

Rocky Mountain Development Council, Inc.
Board of Directors' Meeting
October 26, 2023, 3:30 p.m.
Neighborhood Center Card Room/Zoom Conference Call

Members present: Dannai Clayborn, Bruce Day, Susan Geise, Jen Gursky, Andy Hunthausen, Trever Kirkland, Teri Lilletvedt, Jerry Loendorf, Erin Lyndes, Bob Mullen, Daniel Pocha, Eric Schindler

Members absent: Kate Anderson, Lindsey Richtmyer

Others present: Sarah Adydan, Joan Anderson, Hayden Behm, Laura Craft, Mindy Diehl, Diane Edgar, Steven Ferriter, Joanna Halland, Taya Hovan, Lori Ladas, Jim Marks, Kathy Marks, Liz Mogstad, Kelley Moody, Angela Nelmark, Ashley Peña-Larsen, Tom Robel

Call to Order/Roll Call: The meeting was called to order by Trever Kirkland at 3:30 p.m. and a quorum was present. No public comment was received. Trever introduced new Board member Erin Lyndes.

FY23 Rocky Audit Entrance Conference – Laura Craft and Sarah Adydan, Pinion

Laura and Sarah introduced themselves and explained their roles in Rocky's audit. Laura is taking on a higher-level role this year, while Sarah will handle more of the audit details and supervision of audit staff. Pinion plans to start audit field work the week of November 6, and Laura noted that files are already being uploaded for review. She explained that housing entity controls and account tracking will be reviewed at the request of the Finance Committee, along with Rocky's overall fiscal processes. Pinion plans to have the audit finalized prior to January, 2024. Due to Rocky's late audit submission last year, the organization is classified as a high-risk auditee this year. This will impact the single audit and means a larger percentage of federal funds will be reviewed. Pinion expects the single audit this year to include a review of Head Start and the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs.

Approval of Minutes

Andy Hunthausen made the motion to approve the September 28, 2023, Board of Directors' meeting minutes and the September 28, 2023, Nominating Committee meeting minutes.
Dannai Clayborn seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Director's Report – Lori Ladas

Lori referenced the Board committee list that was included in packets, reminding the Board that committee assignments are reviewed every October. The vacant position on the Personnel Committee will be filled by Niki Redford, the newly appointed Head Start Policy Council Chair, per the Rocky bylaws. Lori reported that Bruce Day offered to fill the vacant position on the Retirement Committee, which must be filled by a low-income representative. In filling this vacancy, Bruce requested to be removed from the Personnel Committee, which opened a position there. After discussing the typical meetings held by that committee, Jen Gursky offered to fill the vacant Personnel Committee position.

Eric Schindler made the motion to approve the committee lists with the presented updates.
Daniel Pocha seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Lori provided an update on Rocky's IHSB monitoring this summer, reporting that the state agreed to split the overpayment amount noted. Board training needs to be completed every two years, and Lori asked Dannai Clayborn if the training being offered by the City of Helena in November would be beneficial to an entity such as Rocky. The training information will be sent to Rocky Board members. Rocky has been working with Slate Architecture on a preliminary architectural review (PAR) funded by the city's CDBG Planning Grant. A public meeting regarding the project will be upcoming and Board members will be invited to share their input.

Per CSBG Organizational Standards, Rocky is required to complete a Strategic Plan every five years. Eric Schindler has offered to facilitate the strategic planning process for Rocky, and his initial plan was outlined. Two sessions involving Board members are expected, one 6-hour session in January followed by a 4-hour session in February. While the attendance of the full Board is not expected, two or three representatives of the Board will attend these meetings and the full Board will receive an update at the January Board meeting. These sessions will also include key Rocky staff, and internal work will be completed including an employee survey and questions addressed to Program Directors. The plan is expected to be finalized in March. The initial session will be tentatively planned for the second week of January.

Finance Report – Joan Anderson

Cash balance today is \$1,625,194, which is around \$397,000 less than last month due to the timing of several federal draws. Rocky is waiting for the Area IV contract from the state, which means no subrecipients of that grant have been paid for July through October. The money market account which holds Rocky's unrestricted funds has earned over \$6,700 in interest thus far. Accounts payable balance is \$48,727.15, which is current. Joan reported that fiscal staff have been busy preparing for the audit and things are on schedule.

Retirement Committee Report – Lori Ladas

Lori reported that the quarterly Retirement Committee meeting was a discussion of The Investment Group's switch from Cetera to LPL Financial as its broker/dealer. Jock Bovington and Matt Maloy explained their reasons for the switch and noted that there will be no noticeable impact to Rocky's retirement funds or fees. Since Rocky's retirement funds are currently waiting to be moved to LPL Financial from Cetera, the standard quarterly reports were not accessible to Jock and Matt in advance of the meeting, but they will be reviewed again next quarter.

