



Minutes for VMRC Executive Committee Meeting

01/08/2025 | 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

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

Committee Members Present: Dr. Steve Russel, Alicia Schott, Erria Kaalund, Lisa Utsey, Jeff Turner, Jody Buriss, Jose Lara

Committee Members Not Present: Gabriela Castillo

VMRC Staff Present: Leinani Walter, Christine Couch, Gabriela Lopez, Aaron McDonald, Donna Saison, Lizzie Valerio, Midori Perez, Evelyn Ledesma Solis, Mayra Ochoa, Aiko Blancaflor

Public Present: Rachelle Munoz, Irene Hernandez (Interpreter), Isela Bingham (Interpreter), Xavier Chin

A. Call to Order, Roll Call, Review of Meeting Agenda

Alicia Schott called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. A quorum was established. The agenda was reviewed with no changes.

B. Review and Approval of the Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of 11/13/24

Alicia Schott asked for a motion to approve the Executive Committee Meeting of 11/13/24. Alicia asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Erria made a motion, Lisa seconded the motion. The Executive Committee Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

C. Introduction of Chief Financial Officer

Leinani introduced Aiko Blancaflor as the new Chief Financial Officer, she looks forward to all her years of experience, skills and leadership at Valley Mountain. Aiko shared that she has been with the Regional Center system for 6 years, prior to that she worked in the healthcare industry. She looks forward to working with the team at VMRC and get to know the community, our clients and families and service providers.

D. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

E. Items for Discussion Menu

1. **Executive Director's Report –**

- Leinani shared VMRC is a few weeks away from introducing new HR Director and looking forward to introducing her at the next executive meeting, Amanda Verstl. With Mayra, Aiko, and Amanda joining our team, she looks forward to growing together, learning from one another and sharing what we know about VMRC and the incredible work our teams have been doing. She shared an executive message to our team and the community-based partners that with a lot of support from the community, VMRC gets a lot done with the support of our community. She is appreciative of the support from the community. Looking forward to this year for fresh outlook, potential opportunity for a new strategic plan, additional efforts with our board, retreat. February 13 will be her one-year anniversary, excited for continuing all the good work that's happening, new opportunities to build relationships in our community and brace ourselves for a new budget year. We have a new regional center director for Regional Center of the East Bay, looking forward to meeting her next week at the ARCA meetings, which begin on the 16th and 17th. At the same time, we will say goodbye to long-time director Lisa Kleinbub who will be retiring. I look forward to sharing my appreciation for all her years of work.
- Alicia reported on the Board Retreat, we have a bid for Wine and Roses, looking for dates in February and April. We are looking to build a strategic plan, there will be time set aside for board members to share ideas on how the board can be more productive or influential in our roles. She has received emails with some ideas, and it will be on the schedule. If anyone would like to contribute to it, please contact Alicia.
 - Leinani added that every connection we have for a training opportunity, DDS does have requirements every year. We have submitted our training plan and things can shift for flexibility. If there are additional topics to discuss, we can bring them into training and think outside of the box. Leinani shared February may be too soon for the retreat, April may sound like an option. We will have our full executive team on and it will be after Grassroots day, which may bring some ideas for the board retreat.

2. **Consumer Updates:** Leinani reported Tara was not present but shared she had nothing to share. Christine reported that Service Coordinators are working on new IPP template, longer and detailed and they started January 2. Sandis is down for now, taking handwritten notes on template, we have new expectations and need some more time. Alicia asked to explain the new template for those who don't know. Christine reported the new template is statewide for IPP, all 21 regional centers are using the same exact format. It makes it easier for folks who move to another regional center, allows for more consistency. It helps implement

the Lanterman act make more sense, self-advocates work statewide on quite a bit of initiatives and hopefully this will help with self-advocacy work.

3. **Consumer Services:** Brian is not present, Leinani shared there was nothing to report. She also reported there will be less contracts to be reviewed. She explained that they were vendor agreements but that is not the same as the statute requires of us, which is to have over \$250,000 that would guarantee those funds. Most of the vendor agreements brought were fee for service. You will see some of those this year, but far fewer than they used to which was based on legal advice from our legal counsel.

4. **Self Determination:** Mayra reported a quick update, same as last month we have 117 participants, Hispanic make up most of the ethnicity, White/other follow. We had 12 individuals exit the program, we are looking as a team to identify the reasons why and will share in a report to see what the barriers are or could have been, and to see what we can do in the future. The Self-Determination program received \$92,000 from DDS to collaborate with our local advisory committee to determine self-determination priorities in our communities. SCDD is actively recruiting for Calaveras, Amador and Tuolumne Counties.

5. **Service Coordinator Communication:** Christine reported that we are in communication with SC:
 - SAC6 meeting is taking place on February 1, 2025, great opportunity to meet with self-advocates.
 - April 11 is the Choices Conference,
 - May 9-10 Statewide Self Advocacy Conference in SacramentoAlicia reported its fair to bring up members of the board had concerns regarding communication between service coordinators and families. Leinani shared some of the discussion is whether or not we're having consistent and effective communication between staff and families. In the last 6 months, has not received communication related complaints.
Leinani deferred to Division Managers if that comes up, they sometimes come in through Dialpad or Lizzie. We Reminding staff to let people know they are out of the office through voicemail greetings or emails.
Christine reported that she has not received complaints, she is currently playing phone tag with a parent, she is returning calls, but parent cell phone is not accepting calls, we have systems that track our calls.
Erria also reported that if a family is meeting on zoom, service coordinator is not showing face on zoom, camera is off. Christine asked for clarification if the camera is not on. Erria said yes, she has had folks tell them their SC does not want to have their camera on.

Leinani reported expectations are that the camera is on, presentable as if you are in person, professionally engaging. The Executive Team will take it back to the team.

6. **Personnel Update:** Leinani shared union update, contract is being finalized. Our attorney is finishing up steps. Thankfully to Aiko and the team, one-time payment and adjustments on salary are in the process that are being implemented. Amanda Verstl is starting in a few weeks.

F. President's Report Alicia Schott

Grassroots is March 4, 2025, there is a save the date we can send out to the board.

- Aiko reported fiscal team is currently working with the DDS auditors, VMRC fiscal team is great to work with and the team is providing them with the supporting documents they need. We are discovering opportunities for streamlining our processes, referring to running operations, how we handle hiring, rent, and different expenses. She will be working closely with the fiscal team and other departments to look at our processes and policies to efficiently use resources. You may hear about things are being consolidated, the goal is to not cut costs, the goal is to use our limited resources efficiently so we can better support our clients, families and service providers. processes and policies.

G. Next Meeting - Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. (In Person and Zoom)
Alicia Schott

H. Adjournment at 5:57pm