

Developmental Disabilities Resource Board of St. Charles County
Board Meeting Minutes
October 19, 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 Present:

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

Members Absent:

Missy Fallert, and Missy Palitzsch

Public Hearing: FY2025 Funding Priorities

Dan Dozier motioned to open the hearing for public comment on the FY2025 Funding Priorities as proposed by the Developmental Disabilities Resource Board of St. Charles County. Sue Sharp 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; Connie Tan, yes; Sue Sharp, yes.

"Hello I am Jodi Woessner, Executive Director of Pathways to Independence. I want to start off by thanking the DDRB for continued support of our organizations and the participants of St. Charles County. Eastern Alliance funding makes up 43% of our organizational budget. We receive no other state or federal funding. Local tax dollars, fundraising and small percentage of participant fees make up our funding streams. This is why DDRB funding is so important to us. For nonprofits like Pathways to remain relevant in the non profit landscape we must be competitive with larger nonprofits. I ask the board to consider a market rate adjustment for next year at or above this years 6% adjustment. This will help us continue to be competitive and retain staff. Our staff is what makes our programs what they are and we need to be able to continue to retain them. A recent example for us was the need to hire a new program manager. We had only six applicant and only two of them had relevant experience. We were fortunate to fill the position but ended up offering 5% above our salary range for the posted position to secure a candidate. This is why MRA is important. In addition I would like the board to consider capacity building funding again. This would allow our non profit to continue to build on the strong collaborative we have in place and go beyond the shard space, van leasing and shared billing specialist we already have. This is one more strategy to help keep non profits like ours relevant, providing more choice to St. Charles County residents. Thank you again for your support."

Additional comments were submitted ahead of time and Kathy Robb read them aloud at the meeting:

Melissa Black, Speech-Language Pathologist, United Services for Children

"Looking at trends with the children we serve, communication delays continue to be the most common concern across all of the children in the Early Intervention classrooms. We work hard to help these children increase their understanding of language and their ability to communicate with others. We see a variety of children who are limited in their play skills. There seem to be more children who are starting with a toy and moving on without becoming engaged in the play. They need assistance to learn how to persist and stay engaged. Working with children in increasing their play skills also helps to building language skills. The longer they stay in the play interaction, the more language we can model and teach within the activity. We continue to see a growing number of autistic children both in the classrooms and in our outpatient setting. We are seeing a trend towards more AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) use with a

variety of children. The field of speech and language therapy has recognized that people who are not speaking do not need to go through a progression of ideas before being introduced to a robust AAC device. We are seeing more AAC use both in our classrooms and in our outpatient sessions. United Services for Children is a wonderful asset to the community. Being here we are able to provide speech and language support to many 2-year-olds through the Early Intervention Classrooms. We are working with the children to help them develop the building blocks they need to be confident communicators (e.g., engagement, interaction, imitation, play, understanding, expression). The outpatient program provides services to children who might not be receiving services through the school district or whose parents would like them to have some extra support to aid in their speech and language development."

Linda Schmid, MA, BCBA LBA, ABA Provider, United Services for Children

"As an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) provider some of the emerging needs for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) that I am seeing are transportation issues for families, in-home behavior support, assistance with copays/deductibles for families with private insurance, and respite care for families that don't qualify for assistance through low-income sources.

United Services for Children provides a unique combination of services for children of St. Charles County. Without United Services there would be a void in Early Intervention services and pediatric therapy. The ability to expand and adjust placement for therapy clients to fit the need of each individual child is so needed and United Services helps fill that need every single day."

Suzanne Salmo, MSW, LCSW, Family Support Manager, United Services for Children

"In the last year we are seeing more kids with higher sensory and social/emotional needs. These kids, and their families, need help with self-regulation and social/emotional supports. We are seeing more kids on the ASD Spectrum who have a diagnosis or are on a waiting list to be evaluated for Autism. We are also seeing more kids who receive multiple therapy services (OT, PT, ST, ABA) than kids who only receive speech therapy for communication delays. Our program offers a broad spectrum of classroom options for families. No other agency in the community offers this spectrum. Families can maintain their current home therapies while also giving their child an opportunity to be in a classroom setting with peers. Children may start in one program and move into another depending on if they need more or less support. Community-wide there are more families who need childcare or full day options and they are being turned away because programs cannot support the special needs of their child. Many of these families work from home and now have to balance work while also supervising their children."

Nicole McClain, OTD, OTR/L, Occupational Therapist, United Services for Children

"At United Services for Children, we are continuously committed to meeting emerging needs for families and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and delays. The stressors that families face are constantly evolving. Families today have new and different stressors to balance compared to families of years ago. As an occupational therapist, I am specifically seeing additional difficulties with families meeting the social emotional needs for children and the ability for children to self-regulate and for families to co-regulate. As our world has changed to make technology more readily accessible to all, I have seen a trend for a reliance on technology to assist with meeting this need. Often children are seen at restaurants waiting for their meal to arrive while playing a game or watching a video on a tablet. When a child is upset and unable to soothe, their favorite song and/or video is often played on a phone to help them calm. When a child is undergoing a scary medical procedure, we utilize a tablet to place between them and the needle stick to put on a favorite show in order to distract them from their current situation.