Jen Gursky made the motion to approve the October 11, 2023, Retirement Committee minutes. Bruce Day seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Head Start Director's Program Report and Budget – Ashley Peña-Larsen

Ashley reported that Head Start Policy Council met with nine people in attendance and had a good discussion. Most members are new so the next couple meetings will include learning new procedures for their meetings. Ashley provided an update on Best Beginnings/STARS, noting that per DPHHS, payments can be expected to be received by November 14. The STARS program is expecting changes in the next year, and advisory teams will be asked to provide input going forward. New childcare licensing regulations are being released, and the main one that will impact Head Start relates to immunizations and the allowance of religious exemptions. This will require a change in policy that the Board will be asked to review at an upcoming meeting. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is also changing its application process and the initial submissions have been time consuming for the program. Ashley reported that things are going well in the classrooms and the teachers are supporting each other

through staff shortages and employee illnesses. All required screenings are done, along with licensing and inspections. Ashley spoke about meetings with the Montana Head Start Association and reported that all programs statewide are requesting enrollment reductions. The future of Head Start in general is being discussed and community partnerships have been a priority for Ashley recently, including meetings with schools, community organizations, and staff. Ashley noted that about 90% of all Head Start programs nationwide are currently on under-enrollment plans, and Rocky Head Start is brainstorming ways to recruit and retain employees for the Teacher and Teacher Assistant positions. The budget is looking good due to the program's vacancy savings.

Bruce Day made the motion to approve the Head Start Director's Program Report and Budget. Jen Gursky seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Head Start Reduction Proposal – Ashley Peña-Larsen

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group
Ashley reported that a ~~committee~~ including several Board members met to review Head Start's under-enrollment and discuss a potential reduction. As a result of these meetings, the program feels the most appropriate path forward is to request a reduction of 51 children in the program, including 48 in the Helena and East Helena area with the additional 3 slots being removed from Whitehall. The Helena and East Helena reduction reflects the classrooms that are currently closed due to staffing shortages, and the Whitehall slots are currently vacant with no waiting list. With the potential reduction of 51 children, remaining fully staffed continues to be a concern for the program. The reduction should allow for salary increases to recruit and retain staff. The impacts of a reduction on program operations and its budget will be explained in greater detail before the reduction proposal is submitted; at this time, Ashley asked for agreement from the Board that the reduction of 51 children should be used in preparing the details of the under-enrollment plan.

Jen Gursky made the motion to give preliminary approval to a reduction of 51 children in the Rocky Head Start program, to allow for additional information regarding the reduction to be determined. Bruce Day seconded, and Daniel Pocha abstained. The motion passed.

Rocky's Agency on Aging Program Presentation – Jim Marks

Jim Marks explained how Agencies on Aging were developed through the Older Americans Act of 1965. Rocky's program operates several programs in its six-county area. Currently, Rocky's Agency on Aging is busy assisting with Medicare Open Enrollment, coaching people on their Medicare choices and providing SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) counseling. The program also offers Information & Assistance, which involves providing guidance on programs such as SSI, Medicaid, housing, and transportation. Evidence-based classes, such as a falls prevention course, are offered regularly. The program includes a Long-term Care Ombudsman, who advocates for residents in assisted living to give them a voice and make sure their concerns are heard. Caregiver support is also provided. Other services such as homemaker, respite, and skilled nursing are funded through the Agency on Aging. Jim explained that the purpose of the Agency on Aging is to assist people in aging in their homes and communities. Statewide, Montana is home to ten Agencies on Aging. Two of those, including Rocky, are part of Human Resource Development Councils. Three are run by county governments, and the other five are stand-alone non-profit organizations. Rocky's Agency on Aging covers a six-county area, including Lewis & Clark, Broadwater, Jefferson, Gallatin, Park, and Meagher counties. Jim explained that one goal of the program is to rekindle its relationship with the Helena Indian Alliance. Staff also plan to write and contribute articles to senior center newsletters, in an effort to disperse information to seniors efficiently. Jim spoke about the impact of Medicaid unwinding on the Rocky Aging program. During the pandemic, the federal government did not allow people to be kicked off Medicaid. Redeterminations

were once again allowed in April, and Rocky Aging has since worked with many individuals who lost their Medicaid benefits. The re-determination paperwork is 22 pages in length and often overwhelming for those who need to complete it. Jim spoke about the program's strategic plan and highlighted that housing, transportation, and home health care were identified as top concerns for seniors in Montana.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Diane Edgar
Executive Assistant

Approved by the Board of Directors:



Eric Schindler, Secretary/Treasurer

12/1/25
Date