
Board Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2022

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. The agenda was posted to the DDRB website in accordance with Missouri Sunshine Laws.

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

Members Physically Present:

Dan Dozier, Missy Fallert, Todd Gentry, Bryon Hale, Mike Mahoney, Angie Rhodes, and Sue Sharp

Members Present via Electronic Communication:

Todd Gentry

Members Absent:

Joe Barton and Angie Rhodes

Robyn Peyton Recognition

Peg Capo gave a history of Robyn Peyton's employment at the DDRB since May 1, 2006. Sue Sharp presented Robyn with a recognition award for her time and contributions at the DDRB for individuals with developmental disabilities living in St. Charles County. Robyn thanked the Board for believing in the program through all the years of ups and downs.

Missy Fallert motioned to open the hearing for FY2024 Funding Priorities. Bryon Hale seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Roll call of the members present was taken: Dan Dozier, yes; Missy Fallert, yes; Bryon Hale, yes; Todd Gentry, yes; Mike Mahoney, yes; Sue Sharp, yes; and Connie Tan, yes.

Public Hearing: FY2024 Funding Priorities

Peg Capo reviewed a summary of past public hearings.

Todd Gentry left the physical meeting and joined via zoom.

Public comments on FY2024 Funding Priorities were as follows:

- Kathy Robb gave an overview of family member emails submitted to her about transportation to BCI and day programs. The Board were given copies of the emails received, which included the following:
 - The Shepards, family members submitted:
"I would like to address the board on behalf of our daughter Megan. Megan is 22 years old and has been at home for the last 2 years due to lack of transportation to her day program. She already missed out on doing a transition from high school to the program due to Covid and lack of transportation. She has been on the wait list at Willows way for 3 years now.

Due to our work schedules, we are unable to provide transportation for our daughter. This saddens us greatly as we see her skills declining from lack of therapies and being around her peers. Megan talks about going to Willows way daily and how much she misses her friends.

This brings up all kinds of feelings for all of us. We feel terrible as parents that we cannot help our daughter get back and forth. My husband works 74 hours a week and I work full time as well.

I hope that everyone can figure this out. Watching our daughter decline in many areas of her life is heart wrenching. She's been through so much in her short life. All we want for her is to be happy and be able to attend her program. Being with her peers is something Megan really enjoys.

As you know it is hard for people with different abilities to have a social life. Megan gets very lonely sometimes and desires to do things with peers. It's just so hard for her friends to get together due to their own circumstances.

It would mean so much to us if we could get the transportation that we need to help our daughter thrive in life. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter for us."

- o LaVerne Worley, family member submitted:
"I am writing this letter to request help in resolving a serious development in support of my mentally and physically handicapped brother Michael . . . Mike is 63 years old and lives with my husband and I. We are his guardians and are responsible for his care. Mike works for Boone Center Inc, St Peters Mo, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization for mentally and physically handicapped people whose mission is to provide employment for adults with intellectual and development disabilities. BCI is an outstanding organization and provides these handicapped people with social interaction, a sense of accomplishment, pride and dignity.

We have recently been informed that the transportation services provided through Axel Transportation by the County of St Charles has been discontinued. We have been told that St Charles County has not or will not negotiate a continuing contract arrangement for Axel to continue this critically important service. This is the second time our transportation needs have been jeopardized. Approximately two years ago the same issue occurred with the previous transportation supplier Oats Transportation.

The sheltered workshop is a vital part of quality of life issues for the handicapped individuals and their caring families or homes. Removing this critical service has a devastating effect for all concerned. Care for these handicapped individuals in many cases, (ours), is a 24/7 job with virtually no relief for rest. BCI or other sheltered workshops provide the only respite. The termination of the transportation services eliminates the ability for many of these special needs individuals to work at BCI or introduces another significant burden for the care takers.

