



Minutes for VMRC Board of Directors Meeting

10/23/2024 | 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, Jessica Quesada, Liz Herrera Knapp,

Board Members Not Present: Jody Burriss (informed absence), Jeff Turner (informed absence), Kyle Cox, Robert Balderama, Marisela Cruz and Jose Lara.

VMRC Staff Present: Leinani Walter, Brenda Crisler, Brian Bennet, Claire Lozaro, Christine Couch, Tara Sisemore-Hester, Gabriela Lopez, Evelyn Ledesma-Solis, Midori Perez, Sean Keyes, Nathan Sioson, Athena Jurado, Cindy Jimenez, Danielle Wells, Gina Ramsey, Jason Toepel, Josie Craig, Julie De Diego, Erin Martin, Lena Dobson, Mari Bel Trujillo, Michele Poaster, Neidra Clayton, Olivia Held, and Taylor Fehn, Mary Duncan, Shelby Baker, Valeria Perez, Anna Florez Nunez, Denisse Gutierrez, Jennifer Copeland, Estrelita Galiza, Valbina Capurro, Lilliana Diaz, Monica Gomez, Reyna Lopez, Nancy Marquez, Mariana Roest, Imelda Flores Sanchez, Morgan Patton, Ben Gonzalez, Christina Yanez, Ann Bogenrief, Destiny Cuevas, Chris Mariscal, Lisa Rosas, Cee Vang, Pa Yang, Balbina Arroya, Marua Melgarejo, Cecilia Gutierrez, Melissa Arizola, Christina Junquero, Gladis Cano, Timothy Lao, Lorraine Rodriguez, Courtney Alvarado, Heather Clinkenbeard, Teresa Santoyo, Shana Molotch, Timothy Bulger, Casey Robertshaw, Christina McGaughy, Jenessa Shaw, Margaret Romo, Megan Gascon, Ana Mendoza, Adriana Lopez, Alicia Loza, Veronica Waldo, Nayelle Diaz, Chelsea Fields, Megan Wilson, Monica Barragan, Ja'Ree Clayton, Wanda Johnson, Rukaiyah Jones, Kioti Fleming, Jose Aguilar, Adrian Gonzalez, Gregoria Gonzalez, Mireya Gonzalez, Courtney Wilson, Annabel Oshana, Brenda Bardo, Jacqueline Alvarez, Monica Gonzalez, Maria Pedraza, Rafael Arroyo, Chanthou Min, and Whitney Costley.

Public Present: Rachelle Munoz (Facilitator), Irene Hernandez (interpreter-Zoom), Isela Bingham (interpreter-Zoom), Dena Hernandez-SCDD, Dora Contreras-ICC, ASL Heather, Blanca Avalos, FUFU, James Ford (DDS), Integrated Community Collaborative, Douglas Bonnet (CVTC), Meena Tadimet (Special Needs In My City), ASL Michelle, Vivian Nicolas, Taffie Walter, Sonya, Quality Assured Training and Advocacy Hill, Nereida Briseno, Kaylen Wyatt, Brian Nakia Keeler.

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:10pm by Alicia Schott. Gaby Castillo completed roll call. A quorum was established. The board read the Mission Statement.

B. Review of the Meeting Agenda

The agenda was reviewed, changes were made to the agenda. Anna Sims – Community Services will provide update on HCBS.

C. Review and Approval of the Board of Directors Meeting minutes of 08/28/24

Alicia asked for a motion to approve the Board of Directors Meeting minutes of 8/28/24. Erria Kaalund motioned to approve the minutes. Crystal Enyeart seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The board of directors meeting minutes of 08/28/2024 were approved.