At United Services for Children, we constantly strive to assist children and their families with finding new and innovative ways to develop self-regulation skills in the classroom and outpatient therapy setting. We assist children with finding strategies for self-regulation and assist families with having tools available, so they are better able to co-regulate with their children. At United Services, we focus on the family as a whole, and recognize that there are multiple aspects to consider when meeting the increasingly complex needs of

families. As therapist and staff, we inquire about the preferences and concerns of the family to better understand and support this area of concern, finding strategies to fit their preferences and lifestyle.”

Sheri Wiltse, President and CEO, Community Living, Inc.

“Thank you for asking for our input on funding priorities and overall needs for St. Charles County. Community Living provides critical services to approximately 1,000 individuals with I/DD living in St. Charles County. We feel that it is important for the DDRB to continue to fund Community Living programs at their current levels with an annual Market Rate Adjustment that accounts for the increased cost of living in St. Charles County.

Lack of transportation to and from services in St. Charles County continues to be a significant issue for individuals with I/DD and their families. We urge the DDRB to not lose sight of this critical issue. Community Living is willing to work collaboratively with the DDRB, and other service providers, toward solutions.

For FY 2025 Community Living will be putting in a new request for funding, to match a request to the Community and Children’s Resource Board (CCRB) to provide after care for children ages eight to 11. This SOAR Jr. program will be just like our current SOAR program that serves kids ages 12 through high school graduation. We continually get requests to serve younger children because parents feel that our programs better meet the need of their children with I/DD. We have asked the CCRB to fund half of the expenses and that request will be considered before the end of 2023. Our pilot program will start with serving elementary school kids in the Fort Zumwalt school district.

Our partnership with the DDRB is key to our success as a service provider in St. Charles County. On behalf of our staff and Board of Directors, thank you for providing funding that allows us to provide critical services to children and adults with I/DD.”

Cindy Clark, President and CEO, Emmaus Homes

“Despite three years of historic rate increases, reimbursement for residential services still lags behind the wages required to attract and retain a qualified workforce. We are currently reimbursed \$16.20/hour for DSPs while our average wage is now \$19.69/hour. This means that across our agency we are required to fund over \$2.5 million and approximately \$1.5 million of that gap comes from St. Charles County residents. I do not see the DDRB as the solution to this problem, but I continue to lift up that I do believe it is important for the Board to consider ways to partner with residential providers and to “do no harm” when considering decisions regarding funding priorities and the MRA that might negatively impact residential providers.

Despite these challenges, Emmaus has once again begun to accept new clients in our residential services. This year we welcomed our first new client since 2019. I am told that we are frequently contacted by DDRB case managers to consider new referrals because we are one of the few residential providers accepting new clients.

Last year was the first year in my tenure, and for what I suspect is a much longer time frame, that Emmaus did not receive funding from the DDRB. An unintended consequence of this is that we were not listed on the DDRB’s funding bulletin, even on the directory, because the directory only lists funded agencies, but nevertheless, it was disappointing.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback.”

Terry Elmendorf motioned to close the hearing for public comment on the FY2025 Funding Priorities as proposed by the Developmental Disabilities Resource Board of St. Charles County. Sue Sharp 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; Connie Tan, yes; Sue Sharp, yes.

Mission Moment:

Judy Naeger, DDRB Case Manager II/Mentor, introduced Steven Conoyer and his mother to the Board. Judy has been Steven's case manager for 12 years. Steven enjoys creating artwork and recently had an art show to raise money for a local food pantry. The one day art show raised \$2,865. A new story was done on Steven's art show and was shown at the meeting. The video can be viewed at:

<https://fox2now.com/news/missouri/man-with-cerebral-palsy-defies-odds-celebrates-birthday-with-art-show-and-fundraiser/>

Public Comments and Announcements:

None

Finance Director's Report:

Ginger Spallek's Finance Director Report included the following:

- September 2023 Financial Statements
- 1st Quarter Operations Expense Report
- Quarterly ARPA Financials
- September bank Activity Report

FY2023 Audit:

Rubin Brown has completed their fieldwork.

FY2025 Budget Planning:

Planning is underway. Much of the discussion at the October Finance Committee was spent reviewing budget planning data. This discussion will continue at the November Finance Committee meeting

Agency Payments Via EFT:

Working towards our goal of making the first EFT payment to agencies on the Friday after the Board meeting.

Tax Rate Setting Process: The tax rate setting packet was sent to the County on September 26. The 2023 certified property tax letter from the State Auditor's office was received from the County on October 4.

