



Minutes for VMRC Board of Directors Meeting

08/28/2024 | 06:00 PM - 07:00 PM

Valley Mountain Regional Center, Stockton Office, Cohen Board Room and via Zoom Video Conference

Board Members Present: Alicia Schott, Lisa Utsey, Dr. Steve Russell, Erria Kaalund, Gabriella Castillo, Jeff Turner, Jody Burriss, Kenneth Huntley, Crystal Enyeart, Jose Lara, Jessica Quesada, Liz Herrera Knapp, Marisela Cruz, Kyle Cox

Board Members Not Present: Robert Balderama (informed absence)

VMRC Staff Present: Leinani Walter, Brenda Crisler, Brian Bennet, Bud Mullanix, Claire Lozano, Christine Couch, Tara Hester, Lizzie Valerio, Aaron McDonald, Gabriela Lopez, Evelyn Ledesma-Solis, Midori Perez, Sean Keyes, Nathan Sioson, Emelia Vigil, Julie de Diego

Public Present: Rachele Munoz (Facilitator), Irene Hernandez (interpreter-Zoom), Isela Bingham (interpreter-Zoom), James Ford

A. Call to Order, Roll Call, Reading of the Mission Statement

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm by Alicia Schott. Lizzia Valerio took roll call. A quorum was established. The board read the Mission Statement.

B. Review of the Meeting Agenda

The agenda was reviewed with no recommended changes.

C. Review and Approval of the Board of Directors Meeting minutes of 06/26/24

Alicia asked for a motion to approve the Board of Directors Meeting minutes of 6/24/24. Lisa Utsey motioned to approve the minutes. The motion was approved unanimously. The board of directors meeting minutes of 06/24/2024 were approved.

Alicia Shott addressed the closed session; discussed a staff issue and reviewed confidentiality and did six (6) month review of Leinani Walters.

D. Public Comment

1. Marilyn Patacsil, VMRC Service Provider of 30 years shared concerns regarding VMRC community service practices sharing examples alleging conduct:
 - Inappropriate treatment of a female consumer who was placed in a dog cage by a service provider.
 - Safety violation: Consumer living in a level 4I, supposedly with additional staff and an alarm system managed to leave the premise and was struck by a semi-truck and passed away. Another consumer from the same home, managed to leave the home unclothed and walked 0.4 miles to nearby gas station.
 - Marilyn reported to have evidence to present, meeting was held between VMRC and Licensing on February 4, 2024. Both colluded to issue lighter citations to the provider without following proper appeal process. Will present documentation.

2. Tumboura Hill thanked the Board. He followed by asking who the point of contact for VMRC was. He made whistleblowers and 4731 complaints while employed and afterwards, a lot of things are coming up. The Regional Center is on a plan of corrections as a result of complaints. He is not here to get people in trouble, he wants to know who he needs to talk to. He's been emailing since 2021 and has received no response. He's complained about SC caseload rations, attended Strategic Planning meetings, DDS. He doesn't know why he needs to attend these meetings; he just wants to talk. He mentioned talking to Tony, nothing happened, he saw deaths, he's seen sexual assaults, a lot of bad things. Just wants to bring things to attention and address how to fix it.

E. Election of Executive Officers

Alicia stated an election would be held one position at a time.

-Alicia stated that she was nominated for President, Alicia accepts the nomination. No additional nominations.

-Erria Kaalund has been nominated for Vice President, Erria accepted. Alicia asked for additional nominations.

-Dr. Steve Russell has been nominated for Treasurer, Dr. Steve accepted, no additional nominations.

-Alicia took votes for positions, BOD voted unanimously for all officer positions.

F. Presentation – VMRC Caseload Ratio Plan of Correction – Tara Sisemore-Hester

Tara reported off her presentation she worked on with Christine Couch. Caseload ratio report represents number of people assigned to a service coordinator. Provision of services of individuals served in March 2024, constantly changing from clients from intake transfer in, transfer out, Medicaid waiver caseloads. Presented DDS requirements and VMRC current ratios.