D. Public Comment

1. Mary Duncan-VMRC Staff and SEIU 1021 President and SEIU local secretary. Shared concerns about the VMRC and SEIU contract expiring and not receiving additional budget information requested in August. Economic proposals were submitted to management and in doing research, VMRC starting SC is earning less than \$4-5 hourly. Shared that at the September committee budget meeting \$4 million was unspent in FY 22-23. For this budget cycle we were told that 1% COLA costs VMRC \$240,000. She reported to have heard a rumor that there is a hiring freeze and noted VMRC does not currently have a CFO or HR Director. We have budgeted positions, managers that have been hired for expansion teams with no staff. The priority does not seem to be for the people, actions speak louder than words.
2. Dena Hernandez – SCDD North Valley Hills Office
Shared about upcoming events. Discussion to eliminate subminimum wage, a law passed in California is working so individuals with disabilities can discuss subminimum wage. ARC of Amador and Calaveras are having a fundraiser at Harrah's, brought flyers. The Self-Determination Advisory Committee will be giving a report but brought flyers for the resource fair that will be held on April 28, 2025. On Saturday, 10/26/24 we will be having a brain health to beat stroke at the University of the Pacific.
3. Akbar Bibb– Vice President SEIU 1021
Is asking for a fair contract, reported why do we even have to ask for a fair contract. Let's listen to them at the table, fair contract for the labor we're doing.
4. Dora Contreras (ICC)
Shared frustration getting access to participate in board meeting. Went on the website and had to click on several links. Worried about other parents who are do not have technological skills or English reading ability. Working with several parents reported not being able to use recreational services. The reason is because they do not have the money upfront, sad part is their loved ones need services. Asked the Board to get an FMS for our regional centers as others have, parents do not have to be reimbursed or pay up front.
5. Vivian David-Nicolas
Reported that she is a family member of a self-advocate and is an independent facilitator for self-determination and chair of the local advisory committee. Reported experience barriers in families interested going in self-determination and families transitioning to their renewal year. She shared we had a client who submitted a spending plan change movement of funds, adding a vendor FMS requested it, it took over a month. A parent had to pay out of pocket and that could've been avoided if they had a timely response. Similarly, another client in year two that has gone 3 weeks without services. Theres a lot of delays, no feedback, hoping for positive change.

E. Calendar Consent Items

1. Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of September 11, 2024
2. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of September 11, 2024
3. Consumer Services Committee Meeting Minutes of September 25, 2024

Kenneth motioned to approve minutes; Dr. Steve seconded the motion. The consent calendar items were approved unanimously.

F. Presentation – Families United for Equity

Dominque Mellion, Executive Director, shared a brief presentation on what services they provide and their partnership with VMRC. Reported to provide services to African American and Latino populations. Shared about a 12-week program that trained family members, school district staff and some regional center case managers on becoming culturally competent in the IDD services system. There are huge gaps for services for African American and Latinos, the hope is to bridge the gap in marginalized communities. FUE started in 2023 and has serviced over 150 families, their program has helped increase screening rates, and advocacy in education. They are grassroots, staff go into neighborhoods in unsafe areas, a lot of targeted outreach in school districts and schools themselves. We offer developmental screenings, referrals for behavioral services. We are doing outreach every weekend.

Leinani reported that with this new partnership, it is an opportunity to share this resource with our service coordinators. Some families are new and need support along the way. Leinani also shared FUE is on the African American focus group statewide.

G. Presentation – Designated conservatorship policy

Jason is presenting a draft for BOD approval of VMRC's policy to mitigate conflicts of interest related to designated conservatorship. This policy was developed due to recent DDS directive that required all regional centers to develop a policy. It must be submitted to DDS that has been approved by the board. Jason explained the policy to the board. This is when DDS is the conservator to an individual and DDS then delegate duties to the regional center that is serving. Some duties are quarterly in-person, reports are submitted to DDS and making sure the clients right and preferences are represented in planning process. Duties cannot be completed by consumer's service coordinator, SC program manager or another SC on their team. VMRC will add a senior community services liaison, it is an existing position and class to the compliance office. This position will be under the compliance office and perform duties of the delegated conservatorship, as well as provide support to compliance officer and office. The policy draft presented is similar from other regional centers. Jason asked if there were any questions, none were asked.

Alicia asked for a motion to approve, Erria made a motion to approve, Kenneth seconded the motion. The draft passed unanimously.