I am asking for your personal intervention on this issue with St Charles County leadership to correct and resolve this most important issue. Transportation services terminated 19 Aug 2022. I believe, as do most healthy people, that a primary responsibility and maybe the important responsibility of government, local or otherwise, is to ensure that we provide for those that cannot help or provide for themselves. These are very compromised people who need our help just to stay alive let alone improve their quality of life.

I hope you see your way to help these critically needy people and resolve this incredibly disappointing decision. If you don't help then who does? We need someone to stand-up for those who cannot."

- o Jill Edelen, family member submitted:
"I wanted to share my opinions about the transportation issues. I'm hoping to be on zoom during the public hearing on Oct 20 or possibly in person.

My daughter Meghan . . . is 22 years old and has no transportation to and from her day program at Community Living. We had transportation in the beginning for a short time. Then they cut our route due to cost/ possibly staff shortages (this was during the pandemic of course) We live in Wentzville. She attends the Kenny Wilson Center in Dardenne Prairie. There is no other program that she can attend. She was attending 5 days a week and now only attends 3 days. Transportation is dependent on me and my 78 year old mom who picks her up. It's been very difficult for my mom lately. I'm not sure how much longer we can do this (I work full time). I feel if there was more funding on transportation then they wouldn't have dropped us. I personally think it sucks. My daughter is losing out on going to her program. I've had to change jobs due to lack of transportation. I know I'm not the only one. If I didn't have my mom not sure how I would do it.

I'm also wondering why there can't be a dedicated transportation company for serving those with disabilities? Or if they are contracted with the state how they can just drop a route. We live 10 miles away from her day program. To me that's not a lot. I'm also wondering where the money is going that is not being used for transportation? I know there is a set amount every year?

On top of having no transportation I'm now paying money for before care at Community Living. Just so I can take her before I go to work. If we had transportation, I wouldn't have this extra cost. Otherwise, Meghan would not be able to attend her day program at all. It's very sad to me. Meghan enjoys going there. It's disappointing that there isn't something that can be done. These adults deserve to be a part of their community. So, we need to do something with the transportation issues that's going on. I know I'm not the only one who feels this way."

- Kathy Booher, family member, submitted:
"My name is Kathy Booher and my son Daniel . . . works at BCI Boone Center, and his case manager at the DDRB is Julie Lebowitz, Katie Jones at BCI message me about the upcoming meeting on October 19th about needs that families are dealing with and ours is the transportation issues. Daniel was riding the Axel van for 5 years as we were granted a waiver for transportation as I have several auto immune diseases and severe back issues and I was having to be his transportation till we were granted the waiver, I currently still have these issues and now Daniel has lost transportation and I'm told that the DDRB is trying to find funding and ways to get back transportation, so I would like to be in on the meeting so I can share how this has affected our family. My husband helps now some but he has a business and can't always be available, I wait to hear from you."
- Robert T Grabowski, family member submitted:
"Since September 24th of 2021 my daughter Stephanie has no transportation. What a travesty that we adults on the board can't take care of the most vulnerable citizens of our county. I find it hard to believe that we have to continue to have meeting after meeting after meeting when these disabled individuals are not able to have transportation. What is wrong with our community that we can't take care of the most vulnerable citizens. My daughter has been with BCI for 25 years, and never have I seen such a disarray in the functionality of our governing, the hardships families, are enduring, because the lack of decisions. A decision to get transportation up and running is vital, so these special people will have a job and purpose. Fiscal year 23 has come and going and now we're talking about fiscal year 24 what about transportation we need to get it done."

- Kay Lynn Remiker, Direct Support Professional, submitted:
"We need providers. One of my consumers will no longer be able to participate in his supported work program. I am unable to be in 2 places at once. BCI and or the St. Peters day program, MO Mentor."
- Peg Capo read aloud comments received from Jeanne Marshall, Easterseals Midwest:
"Easterseals Midwest would like to thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to individuals with disabilities and their families living in St. Louis County. We are grateful for the funding you allocate annually and the thoughtful approach you take in considering new programs and understanding the challenges that providers are facing. We also appreciate the opportunity to provide input and apologize for not being present, but our own Board meeting unfortunately conflicts with today's DDRB meeting."

