

## **Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities Quarterly Meeting**

The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) met on Thursday, June 8, 2023, at the University of Arkansas – Pulaski Tech South Campus, 13000 Interstate 30, Little Rock, AR, 72210.

### **Agenda Item I Call to Order**

Council Chair Katherine Donovan called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM CST. She asked for any guests to introduce themselves, then proceeded to call roll.

### **Agenda Item II Welcome and Guest Introductions**

Chair Donovan asked for guests to introduce themselves. They are listed under "Guests" in Agenda Item III – Roll Call.

### **Agenda Item III Roll Call**

Donoven conducted the roll call with the following results:

#### **Members Present:**

Katherine Donovan – Chairperson  
Lud Kozlowski – Vice - Chair  
Proxy for Karan Burnette  
Joseph Baxter  
Syard Evans  
Cynthia Fong  
C.W. Gardenhire  
Mark George  
Kasey Hodges  
Carrie Hollis-Anthony  
Tom Masseau – via Zoom  
Ann Price  
Amanda Sanders  
Proxy for Rhonda Saunders  
Christopher Tebbetts  
Maria Villagran  
Janette Williams-Smith  
Melissa Weatherton

#### **Members Absent:**

Ke'Arus Henderson  
Toni Roy  
Heather Shrader

**Guests:**

Teresa Dannaway – Partners in Policymaking graduate

Amanda Mauck- MHP

Tanya Miller-Witsell- Project Director, MICI

Susan Pierce – Disability Rights Arkansas (DRA)

Michael Thornton - Arkansas People 1<sup>st</sup>

Ally Thomlinson – Executive Director, Arkansas Alliance for Disability Advocacy (AADA)

**Staff Present:**

Jonathan Taylor, Executive Director

Assiah Lewellen, Deputy Director

Linda Sims, Program Coordinator

Kim Gatewood, Admin. Specialist

**Agenda Item IV****Approve March 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Council Chair Donovan asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Council meeting. She asked if there were any corrections. Chair Donovan and Mark George identified two grammatical errors to be corrected. Donovan asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was made by Mark George and seconded by Janette Williams-Smith to approve the March 9<sup>th</sup> minutes as amended. All members present voted unanimously in favor, and the motion to approve the minutes passed.

**Agenda Item V****Council Staff Update**

- A. **Director's Report** - Executive Director Jonathan Taylor thanked the council members for attending the meeting. Taylor broke down his activities since the March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Quarterly Meeting. He categorized his activities as Legislative, Outreach, and Goal 3. Taylor discussed legislation that passed, as well as legislation that moved to an interim committee study. He then discussed his public outreach efforts and concluded with his Goal 3 (employment) work. Please see the Director's Report for more details.
- B. **Council Budget Report** – Program Coordinator Linda Sims presented the Council Budget Report. Sims asked if there were any questions. Being none, Chair Donovan asked for a motion to approve the Council Budget Report as presented. Mark George made the motion, with Jeanette Williams-Smith seconding. All members present voted unanimously in favor, and the motion to approve the report passed.
- C. **FY23 Funded Project Report** - Program Coordinator Linda Sims presented the FY23 Funded Project Report. She detailed the progress (by workbook reporting and award spending status) for Arkansas Support Network (ASN), Central Arkansas Disability Services, Inc (CADS), Partners for Inclusive Communities, and Disability Rights Arkansas. As Tanya Miller-Witsell, Project Director for Marshallese Interpreting for Community Inclusion (Partners), was present, she gave the Council an update on her work.

Tanya finished her update, Donovan thanked Sims and Miller-Witsell for their work and moved to the next Agenda Item.

### **Agenda Item V DD Network/Advocacy Update**

Ally Tomlinson, Executive Director of AADA, gave a full recap of AADA's activities since March. She also introduced Theresa Danaway, a graduate of the first Partners in Policymaking class. Danaway described her experience in Partners and thanked the Council for opportunity.

Syard Evans asked for written updates in addition to the presentations for Advocacy going forward. Tomlinson presented significant achievements, and a report (and a PowerPoint) would have helped some Council Members process the information. Director Taylor committed to a more formal presentation for future meetings.