H. Committee Reports

1. VMRC Professional Advisory Committee, Coalition of Local Agency Service

Provider (C.L.A.S.P.) – Liz Herrera Knapp

- Last meeting was held on September 23rd, 2024
- Presentation from DDS DSP Internship Program by Jessica Kyle
- \$23,333.70
- Currently have 69 paid members
- Heard reports from VMRC Staff: Leinani, Ana, Brian, EJ, Robert, Katina, Christine, and Erin Martin
- CHOICES Conference is currently working on themes and have 4 different themes they are going to be voting on
- There will be no Provider Conference for 2024, but CLASP Leadership is working on CEU events for our membership
- Residential Home Workgroup met. Next meeting will be TBD.
- Day Program Workgroup held a meeting on September 25th, 2024.
- Thank you to Erin Martin for coordinating with providers to develop a SLS Workgroup. They are currently working to identify a provider to lead this workgroup.
- Next Meeting: October 28th 10am via zoom

2. Self-Determination Advisory Committee – Vivian Nicolas

September Summary

- 199 participants: 43 female, 73 male
- Ethnicity: 22 Other, 6 Multicultural, 35 White, 45 Spanish Latino, 10 African American
- Serving San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Three Mountain, Sacramento and San Bernardino counties (transitioning out)
- Of total numbers to date:
 - Those who started but did not see it through - 72
 - still in process, pending transition - 11
 - went back to traditional - 34
 - 2 - transfers out of VMRC sharing case management until fiscal year ends
- Fiscal Summary from September
 - We still have allocation from **FY 2021-2022**
 - Total expenditure: \$57, 553.36
 - Balance: \$24,046.64 must be spent by March 2024
 - Original budget \$81,600
 - **FY 2022-2023**, Budget of \$89,734.77
 - \$9,051.91 was expensed, balance left of \$80,682.86
 - **FY 2023-2024**=\$90,983 remaining balance and budget
- Reported updates on projects will offer independent facilitator training, not certification, more on knowledge and information needed for independent facilitator and will be open to self-advocates and their families for one day training. VRMC will be meeting next week on RFP guidance. Hope to have it done in early 2025
- 1st Self-Determination resource fair on April 28, 2025, will be held at San Joaquin County Office of Ed. Details to be presented next week at work group meeting and committee meeting next month
- Also attending Statewide meetings and Statewide work groups
- 2 new self-advocates part of the committee

3. Consumer Advisory Council (SAC6) – Crysyl Enyeart

- September 14th Sac6 had their quarterly Business meeting. We had this meeting in Manteca
- September 16th Sac6 members attended the two in person CMP ceremonies, one was in Stockton and the other in Manteca. This was the 22nd annual California Memorial Project. This ceremony honors those who passed away while living in state Hospitals without the proper services.
- September 27th Lisa U attended the ARCA CAC meeting on zoom.
- October 2nd Sac6 had their practice zoom chat to prepare for the Friday Zoom Chat.
- October 4th Sac6 had their Friday Zoom chat from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm where we introduced Nicole Patterson from DDS as she shared information about The Master Plan to advocates. She will also be our presenter at the November Area Meeting to get individuals feedback who receive services from VMRC. We also shared the CHOICES Planning Team request for feedback and input on this year's conference Theme.
- On October 12th several Sac6 members had an information table at the VMRC Cultural fair and some advocates registered for the Micro business fair and sold their handmade items.
- October 23rd, Sac6 Consultant Lisa attended the VMRC Popplewell Committee meeting. Also, Sac6 members attended the VMRC Board Training and Board meeting in person at the Stockton VMRC office.
- November 2, Sac had their quarterly area meeting the guest speaker was Nicole Paterson from DDS and the topic was The master Plan and its 5 areas. There were over 150 advocates in person that were able to give feedback. We also shared the CHOICES Planning Team request for feedback and input on this year's conference Theme.

Upcoming events

- November 23rd sac6 will have an informational table at the Autism Resource fair & Festival on November 23rd 10 am to 3 pm Location is Northgate Complex in Manteca.

Report submitted by Crystal Enyeart, SAC6 representative to the VMRC Board and Consumer Services.

4. Community Services – Anna Sims

Reported onsite compliance that HCBS has recently completed doing onsite assessments for all their residential day program and employment day programs. Process includes doing interviews with providers and individuals, reviewing policy and procedures and physical site where services are provided.