Bryon Hale motioned to accept the September 2023 & 1st Quarter Finance Reports as presented. Dan Dozier seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Denise Cross, Executive Director Report included the following:

First Quarter Strategic Plan Results

This year's plan addresses the five big questions facing the DDRB through thirteen goals that have twenty-five actions steps. There were no deadlines during the first quarter. However, progress was made on all but two of the action steps. Of these two, one cannot start until later in the year due to the nature of the action step and one is slated to begin in quarter two. Outcomes expected during quarter two include the selection of a strategic planning facilitator, posting of the positions noted in the plan, education for legislators at an event in St. Charles County, and initial meetings of the recently formed property work group.

Senate Bill 190

This is hot-topic, and the details rapidly change as all counties (and cities not within a county) work to respond to Senate Bill 190/Senior Tax Credits. One of the issues being discussed is whether the tax credits apply only to the county's portion of the taxes or to all taxing jurisdictions. The ordinance adopted by the

St. Charles County Council will apply to all taxing jurisdictions, including the DDRB. There is an effort to offer the strengthening of the already existing property tax credit, commonly known as the circuit breaker. This gives credit to certain senior citizens and individuals with disabilities. The maximum credit and income related qualifications have not been updated in several years. It has been suggested that adjusting those numbers could give the relief those citizens need. The difference between the existing property tax credit and the one adopted recently is that this credit would come from state taxes (as opposed to county taxes) and is income based. MACDDS has endorsed this as an alternative. To date, Denise has not been informed of any formal challenges to SB190 related ordinances passed in any county.

Office hours

Remote working has become the industry standard for many companies and most providers of TCM. The ability to have a flexible schedule, while also maintaining excellence in service delivery, has been a proud accomplishment for the DDRB. The DDRB has been looking into options that can provide proper support to our community while also providing the proper level of building and employee security. It is no surprise that Fridays are one of the most popular days for PTO usage. This has created challenges in coverage at the office building, sometimes leading to less-than-optimal security and back-up for the front desk. The DDRB also sees little to no external foot traffic on Fridays. For these reasons, the DDRB implemented a trail of by appointments office hours on Fridays. This does not mean that there are no employees present, it just means the front door is locked. Unexpected visitors may ring the doorbell, and someone will respond. There has been no feedback that this has created any challenges, either in conducting business or in meeting customers' needs. Some feedback was received that our signage may send a message that was not intended. A quick survey of our partners shows that nearly all have some sort of front door security measure. The staff will continue to investigate options that balance our security needs with the needs of the community. This is a work in progress.

Eastern Region Alliance

One of the promised benefits of participation in the ERA is the access to data which can help drive sound decision making. The first funding cycle that utilized the ERA was FY21. Data that has been collected over the past three years is now becoming available in meaningful ways. This process will continue to be developed to meet the needs of the participating boards. What follows in the Board packet is an early look at a couple examples. Denise will continue to learn and will present more at upcoming meetings. Feedback is welcome as to the types of data that would be of interest. Denise plans to dive into the outcome data next.

Case Management Director Report

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

- The DDRB Case Management Program is currently serving 1,346 individuals. This is an increase of 13 from last month. Five customers were discharged from the program since the last report on September 11, 2023. Laura is working to create a Case Management Dashboard to share with the Board each month.
- The Case Management Program currently has capacity for approximately 90 new customers.
- Our one open Case Manager position has been filled by a former Case Manager, Shane Yardley, who will be returning to the team on October 30.
- Case Management Week was celebrated with our staff the week of October 9.
- The Division reported there will not be any updates regarding a new launch date for the ConneXion database until after January 1, 2024.

Gateway Coalition Report

There was no Gateway Coalition Report

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes of Board Meeting – September 21, 2023
2. Minutes of Closed Session – September 21, 2023
3. Minutes of Finance Committee – October 3, 2023
4. Minutes of Program Committee – October 5, 2023
5. Minutes of Human Resource Committee – October 6, 2023
6. Minutes of Ad Hoc - Strategic Planning RFP Committee
 - a. September 6, 2023
 - b. October 6, 2023
7. 2024 Case Management Policies Approval
8. 2024 General Operations Policies Approval

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

Old Business

None

New Business

1. Emmaus Homes Vehicle Request

Emmaus is requesting 20% local matching funds of \$15,983 for a van awarded by MODOT.

Dan Dozier motioned to approve Emmaus Homes Vehicle request for up to \$15,983.00 and authorize the President to sign the contract as presented. Sue Sharp seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Strategic Planning Consultant/Facilitator Approval

The Ad Hoc Strategic Planning RFP Committee is recommending awarding the consultant/facilitator contract to IllumiLab for up to \$35,000.

Mike Mahoney motioned to approve IllumiLab as the Strategic Planning Consultant/Facilitator for up to \$35,000 and authorize the Executive Director to sign the contract. Terry Elmendorf seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Draft 2024 Human Resource Policies

Vicki Amsinger reviewed changes to the 2024 Human Resource Policies. The Human Resource Policies will come before the Board for approval at the November 16, 2023, Board meeting.

No motion needed.

4. Draft 2024 Job Descriptions

Vicki Amsinger reviewed changes to the 2024 Job Descriptions. The Job descriptions will come before the Board for approval at the November 16, 2023, Board meeting.

No motion needed.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted: *Nikki Rogers*