- DDS requirement 1:62/ VMRC 1:64 although not meeting DDS requirements, we have come a long way from previous years
- Early start and Early Childhood DDS 1:40, VMRC 1:44
- Complex caseloads DDS 1:25, VMRC 1:22
- Low to No Purchase of Service (POS) Caseload in 2024, DDS 1:40, VMRC 1:39
 - Leinani commented low to no POS took some time for regional centers to implement as many families did not want to change case managers. Families had to fall within certain purchase numbers to be on this type of caseload.
- All other caseloads DDS 1:66 VMRC 1:63
- VMRC currently serves 19,968 consumers, we need approximately 26 additional SC to ensure we meet caseload ratio
- Efforts to meet caseload ratios, as of 6/2024 we have 290 service coordinators (262 SC, 28 Senior SC)
- Working to fill vacant positions, posting on online sources, recruiting award program
- Challenges: High COLA, changes to eligibility criteria, don't have education requirements, 100% remote expectations, competition in the field (Department of Social Services, etc), outdated staffing formula

Leinani reported staffing formula is outdated by decades. Regional centers continue to advocate for updates to the core staffing formula. Regional Centers sometimes lose staff to county jobs due to pay scales. VMRC recently lost staff who are moving out of California due to Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA). Highest area of competition city government offices that offer better pay/different types of benefits. We are competitive as we can be,

Bud reported ups and downs. We were not getting applicants for a while, starting to see an increase. Tracy office has been tougher to recruit for. VMRC is competitive in benefits and worked on Union to open steps (1, 2, 3) can bring in staff with more experience at a higher pay. Agreed to Tara's point, there are applicants with experience, but not educational background.

Jose Lara asked for the turnover rate. Bud reported it is low, July 1st at start of the year with 2-3%, last year was 7%. Some staff leave to move out of state, retire, other opportunities.

Most hiring is due to promotions due to VMRC growth. Bud Mullanix reported over 73 hires since last year, average 8-10 a month. The strategy is hiring on the new, DDS will give incentives to hire new and we work on hiring on the backfill.

Leinani reported that many regional centers are in the same position. We are hiring 26 for 4 offices, which is a low number. We are actively recruiting despite challenges.

Jeff Turner asked who sets educational requirements and job descriptions requirements. Do we have control over that here?

Bud reported service coordinators need a minimum of bachelor's degree. RC does not have control over this. Jeff reiterated DDS set requirements. Kenneth asked what the recruitment process was. Bud reported job fair, social media, articles in local newspapers, reached out to university-internship program, referral bonus has helped.

Alicia opened Public Comment regarding presentation only. Jeff had another comment, if DDS dictates what our requirements are and what our pay is, we need a conversation with DDS and government officials "you can flip a burger at McDonalds and earn \$23, but we require a college degree, it's a joke, just a thought." Tara reported pay is negotiated with the union which is about to a contract reopener. Bud reported HR Directors at other RCs share their compensation to ensure we're competitive.

Alicia asked for Public Comment on zoom. Tumboura Hill spoke and reported audit was done on DDS, came out in 2021, SCs average \$34,000 a year based on old model/hiring freeze in the 90's. They should be making \$74,000 a year. Alicia asked for public comments in person again. No one in zoom made public comments.

G. Committee Reports

1. **Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of June 12, 2024.** Alicia Schott
-Alicia asks for a motion to pass the committee reports for June and July, asked for a motion to pass Executive Committee report. Jose made a motion to approve, Lisa seconded the motion. The Executive Committee minutes were approved unanimously.
2. **Finance Committee** – Brenda Crisler, Interim CFO and Pete Tiedemann, VMRC Fiscal Consultant
 - a. Review of Financial Report – Brenda Crisler
Brenda reported that Pete was able to pull information on the financial status VMRC:
 - 100% spent year elapsed
 - 95% POS budget has been expended
 - 87.8% of Operations budget
 - We anticipate expending the entire Ops budget 100% as late bills will continue to come in. \$2.1 Million expected to be spent on POS due to late bills coming in from vendors sending invoices 1-2 years late
 - \$7 million projected late bills
 - b. Approval of Contracts over \$250,000 for August, September and October 2024 brought forth as Motion from the Finance

Committee – Corina Ramirez

-Dr. Steve makes a motion to approve contracts. Crystal seconded the motion. Liz Herrera-Knapp abstained.