We are committed as an agency to serving people well, but in order to do that we have to hire and retain exceptional staff and as you know these past 3-5 years have been an uphill battle in achieving that goal. We continue to put every resource we have toward solving the DSP staffing crisis and attempting to create stability for those we serve and establish a career path for our workforce. We want them to be able to make a career out of a vocation they are called to and in order to achieve that we have to compete with every other industry vying for staff. In the past 28 months we have invested an additional \$19.9 million dollars in staff increases. We continue to reset the bar for starting wages while simultaneously recognizing the commitment for years of service to our staff who are making a real difference in our mission by staying year after year. Since February 2021 our base rate average increased by 42%, and this only just keeps us minimally competitive with the quickly changing market within I/DD and in the general sector. Along with the competitive wage market, agencies are experiencing increased costs related to extraordinary overtime (millions of dollars each year), mileage reimbursement and transportation costs, insurance expense, and costs related to turnover and hiring (advertising, onboarding, training, etc.), to name a few.

We appreciate your consideration of a market rate adjustment for the next funding cycle and know that our employees are worth it as is the stability of services to individuals in need of them in St. Charles County.

In terms of other future funding considerations, we continue to receive inquiries about essential parent training that families would like to access. We have 50 years of experience with this program and would love the opportunity to speak to with the program committee to discuss these additional needs and describe the history and efficacy of this individualized, family and child centered program.

Thank you once again for seeking input from stakeholders! We are proud to be your partner."

- Monica Wilmsen, Curriculum and Family Specialist, United Services for Children, gave an overview of United Services for Children's services. Monica thanked the Board for ongoing support. The agency has seen an increase in Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis's and increased social needs due to COVID-19 isolation. Their Therapeutic Interventions project is thriving, and the data supports its positive effects on young children. United Services has seen a 17% increase in expenses overall. 25% increase in family scholarships, 19% increase in DSP wages, and 31% increase in paid services (janitor, IT, etc.).
- Barb Griffith, President and CEO, Community Living shared the following statement and submitted in writing for the minutes:

"Thank you for your continued partnership and flexibility over the past few years as we emerge from the COVID 19 pandemic and "the great resignation" staffing shortage and figure out how to do business differently.

Regarding a market rate adjustment, the current rate of inflation is over 8%. Tying a market rate adjustment to the rate of inflation would be reasonable and could be used as the formula for the future. It would truly be a "market rate" adjustment.

As you review options for the FY2024 funding cycle, I would like you to consider flexibility for agencies in funding programs/services. Service needs can change remarkably from the time of an agency's request to actual usage. Funds are encumbered for an agency at the time the DDRB budget is set. What often happens through the fiscal year is that a particular funded service is not used as predicted in one program, and in another program, more services are needed than predicted. The funding goes unused in the underutilized program and the program that has more demand will either have to limit services or operate at a deficit, etc. In the past, agencies could request that funds be moved from one program to another, with appropriate documentation and approval. I would like the DDRB to consider this option.

Another consideration would be setting the market rate adjustment on the total amount of funds encumbered for an organization but allowing flexibility of the actual unit rates for various programs. One service's unit rate may not need the full MRA due to economies of scale/efficiencies, but another service may need a higher rate.

The DDRB has always been open to ideas and suggestions from community partners and I know that all the providers in St. Charles County greatly appreciate being able to have open, honest communication with the board and staff. Thank you for ensuring that our tax dollars are used as efficiently and effectively as possible to ensure individuals with developmental disabilities have quality opportunities and choices to live their best possible lives."