Maria Villagran asked if more events could be in Northwest Arkansas. Tomlinson informed her that while the events would be centrally located, there were program participants from that part of the state.

Director Taylor then discussed the experiences of the Council members who attended the Disability Policy Seminar 2023 in April. The 2023 delegation was Chair Donovan, Tom Masseau, Syard Evans, Kasey Hodges, Aric (Kasey's DSP), and Taylor. They met with staff from every congressional office, and Hodges' presentation on the issues facing the DSP workforce was well received.

Chair Donovan then called for a 15-minute break.

### **Agenda Item VII Reports from Committee Chairs**

- A. Executive Committee** – Did not meet during the previous quarter.
- B. Nominating Committee** – As the new Director of Boards and Commissions, Alex Flemister, is still reviewing applications, Kim Horton's position is still unfilled. Director Taylor is working with Flemister to fill the vacant position.
- C. Public Policy and Outreach** – Taylor detailed the proposed HCBS Rule requiring service provider to spend 80% of Medicaid funds received on DPS's with only 20% being spent on administration and operations. The public comment period ends July 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Taylor implored Council members to comment.

Account Strategy Director Amanda Mauck from Mangan Holcomb Partners presented FY23 November-February reporting of website performance, social performance, eNewsletter performance, Public Relations Efforts, Legislative Session Campaign, and Upcoming Projects.

PPO Committee Chair Mark George expressed gratitude to the Council members that showed up and advocated during the 2023 Legislative Session, and strongly urged them to show up for the bills in Interim Study as well. George then asked Melissa Weatherton, Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) to discuss the complexities of the Medicaid unwinding process in the state.

Director Weatherton gave a detailed presentation around the Medicaid disenrollment process that has been occurring since the end of the national COVID emergency. Multiple Council members expressed concern at the complexity of the process, but also gratitude for Melissa's presentation.

Maria Villagran asked Weatherton to review the Spanish forms in the process, as many of them were grammatically incorrect. Amanda Sanders, who is a member of the Arkansas Medicaid Voice Council informed the Council that DHS has been preparing for this unwinding process for two years, through two Administrations and two DHS Secretaries. She praised Weatherton and DHS for being open to questions as well as being committed to resolving issues as they were presented.

**D. State Plan and Implementation** – SPI Committee Chair C.W. Gardenhire reviewed the FY 22 Program Performance Review (PPR) that had been approved by the Administration on Community Living (ACL), then discussed the new Annual Report Template for the PPR. He explained that ACL has directed state DD Councils to release the PPR in an easier to read format, and the new Annual Report is written in that new format.

Gardenhire then discussed the Annual Workplans due by August 15, 2023. The workplans are the target metrics for the Five-Year state plan activities for FFY24 and FFY 25. He then moved to the State Plan Implementation (SPI) Committee's funding recommendations for FY24.

Gardenhire stated that staff had issued documents containing SPI's funding recommendations prior to the meeting and asked if there were any questions from the Council. Being none, Committee Chair Gardenhire asked for a motion to approve SPI's funding recommendations as presented. Cindy Fong made a motion that was seconded by Carrie Hollis-Anthony. The motion passed unanimously with Syard Evans, Kasey Hodges, Tom Masseau, and Maria Villagran recusing themselves out of conflicts of interest. Chair Donovan then moved to Agenda Item VIII.

### **Agenda Item VIII New Business and Announcements**

Chair Donovan asked if there was any new business or announcements. Director Taylor shared the following upcoming events:

- APSE Conference June 12 – June 16 in Columbus, Ohio
- Starshine Conference June 30 in Little Rock, AR
- ADA 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary July 26
- NACDD Annual Conference July 26 – July 28 in Orlando, Florida
- ABLE to Save Month – August 2023

- Emergency Preparedness Month – September 2023
- 2023 GCDD Retreat – September 17- September 18

**Agenda Item XII**  
**Adjourn**

Chair Donovan asked for a motion to adjourn. Maria Villagran made the motion, seconded by Cindy Fong.

The meeting adjourned at 12:47 PM CST.

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Jonathan Taylor, Recorder

**APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL ON: 09/18/2023**