3. Consumer Services Committee

- Alicia reported that Gabriella Castillo is the new co-chair along with Jose Lara. There are no meeting minutes.
- Evelyn reported on behalf of Gabriella that she has an event coming up with Leinani in her county to introduce new E.D. and is inviting BOD to attend.
- Alicia reported next meeting will be on September 25, 2024, at 5pm

4. Legislative Committee

Alicia reported Jeff Turner is new chair Alicia to forward ARCA legislative meeting.

5. Bylaws Committee

Alicia reported Jody Buriss is new chair

6. Nominating Committee

Alicia reported Erria Kaalund is chair

7. Popplewell Review Team

Erria Kaalund-no meeting, no notes

8. Consumer Advisory Council, SAC6 – Crystal Enyeart

Crystal read her report.

9. VMRC Professional Advisory Committee, Coalition of Local Agency Service Provider (C.L.A.S.P.) – Liz Herrera Knapp

- Liz reported on 7/22 and 8/26 meetings with 35 paid members. Working on getting members back up to paid
- \$22,745.97 in their account with no expenditure, they will use in upcoming provider conference, information to come
- July 20 meeting, presentation from Vicki Smith on DDS DSP Internship Program
- August 26 meeting, presentation from Erin Martin on caseload ratios
- Residential work group continues to meet (KC Shadman-Contact person)
- Day program work group continues to meet next meeting 9/18/24 (Jennifer Jones-Contact person)
- Working to create ILS and SLS work groups
- Next meeting is September 23, 2024, on zoom at 10am. Looking to have them back in-person at VMRC, more information to come.

H. Executive Director's Report

- Leinani shared about the VMRC Board dinner held on July 31 and thanked those who could join and coordinate the special event.
- July 1 - welcomed Brenda, interim CFO, thanked for supporting during transition time, build systems and put in place

- August 14 - we had tribute to Director Bargmann to express appreciation at ARCA meeting, Director Bargmann Introduced Chief Deputy Director, Dr. Michi Gates, former Kern RC Director, will serve as liaison to all 21 RC as Brian Winfield is also retiring.
- With Alicia's Support, Leinani is coordinating new board member orientations, presenting packets to BOD that were created, orientations hosted at their local VMRC office.
- August 22 - Presented with Dr. Claire Lazaro at the DDS Legislative Briefing in Sacramento to share about VMRC Wellness Project impact in the community and thanked Claire for her hard work.
- August 27 - All-Staff Gathering at the Bob Hope theater. Thanked the staff for their support in the wonderful event – Christine Couch, Edwin Gaspar, Renee Williams, and the entire IT staff. Shared about panel speakers, Marisela (Member of VMRC Board), Tommy & Leticia Florez (Parents), Pam Chueh (Government Operations, Chief Equity Officer), Season Goodpasture (Tribal Leader), Yvette Baptist (East LA FRC Director).
 - Marisela shared her experience with everyone at the meeting.
 - Tara shared her insight, staff shared with her that they felt respected and seen. Thanked Leinani for her leadership. ARCA academy is September 6 & 7, staff and some members of the BOD will be attending. The masterplan will be taking place in Fresno online and in person.

H. Board Member Activities and Reports

-Kenneth shared that at the Stockton Civic Center, the Mayor's Taskforce for Disabilities Meeting takes place on last Thursdays of the month at 3pm.

I. President's Report

-Alicia shared the VMRC All Staff event was a great experience, met a lot of staff and got a lot of feedback. Great message from the panel to remind SC to meet the families where they are, listen to consumer and families.

-Also attended the ARCA Academy meeting. ARCA is an entity that supports RCs with Board delegates from all 21 RCs to gather to talk about RCs and legislation in the state. Over 68,000 professionals completed DSP training and received stipends, an opportunity to further education for direct service providers.

-A new position, Chief Equity Officer rolling out at 6 RCs

-Over 100 board delegates from RCs are going to the ARCA Academy on September 6 & 7, Lisa will be a speaker on onboarding people with disabilities.

J. Next Meeting – Wednesday, October 23, 2024, at 6:00pm Hybrid (In-Person and Zoom)

K. Adjournment – Alicia Schott