- Rachel Svejkosky, Program Director, Family Advocacy and Community Training (FACT) thanked the Board for their ongoing support and the increase this past year. FACT has Increasing starting wages to \$18.00 per hour. Everything costs more so an MRA is very important. FACT is having serious concerns about the Advocacy project waitlist for educational advocacy. Everyone including school districts are have issues with the workforce crisis that is happening right now.
- Joy Steele, Executive Director, Willows Way thanked the Board for their ongoing support. Joy let the Board know that a market rate adjustment alone is not meeting and will not meet the needs of agencies. Inflation and rising costs are just too much for the market rate adjustment to cover. Rent costs have increased so much many individuals cannot move out on their own because they can't afford the initial first and last month's rent. Willows Way has been helping individuals as they can, but this is a burden seen by many residential agencies. Rising costs are not just an issue for agencies but also the individuals they serve.
- Gary Wolmack, family member of employee at BCI shared with the Board how much his son loves to work at BCI. He stated that COVID was a setback for recreation for many, including Gary's son. The biggest challenge is transportation. This is an ongoing issue for the family and dropping him off and picking him up from BCI daily is a struggle because both parents also have employment. "Once he gets a self-driving car he can go anywhere" Their family doesn't want to have to leave St. Charles County due to lack of transportation. Not sure how to fix the problem but wanted the Board to hear it really is a problem.

- Joyce Holzum, family member submitted this comment via the zoom chat:
"We are grateful for the past funding DDRB contributed to transportation in the past, in order to provide transportation for our daughter to get to and from work at BCI Packaging. For the past year, my husband and I have been driving 30 miles out of our way each day, as we are her source of transportation now. This has been very much of a hardship for our family. It has also effected our income, as we have to pass up overtime opportunities at our jobs. However, we do this because our daughter's job at BCI is her livelihood and crucial to her well being - she enjoys being a productive citizen. Please prioritize the transportation funding in your budget. Many families are being adversely effected by this current crisis and BCI workers desperately need this. Thank you very much."
- Heather Ward, Chief Program Officer, LifeBridge Partnership thanked the Board for the increase this past funding cycle. The agency's Camp project will be needing additional funding for increased participation. The new model is working well and has seen an increase in individuals being served.

Bryon Hale motioned to close the hearing for FY2024 Funding Priorities. Connie Tan seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Roll call of the members physically present was taken: Dan Dozier, yes; Missy Fallert, yes; Bryon Hale, yes; Mike Mahoney, yes; Sue Sharp, yes; and Connie Tan, yes.

Mission Moment: MACDDS Cutting Edge Award Winners

Kathy Robb presented this year's MACDDS Cutting Edge Award Winners the St. Louis Arc's Launch program and Orchard Farm School District's Bridge to Success program.

St. Louis Arc's Libby Eversgerd, Director of Transition Services and JR Johnson, Assistant Director of Transition Services, thanked the Board for their ongoing support and spoke to the impact that Launch is having on individuals. St. Louis Arc is grateful to receive this award and hopes the project continues to grow.

Orchard Farm School District's Melissa Daniels, Executive Director of Student Services thanked the Board for their support. Melissa has made it her personal mission to build something that affects this community in a positive way. She believes the program Bridge to Success is doing that. Melissa reported that Fort Zumwalt School District has joined the program and they are excited to grow and reach more students in St. Charles County.

Public Comments and Announcements:

Barb Griffith, CEO, Community Living, announced that Community Living is selling poinsettias again. Fliers are at the table. Orders are due November 9.

Finance Director's Report:

Ginger Spallek's Finance Director Report included the following:

September 2022 and FY2023 1st Quarter Financial Statements

- For 1st Quarter only, the September financials serve double duty as the both the September financials and 1st Quarter financials. Also, included in the packet was the 1st Quarter Agency report.
- Moving forward, a quarterly financial template will be created with the following:
 - current year's respective quarter and the prior year's respective quarter and related variance
 - current year Year-To-Date (YTD) amounts and the prior year's YTD amounts and related variance
 - current year's annual (12-months) budget

- Ginger is continuing to review the new financial statement format and plans to make some minor changes, in conjunction with the Finance Committee. Please feel free to share your comments on the new financial statement format with her as well.
- The County Boards in the Alliance have reacted positively to DDRB's re-formatted financials. Soon they too likely will be using jet reports for their financials.

