

MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES
May 12, 2021

The regular meeting of the Board of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) was held May 12, 2021 at the Jeral L. Hampton Meeting Place in Booneville, Arkansas. The meeting convened at 10:40 a.m. pursuant to the call of the Board Chair.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Chair Darrell Pickney, Randy Laverty, Suzann McCommon, Sally Hardin and Artie Jones.

STAFF PRESENT: DDS Director Melissa Stone, Jeff Gonyea, Sarah Murphy, Kerry Gambill, Diane Keith, Dana Harvey, Avis Lane, Tammy Benbrook, Dale Woodall, Thomas Tarpley, Shannon Roberts, Billie Hix and BHDC staff.

OTHERS PRESENT: Rita Hoover, Jan Fortney, David Fritsute of Booneville Vending, Booneville Mayor Jerry Wilkins, and Robert Herrera of First Western Bank/Petit Jean Foundation.

Mr. Pickney called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Mr. Pickney called for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 24, 2021 regular meeting of the DDS Board. Ms. McCommon made a motion that the minutes be approved. Mr. Laverty seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The Superintendents presented reports for the human development centers and shared items of interest regarding campus activities. Conway HDC was pleased to announce the campus is currently COVID free. The following statistics regarding employee/client vaccinations were provided; AHDC 81%/97%, BHDC 47%/99%, CHDC 40%/87%, JHDC 54%/100%, SEAHDC 53%/94%. SEAHDC hosted a Town Hall meeting to address questions/concerns in addition to a vaccine clinic. CHDC hosted a two-day vaccine event which included clinical staff to address questions/concerns. Tammy Benbrook and Shannon Roberts were instrumental in organizing this event.

Ms. Hardin expressed appreciation to the Superintendents for the extraordinary job they have done during the past year. Ms. Benbrook echoed those sentiments and commended the Superintendents' 24/7 leadership. Ms. Stone applauded the dedication of Ms. Benbrook and the support she has provided the Superintendents.

Ms. Stone began her report by acknowledging the low percentage of staff vaccinations and noted the numbers affect both the workforce and how HDCs operate. As a result of the low vaccination rate the centers are unable to host Farmers Markets and the Annual DDS Fall Festival is being pushed back until October. Ms. Stone recapped previous incentives to increase staff vaccination rates and welcomed any new ideas.

On May 11th the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce welcomed The Blue Umbrella into the chamber. Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott was present for the ribbon cutting ceremony.


The 2021 Legislative Session ended with no legislation which adversely affects DDS. A Capitol Appropriations Bill passed and will be used towards HDC master plans. The COVID Relief Act allows childcare vouchers for essential workers. DDS is also in the initial stages of locating a property to ultimately provide childcare for CHDC staff.

Mayor Wilkins commended BHDC staff for their work during the pandemic. He also complimented the progress on the new buildings. BHDC Superintendent Jeff Gonyea advised a tentative completion date of August for one of the new structures and a tour would be conducted at the end of the meeting. He also noted demolition is scheduled for three other campus structures.

Mr. Pickney requested an update on construction of HDC infirmaries and the Behavior Consultation Committee's report on restraint usage. Ms. Stone advised medical clinics are included in the HDC master plans so that medical services will be housed in one area. Three outside experts are being considered to review HDC restraint statistics and policies. The review should be complete by the end of the summer.

With no other business, Mr. Pickney called for a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Ms. Hardin made a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Ms. McCommon seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

ATTEST:


Chair, Board of DDS


Executive Secretary