Onsite Assessment:

- 321 Providers were assessed
- 263 Residential providers from level 2
- 55 Day Programs
- 3 Supported employment providers

Remediation Needed:

- Physical Site modifications (lock on their doors, can have a day over roommates if they share a room, privacy to bathrooms, change hospital style curtains)

- Work on policies and procedures (house rules, visitor policies, grievance policies)

5. Finance Committee – Brenda Crisler, Interim CFO

a. Review of Financial Report – Brenda Crisler

Reported Pete Teidemann, VMRC fiscal consultant, provided our report. The first column is what's been spent the current month for purchase of service and in bottom of report is operations. Year to date includes 3 months on second page. She shared the report covers the first three months of the 24-25 fiscal year:

- 25% of the year has elapsed.
- 21.9% purchase of service budget has been expended
- 31.5% of the operations budget has been expended

We are expected to spend all the allocated amounts from DDS by end of fiscal year. This is the most current information to provide, it is different than the one presented at the Finance meeting in September as there was a state claim where a month shuts down. This is all updated to date.

Dr. Steve thanked Brenda as this may be her last board meeting and thanked her for service to VMRC. Brenda shared she will still be supporting in transition.

b. Approval of Contracts over \$250,000 for October and November 2024 brought forth as Motion from the Finance Committee – Corina Ramirez

-Dr. Steve makes a motion to approve contracts. Erria seconded the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

6. Consumer Services Committee

Gabriela reported that they had their first meeting on September 25, 2024. She does not have a report, she is still training and needs more information to share with everyone.

7. Legislative Committee

No report

8. Bylaws Committee

No report

9. Nominating Committee

No report.

10. Popplewell Review Team

Erria Kaalund shared there have been recent requests. In September there was a request for a water bill to be paid, an electric heater was purchased, car registration was paid for a family, and PG&E bill was paid. We are coming into Thanksgiving and Christmas, there is a proposal to provide 45 meals: 15 Stanislaus, 15, San Joaquin, 15 mountain counties. We will be meeting soon to coordinate and would love to have assistance with delivery of meals. Hoping to meet Wednesday before Thanksgiving between 10-1.

For Christmas we will be giving gift certificates for \$100, we are unsure how much we can do, we would like to do 35. Priority of clients in need.

Erria asked for approval. Alicia asked for a motion to approve 45 meals not to exceed \$4,100 and gift cards to not exceed \$3,500. Kenneth motioned to approve, Crystal seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Popplewell currently has \$10,798.78 in budget. We expect to have donations come in.

H. Executive Director's Report

- Leinani shared that on October 8 and 9, 2024, Division Managers, Cultural Specialists, Deaf Specialist attended the 3rd Annual Native American Individuals with Disabilities Symposium at Pala Reservation in San Diego.
- October 12th – VMRC Cultural and Resource Fair was held at the Stockton office. Thanked Christine Couch for leadership, we had over 1,000 people attend, we had over 80 vendors, service providers, community-based organizations, and many artists participated. Thanked staff who were in attendance as it was on a Saturday, and it takes time away from their families to join VMRC family.
- October 17-18 was the ARCA Board of Directors Meeting and thanked Alicia for participating in the meeting in San Diego. A few big takeaways: new DDS leadership, new January rate reform to come, quality incentives payments-presentation from tribal liaison in San Diego. It's helpful to hear what's working to support over 21 regional centers.
- Shared appreciation for SEIU and wanted staff to know we are thoughtful in our approach, working in good faith, and thanked all of those SEIU members who participated in the meeting tonight.
- Shared Special Needs In My City event on November 2, 2024. We will post on the front page of our website and share with the board.

I. President's Report

- Alicia thanked Leinani and all the staff; the cultural and resource fair was an amazing event. Erria, Kenneth, and Lisa attended and met with staff and talked to community members. Also, she appreciated the considerable number of VMRC staff present.
- Congratulated Leinani and community service staff for meeting compliance milestones and requirements on new HCBS rule.
- ARCA meetings – shared concerns about individuals and families' fear of losing social security benefits. There is a big group working on how we can fix this.
- VMRC Tracy open house will be on Tuesday, October 29, 2024, from 11am-1pm. There will be light refreshments and a tour of part of the office, not where case management will be.

J. Next Meeting – Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 6:00pm Hybrid (In-Person and Zoom)

K. Adjournment at 7:35pm – Alicia Schott