FY2022 Audit Update

Audit fieldwork was completed the first week of October, as planned. However, the audit is ongoing, as critical data from the LAGERS' system will not be received until November. Plans are to complete the audit in mid-December. Michele Graham, Botz Deal will be presenting the audit results to both the Finance Committee and Board.

FY2023 Tax Rate Setting Update

On September 30th, Ginger received the 2022 Certified Property Tax Letter from the State via an email from St. Charles County.

Mike Mahoney requested a note be made on the Case Management financial statement that there is a variance in time in expenses to revenue and note the Service Coordination original budget on the statement.

Bryon Hale motioned to accept the September 2022 and FY2023 1st Quarter Financial Statements as presented. Dan Dozier seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Peg Capo's Executive Director Report included the following:

ARPA Applications

The DDRB received 20 ARPA project applications from 12 agencies. The total request was just over \$2.5 million with \$2.1 million in ARPA funds available. Approximately \$260,000 of the requests is already included in the DDRB FY2023 budget. Ginger, Kathy, and Peg are conducting an internal review this month and will forward applications to the Board with staff comments in early November. It is hopeful that the Board will be ready to approve the first allocations at the December 15 Board meeting.

Missouri Legislative Special Session

The Special Session called by Governor Parson to discuss a permanent income tax reduction concluded on October 4. Two bills were passed: House Bill 3 is related to agricultural economic opportunities and Senate Bill 3 reduces state income tax. During the Special Session, Senator Eigel introduced Senate Bill 24, included in the Board packet, which virtually eliminates personal property taxes in the state of Missouri. He acknowledged that the Special Session could not consider the bill in the Special Session, but that he wanted to alert the legislature that he would be filing it again for consideration in January.

The 2023 Legislative Session begins January 4, 2023. The first day to pre-file legislation for the 2023 Legislative Session is December 1, 2022.

FY2024 DDRB Funding Cycle

The Finance and Program Committees are reviewing financial, utilization and program outcome reports in preparation for establishing priorities for the FY2024 Funding Cycle. It is hopeful that more specificity regarding priorities will give better direction to agencies submitting FY2024 Funding Requests.

Eastern Region Alliance (ERA) Update

The full ERA Team is meeting on December 14 to address input received from ERA partner agencies related to needs they are facing and solutions they proposed in listening sessions held earlier this year. The ERA will be developing a plan to address key input and suggestions.

Case Management Director Report

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

- The DDRB Case Management Program is currently serving 1,294 people. This is a decrease from the last report due to moves to other counties and deaths. The program has reached out to the local Regional Office to let them know there is capacity for new referrals, and some transfers have been received and are pending at the intake process. These transfers will be assigned to Case Managers as soon as the intake is complete.
- Morgan Popp was promoted to the Case Management Assistant Director position, effective October 10, 2022. Over the past eleven years, Morgan has supported DDRB customers, families, and Case Managers in her roles as Case Manager, Mentor, and Case Management Supervisor. She has been an integral part of the Case Management Leadership Team in her Supervisor role thus making her an ideal candidate for this position. Heathersann Menendez was promoted to Case Management Supervisor, effective October 10, 2022. Heathersann has been at DDRB for ten years and has been a Mentor for the past four years. She will be a great addition to the Leadership Team. Interviews for the open Mentor position are currently in process.
- The Case Management Leadership Team recently collaborated with Regional Office staff for two trainings. The Leadership Team and Case Management Team were trained on entering customer authorizations for funding into the CIMOR database. This function has previously been a task that was relied on Regional Office staff to complete. The new process started in September and appears to be going smoothly as it is more streamlined now. The Case Management Leadership Team also attended a training with Regional Office to enhance the transfer process when customers move to and from our county.

