

Developmental Disabilities Resource Board of St. Charles County  
Board Meeting Minutes  
April 20, 2023

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.

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

**Members Physically Present:**

Dan Dozier, Bryon Hale, Todd Gentry, Mike Mahoney, Angie Rhodes, and Connie Tan

**Members Absent:**

Missy Fallert and Missy Palitzsch

**Mission Moment: Gabriel Cobb**

Kathy Robb introduced Gabriel Cobb a presenter at the Recreation Council's Annual Meeting. Gabriel shared a slide show about his life with the Board. Gabriel shared with the Board that he has Down Syndrome which can cause low muscle tone. He gave the comparison that standing up for him is like getting up out of a bean bag chair. Gabriel has never let disability stop him from reaching his goals. Gabriel is an outstanding athlete and has competed in two, half triathlons with no modifications. The half triathlon includes a half mile swim, 12 miles of biking, and three miles of running. Gabriel finished his most recent race in two hours and forty-seven minutes. Gabriel said he is thankful for his coaches because with their help he has no limitations. On top of half triathlons Gabriel also weight lifts, plays special Olympics basketball, and is a green belt in Taw Kwon Do. Gabriel also enjoys a number of hobbies and interests while he is not working out. Many times, you can find Gabriel cooking, dancing, coloring, doing puzzles, or creating Tik Toks with his friend Grace. Above all Gabriel says that his faith is the most important thing in his life. To follow Gabriel's successes, he can be found on Instagram using @gabrielcobb.

**Dan Dozier motioned to open the public hearing for FY2024 Financial Projections and Funding Requests. Bryon Hale seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. A roll call of members present was taken: Dan Dozier, yes; Bryon Hale, yes; Todd Gentry, yes; Mike Mahoney, yes; Angie Rhodes, yes; Connie Tan, yes; Sue Sharp, yes.**

**Public Hearing: FY2024 Financial Projections & Funding Requests**

Peg Capo shared the summary of public comments from the last few public hearings.

Ginger Spallek shared the FY2024 Financial Projections & Funding Requests.

**Heather Ward, Chief Program Officer, LifeBridge Partnership**

Thanked the Board for their participation and support for the Gateway Coalition DSP conference. She also thanked the Board for the use of the building's public meeting space. Heather finally thanked the Board for the one-time funding in FY2023 for their vehicle as transportation is a major challenge not just for LifeBridge participants but for all of St. Charles County.

**Gina Ruedin, Chief Program Officer, Community Living**

Gina read aloud words submitted by Sheri Wiltse, President and CEO of Community Living:

"Thank you so much for the opportunity to give feedback to the DDRB related to funding and service needs for St. Charles County. Community Living appreciates the partnership that the DDRB has with community providers and the willingness to listen to what is important to us.

Over the last four to five years, provider agencies have had to learn to do business differently. All the rules have changed and there is not a rule book available; no guidelines to pull from. We've had to pave our way through a pandemic, and a staffing crisis I have not experienced in my 40+ years in this field.

Our most valuable and critical asset is our employees. Without qualified and compassionate staff, we would go out of business. Over the last several years, we have had to increase our direct support staff wages by 70 to 80%. We've gone from starting wages of \$10.50 per hour in 2018 to starting wages of \$18 per hour currently. Cost of living increases and market rate adjustments have not kept up with those wage increases. Smaller agencies struggle to even stay in business due to these variables.

Agencies like Community Living that have multiple programs with multiple funding streams face a unique problem. On the one hand, diversified funding is a positive. On the other hand, it can be problematic. If we increase wages in one critical program with funding to do so, it then creates a situation where we must raise wages across all programs to keep the playing field level internally. While funding may be available to offset one program, we may have to eat the cost of staff increases in another program just to stay competitive.

The DDRB 6% market rate adjustment has allowed us to continue to keep our heads above water in some programs. For that we are certainly grateful. But it does not accommodate all our expenses related to staff wages, program growth and overall inflation. The cost to do business far exceeds our revenue in some programs.

