

MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES
February 7, 2024

The regular meeting of the Board of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) was held February 7, 2024 at Conway Human Development Center. The meeting convened at 10:30 a.m. pursuant to the call of the Board Chair.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Suzann McCommon, David Rosegrant, Linda Patterson, Michelle Loe and Randy Laverty participating via conference call.

STAFF PRESENT: Medicaid Speciality Populations Director Melissa Weatherton, DDS Interim Director Thomas Tarpley, Jeff Gonyea, Sarah Murphy, Kerry Gambill, Diane Keith, Mark Wargo, Avis Lane, Tammy Benbrook, Dale Woodall, Kathleen Hoskins, Amanda Cox, Kathy Guffey, Jennifer Ethridge, Raven Fuller, Lisa Hancock, Gretchen Baggett, with Hunter Ballard attending via Zoom.

OTHERS PRESENT: Deborah Rainwater, Reagan Stafford of Disability Rights Arkansas, Kimberly Dodd, and Carole Sherman attending via Zoom.

Ms. McCommon called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Ms. McCommon called for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 1, 2023 regular meeting of the DDS Board. Mr. Rosegrant made a motion that the minutes be approved. Ms. Loe seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. McCommon called for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 21, 2023 called meeting of the DDS Board. Ms. Patterson made a motion that the minutes be approved. Mr. Rosegrant seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Physical Management Subcommittee met at 10:00 on this date to discuss the extension of lease 42-000-T6059 (attachment 1) involving World of Wireless utilizing air space above the north water tower on Booneville Human Development Center property. The Subcommittee moved to approve the extension for two years at the current rate. Mr. Rosegrant seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Superintendents of the human development centers shared items of interest regarding campus activities, hiring efforts, and construction updates. Conway HDC Superintendent Sarah Murphy reported that the Polar Express was very successful during the holidays with over 2000 in attendance. CHDC has also been participating in Special Olympic activities across the state and recently kicked off the We Heart campaign. Jonesboro HDC Superintendent Diane Keith shared that their annual Christmas parade received a large amount of participation from the community and the elementary and middle schools on campus. A group of JHDC residents traveled to Little Rock to tour the Little Rock Central High Visitors Center. Booneville HDC Superintendent Jeff

Gonyea updated the Board on the success of hiring efforts. He also advised town hall meetings have resumed and that the We Heart campaign has been well received. The completion date of the large building is approximately 60 days away. Arkadelphia HDC Superintendent Kerry Gambill highlighted campus Christmas activities and noted the upcoming eclipse party. ADHC has hosted several Winter Olympics activities in preparation for the Special Olympics. National leaders for the Elks are scheduled to visit campus to tour the Razorback Bank Workshop. Southeast Arkansas HDC Superintendent Mark Wargo shared that SEAHDC clients created custom Christmas sweaters and went caroling at area senior citizen centers. The recreation center is in phase II of development and the Hickory unit is near completion.

At this time Ms. Weatherton outlined the HDC emergency plans that will be in place during the eclipse.

At 11:07 a.m. the Board went into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue. The Board returned at 11:46 a.m. Ms. Loe made a motion to appoint a committee to interview candidates for the DDS Director position. Ms. Patterson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Weatherton reported ALC Peer Review is scheduled to approve the release of \$8,000,000 secured by Representative Ladyman for Jonesboro Human Development Center. The Blue Umbrella will celebrate its 5th Birthday on February 23rd at Central Office. DDS continues to work to secure RNs and LPNs for the human development centers. Mr. Tarpley is scheduled to meet with the Office of Personnel Management to establish an emergency pay grid that will apply to both new and current staff without the addition of extra duties.

Mr. Tarpley advised March 4th is the kickoff of DDS Awareness Month. The unveiling of photo banners will occur at Central Office. DDS is also working with the Governor's Office to engage in additional events during the month.

Conway HDC parent Deborah Rainwater voiced her appreciation to Sarah Muphy, CHDC staff, and DDS staff. She noted that her son Kirk would be featured on one of the DHS banners during Developmental Disabilities Month. Arkadelphia HDC parent Kimberly Dodd advised her son Matthew would be featured on a banner as well.


Mr. Lavery requested information regarding the availability of sedation dentistry for HDC clients. Ms. Weatherton advised DDS was actively working through this. Because of the amount of time required to treat an IDD client there is a lack of interest in dentists willing to provide this service. A list of providers across the state who provide sedation dentistry is being compiled and will be forwarded to the Board upon completion.

The Board discussed the ongoing issues faced with the DHS TRIPS system utilized for mileage reimbursement. Ms. McCommon called for a motion to return to submitting mileage reimbursement through paper TR-1s. Ms. Loe made the motion. Ms. Patterson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2/7/24

With no further business, Ms. McCommon called for a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Mr. Rosegrant made a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Ms. Loe seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

ATTEST:


Suzann McCommon
Chair, Board of DDS


Executive Secretary