Committee Reports:

- **Finance Committee**
Ginger Spallek reviewed the October 12, 2022, Finance Committee meeting minutes.
- **Human Resource**
Peg Capo summarized the agenda of the meeting held October 20, 2022.
- **Program Committee**
Kathy Robb reviewed the October 14, 2022, Program Committee meeting minutes.

Gateway Coalition Report

Suzanne Yardley, Gateway Coalition President, gave the following report:

The meeting was held on October 6, 2022, at Easterseals Midwest. The presentation was Elizabeth Huxel with Latitude Therapy. Latitude provides in-home and clinic-based ABA therapy services to the greater St. Louis Region and nationwide virtual caregiver training.

Reports:

1. Legislative Committee

- a. The Missouri tax rate will drop to 4.9% which is expected to occur on January 1, 2023. Senate Appropriation Committee Representative, Lincoln Huff, hopes this may increase spending, thus generating more tax revenue. There is currently a surplus in the state budget, but the legislative committee will keep an eye on how this reduction in taxes will impact funding for I/DD services.
 - b. The committee is drafting primary legislative priorities which would become the standard discussion points when meeting with legislators. Secondary issues that fall outside the priorities would be supported as determined necessary. The committee has historically focused on adult issues and wishes to expand future efforts to include issues impacting children and transition-age teens to address the needs of all Coalition member agencies.
 - c. Next committee meeting is October 17 at 9:00am via Zoom.
2. Activities Committee:
 - a. Planning for our April 2023 Direct Support Professionals Conference and Awards Celebration are in full swing. Venue options include UMSL and Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel. The conference will be held on one day, with full and half-day attendance options. Guest speakers and four break-out tracks are planned. The tentative theme is "Living the Good Life."
3. New Business:
 - a. DDRB held an Employment Law Supervisor Training on October 19 from 9am-1:30pm.
 - b. Next membership meeting is November 3 at 8:30am via Zoom.

Consent Agenda

Bryon Hale motioned to move General Operations Policy 19 – Public Use of the Building out of the consent agenda for changes to be discussed in committee. Dan Dozier seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

1. **Minutes of Board Meeting – September 15, 2022** - Available on the website, www.ddrb.org.
2. **2023 DDRB Policies Approval** – Policy changes take effect January 1, 2023. Policies are used for internal operations and general Board operations.
 - a. **Case Management**
 - b. **General Operations**
 - c. **Governance**
 - d. **Human Resources & Job Descriptions**
3. **FY2024 Partner Funding Manual Approval** – Available on the website, www.ddrb.org.

Missy Fallert motioned to approve the consent agenda as changed. Bryon Hale seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

1. FY2022 Service Outcome Report

Kathy Robb presented the FY2022 Service Outcome Report. The report is available on the DDRB website, www.ddrb.org.

Bryon Hale motioned to approve the FY2022 Service Outcome Report as presented. Missy Fallert seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Variety the Children’s Charity of St. Louis Insurance Waiver Request

Variety the Children’s Charity of St. Louis is requesting an insurance waiver for their business interruption insurance requirement noted in the Partner Funding Manual and service contract with the DDRB. The request would require a condition of funding be added to their current contract and contracts going forward. Board Members questioned the reason for requiring business interruption insurance, as well as, more

information on why Variety's insurance broker is stating the need for the waiver request. Board members requested the information to be presented in committee.

Connie Tan motioned to table Variety the Children's Charity of St. Louis Insurance Waiver Request until next meeting. Bryon Hale seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board had an open discussion about transportation with themselves and those members of the public who were present. The Board asked Heather Ward, LifeBridge Partnership how much transportation services cost for their Camp program. Heather stated that transportation costs on average \$44.00 per person per one way trip. The Board wanted the public to know that they heard them and encouraged all ideas to help with the ongoing transportation issue in St. Charles County. The Board encouraged agencies to come up with creative ideas and/or collaboration to tackle transportation issues.

Adjournment

Missy Fallert motioned to adjourn. Bryon Hale seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted: *Nikki Rogers*