We know that to stay in business, we must continue to grow our programs, grow units, increase the number of people served and even increase the number of sites where services are provided. As a leader in our community, we want to be there to provide services for those in need. There are waiting lists for many services throughout the county. That means people with disabilities and their families are not getting what they need. For Community Living, continued growth means we must stay competitive in wages and in quality service provision. Continued opportunities for growth (increased funding for more units and more people to serve) will allow us to do away with those waiting lists in various programs.

As we grow, our unit costs go down and we can offer more services more efficiently. Our SOAR program is a good example of that. Last year we asked for a substantial increase in our unit rate and due to economy of scale and increased efficiencies over this past year, we can decrease that unit cost substantially for this year, as promised.

Again, the partnership with the DDRB is vital to the success of Community Living in providing services in St. Charles County. We appreciate the job the board and staff do and are grateful for the opportunity to express our needs."

**Leslie Tucker, Program Director, United Services for Children**

Leslie thanked the Board for increasing units in FY2023 for United Services. Leslie also thanked the Board for the use of the building for United Services' Exploring the Spectrum Conference. United Services continues to see both an increase in need and an increase in autism spectrum diagnosis rate. 1 in 36 are now diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. United Services works hard to adjust classes to address the changing needs

of the children. United Services is also seeing an increase in families that have multiple needs including financial and mental health.

**Bryon Hale motioned to close the public hearing for FY2024 Financial Projections and Funding Requests. Dan Dozier seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. A roll call of members present was taken: Dan Dozier, yes; Bryon Hale, yes; Todd Gentry, yes; Mike Mahoney, yes; Angie Rhodes, yes; Connie Tan, yes; Sue Sharp, yes.**

#### **Public Comments and Announcements:**

None

#### **Finance Director's Report:**

Ginger Spallek's Finance Director Report included the following:

#### **Included Reports**

The following reports were included in the Board Packet: March Financials, ARPA Quarterly Financials, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report, and March Bank Activity Report

#### **Finance Department Projects**

- **FY2024 Agency Funding** – Ginger and Kathy have worked closely together on reviewing and analyzing the agencies' FY2024 funding requests. A major focus has been on agencies who will appear at hearings and on agencies who have request funding above the FY2024 market rate adjustment (MRA). A new schedule has been developed that analyzes agencies. The intent of the schedule is to streamline Board Members' reviews of these requests and aid in their decision-making process.
- **FY2024 DDRB Budget** – Work continued on the FY2024 DDRB Budget. The DDRB FY2024 budget request will be included in the April 26 hearing and a copy has been uploaded to the Board Portal.

**Bryon Hale motioned to accept the March 2023, FY2023 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, and ARPA Quarterly Financial Statements as presented. Missy Fallert seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **Executive Director Report**

Peg Capo's Executive Director Report included the following:

#### **CARF Conformance to Quality**

The DDRB is CARF accredited through May 2024. Each year, the DDRB is required to acknowledge that it continues to operate under CARF standards. Included with the report were a few pages from the current CARF manual that provide more information on CARF and the framework of their standards.

Peg has submitted the Annual Conformance to Quality Report and read the attestation aloud to make our commitment public. The Annual Conformance to Quality Report was included with the report.

#### **Legislative Update**

Personal Property Tax Bills - The Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 8 (Eigel) has not yet been voted out of the Fiscal Oversight Committee. It reduces the assessed valuation of personal property from 33% to 31% of its 'true value in money'. Additionally, for vehicles/farm equipment, the valuation will be the MSRP of the vehicle/farm equipment for the year of manufacture of the vehicle/farm equipment. The value will depreciate over 10 years.

House Bill 713 sets the depreciation of vehicles/farm equipment at 15 years. This bill passed the House and had a hearing in the Senate Economic and Tax Policy Committee on April 11. No action was taken.

If a specific bill is not approved to move forward, it is expected that there will be attempts to attach language to other bills that are moving forward. The MACDDS and Gateway Coalition legislative consultant Bill Gamble and his team are closely following this initiative.

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget - The legislature is required to pass a Fiscal Year 2024 budget by May 5. As of this week, the Department of Mental Health budget does not include additional rate increases for Medicaid Waiver services, including residential, day habilitation and targeted case management. Advocacy continues. Staffing challenges are expected to worsen without rate adjustments as supported by the recent DMH Mercer study. Waiting lists for services continue to grow and crisis services are difficult to secure.

### **Alliance Capacity Building Initiative**

In response to agency requests, the Alliance is offering an Agency Self-Assessment training to assist agencies with their current challenges. The invitation was included with the report. 20 agencies have registered, 12 of whom provide services in St. Charles County. The impact will be evaluated, and it is hopeful that more trainings will be offered in the future. The DDRB Community Programs budget for FY2024 includes funds for these future trainings.

### **Case Management Director Report**

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

- The DDRB Case Management Program is currently serving 1,319 individuals. A delayed start date remains in place due to open positions and caseloads in coverage. Individuals on the wait list are being assigned to a Case Manager in the order they were referred.
- A new Case Manager is starting on April 24th. This leaves 1 remaining position open. However, a Case Manager resigned on April 5th. Another Case Manager submitted her resignation effective May 4th. Therefore, the program is hiring for 3 positions.
- The Division's new ConneXion system launch date has been delayed from July to October 2023. In person trainings will occur in our region in August and September. Case Managers will each attend an 8-hour training session. The MACDDS TCM subcommittee has been active in voicing questions/concerns with ConneXion as it specifically relates to Case Management. As a result, representatives from the Division attended the March TCM meeting to answer questions and gather feedback.
- Morgan Popp and Laura attended the Columbus Group meet and greet on March 28. The Columbus Group is assuming responsibility for all annual TCM reviews in Missouri. Ours takes place every year in November. The Columbus Group will eventually take responsibility for all due process reviews for our customers as well to provide consistency across the state.

### **Gateway Coalition Report**

Suzanne Yardley, Gateway Coalition President, reported the following:

The DSP Conference was this week and was well attended. There was very positive feedback of the conference from those who attended.

### **Consent Agenda**

1. Minutes of Board Meeting –March 16, 2023
2. Minutes of Kick-Off Meeting – March 30, 2023
3. Minutes of Finance Committee – April 4, 2023

**Bryon Hale motioned to approve the consent agenda as presented. Angie Rhodes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business:**

**1. The Center for Specialized Services – Supported Employment FY2023 Emergency Request**

As mentioned at the April 13, 2023, Agency Hearing, The Center for Specialized Services is requesting an increase in units for FY2023. This request is resulting from the increase in individuals served this fiscal year. The emergency request is for 464 additional units at the FY2023 unit rate of \$52.44 for a total of \$24,332.16. This item was reviewed and recommended to move forward by the Finance Committee.

**Bryon Hale motioned to approve The Center for Specialized Services' Emergency Request for up to \$24,332.00 for 464 additional units as presented and to amend the FY2023 budget. Mike Mahoney seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

**2. FY2023 Budget Adjustment: Productive Living Board (PLB) State Funding**

DDRB staff is requesting to add a line item to the FY2023 Budget to include PLB's pass through portion of FACT's State grant funding. The budget amount requested is \$72,750.00. The new line item will prevent the audit disclosure issue that appeared in DDRB's FY2022 audit.

**Angie Rhodes motioned to amend the FY2023 budget as presented. Sue Sharp seconded the motion. Bryon Hale abstained. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Closed Session**

**Dan Dozier motioned to go into closed session, announcing the intent to discuss Property: (S.B. 2, Section 610.021 (2) RSMo), Legal: (S.B., Section 610.021 (1) RSMo), and Personnel (S.B., Section 610.021 (3) RSMo) as presented. Angie Rhodes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. A roll call of members present was taken: Dan Dozier, yes; Bryon Hale, yes; Todd Gentry, yes; Mike Mahoney, yes; Angie Rhodes, yes; Connie Tan, yes; Sue Sharp, yes.**

**Open Session**

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

**Adjournment**

**Bryon Hale motioned to adjourn. Angie Rhodes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted: *Nikki Rogers*