

Rocky Mountain Development Council, Inc.
Board of Directors' Meeting
January 25, 2024, 3:30 p.m.
Neighborhood Center Card Room/Zoom Conference Call

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

Members absent: Kate Anderson, Jen Gursky, Niki Redford, Lindsey Richtmyer

Others present: Rod Applegate, Hayden Behm, Mindy Diehl, Diane Edgar, Steven Ferriter, Joanna Halland, Taya Hovan, Lori Ladas, Jean Leischner, Samara Lynde, Jim Marks, Kathy Marks, Liz Mogstad, Angela Nelmark, Ashley Peña-Larsen

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.

Approval of Minutes

Andy Hunthausen made the motion to approve the December 14, 2023, Board of Directors' meeting minutes. Eric Schindler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Director's Report – Lori Ladas

Kathy Marks and Steven Ferriter provided an update on *Rocky Presents Chopped*, which is scheduled for March 9 at Rocky. Thus far, \$7,500 has been raised through sponsorships, with a goal of \$15,000. The chefs for this year's competition include Adonis from Habana 406, Chris Abrego from Hardware Café, and Emma Ramierz from Citystack Catering. Judges will be Dan Bay, Margaret Corcoran, and Curtis Grevenitz. Tickets went on sale yesterday and 34 were already purchased; 150 tickets are available, at a price of \$65 each. The event will be catered by The Uphill Grill, and items are being collected for a silent auction during the evening. Lori Ladas offered two possible dates for the Board's Strategic Planning session, and the date was set for February 22. Eric Schindler asked about the sale of the Jackson Street Center, where Rocky's Energy Services team is located. Lori confirmed that the building has been sold, and she has been told that Rocky's current lease will be honored, which secures the space until 2025.

Approve Change to Rocky Bylaws – Lori Ladas

Lori explained that the changes presented were the result of a conversation with Broadwater County Commissioner Lindsey Richtmyer, who inquired about the possibility of county commissioners appointing a representative to serve on the Rocky Board of Directors. Questions were raised regarding the necessity of the proposed changes, and the importance of involvement from the county's elected officials was discussed. Lori agreed to collect some additional information regarding commissioner involvement on the Rocky Board.

Susan Geise made the motion to table discussion of the proposed bylaw changes until the March Board meeting. Daniel Pocha seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Resolutions to Change Bank Signers – Lori Ladas

Due to Joan Anderson's retirement as Rocky's Finance Director, she needed to be removed as a signer on Rocky's bank accounts. Two resolutions were presented, one removing Joan as an authorized signer and the other to add Operations Director Kathy Marks as an authorized signer on all Rocky bank accounts.

Eric Schindler made the motion to approve the resolutions to change bank signers as presented. Bruce Day seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Finance Report – Lori Ladas

Cash balance is \$2,351,398, and the accounts payable balance is \$27,252. The fiscal staff have been working to finalize the FY2023 audit, which is projected to be presented at the February Board meeting. Property audits are currently in progress. Lori reported that Jean Leischner has taken over some of the Finance Director's duties, including serving as budget analyst for CSBG and IDC. Kathy Marks will oversee insurance-related items going forward.

Lori spoke about the possibility of outsourcing the work of the Finance Director position. She received one proposal from WIPFLI which was included in packets for review, along with two others since then, and hopes for a fourth to be received next week. Once all proposals are received, she will complete a scoring matrix to compare services offered and the financial impact to Rocky. In the interest of time, Lori asked that the Board allow the Executive Committee to review the proposals and make a decision regarding outsourcing, so it does not need to wait until the next full Board meeting at the end of February. The Finance Committee recommended utilizing the Executive Committee for this decision as well.

Eric Schindler made the motion to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee to allow the Executive Committee the authority to approve an outsourcing agreement for Rocky. Susan Geise seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Retirement Committee Report – Lori Ladas

The Retirement Committee met on January 10 and reviewed the audit documents along with the return on Rocky's retirement account. Jock Bovington and Matt Maloy are very happy with their recent switch to LPL Financial. The return on the account since the switch to LPL Financial is 8.75%. The pooled account value as of December 31, 2023, is \$2.3 million.

Bruce Day made the motion to approve the January 10, 2024, Retirement Committee minutes. Andy Hunthausen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of FY23 Retirement Plan Audit – Lori Ladas

Lori highlighted key points of the draft audit, recently completed by Pinion. The letter to administrators explained the responsibilities of both Pinion and Rocky through the audit process, along with noting that there were no difficulties, misstatements, or findings during the audit. The audit offered a clean opinion, confirming that financial statements are presented fairly. Total investment income notably increased in 2023, after a down market year in 2022. In FY23, Rocky contributed \$126,136 to the pooled account, and participants contributed \$154,585 to individual 401(K) accounts. Distributions to participants in FY23 totaled \$183,580, down from \$321,264 the previous year. Lori noted that the cost-basis for nonparticipant-directed funds was provided this year, which is a change from previous years.

Susan Geise made the motion to approve the FY23 Retirement Plan Audit as presented. Daniel Pocha seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Ashley reported that Head Start has a couple vacant Teacher Assistant positions, and the program is in the process of hiring. Head Start recently hosted RIOT – Reading Instead of Technology – in collaboration with ExplorationWorks. RIOT will also be held in Townsend and Whitehall this year. The comment period for Head Start's proposed rules closed on January 18, and the expectation is that most of the rules will become final. Ashley acknowledged support of the proposals but also emphasized the need for funding to accompany any changes. The reduction grant was submitted and returned, which was expected. Additional information was requested regarding the staffing portion of the grant, specifically the focus on the Teacher Assistant position. The grant has been resubmitted, and Head Start is proceeding with the assumption that the reduction will be approved. Ashley spoke about Head Start's partnership with the Carroll College basketball teams and mentioned that staff and families have been invited to the February 10 games against UM-Western. The Head Start budget looks very good. Discussions will occur soon to determine the best use of vacancy savings in the program. Possibilities include purchasing a vehicle for Whitehall and Townsend staff or finding office space for staff at the Townsend location. Ashley reported that the Head Start office has recommended that the program look for property to purchase with one-time funds, rather than continuing to pay rent for current space used in Helena. This would be a cost savings to the program but potentially not to Rocky overall, as a large portion of Head's Start's current rent costs are paid to Rocky.

Susan Geise made the motion to approve the Head Start Director's Program and Budget Report. Andy Hunthausen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Head Start 2024-2025 Grant Proposal and Budget – Ashley Peña-Larsen

Ashley provided an overview of the items included with the grant proposal and spoke about the discussions held to address goal setting, data review, and ways the program can evolve and continue to improve. The proposal encompasses a 12-month grant and is reflective that the Head Start reduction will be approved. The reduction remains at 29% as presented earlier, and there is no additional data related to the reduction grant since its submission. The program plans to eliminate half days on Mondays and will opt for longer sessions the other four days of the week. This is being implemented both at parents' request as well as in consideration of the mental health of the staff. The program goals were reviewed, and Ashley noted the progress updates at the end of the document. When the next grant is completed, the goals will be completely re-written. The grant budget highlights the various sources of revenue for the Head Start program, including Best Beginnings scholarships, Child and Adult Care Food Program, STARS to Quality, and CSBG, in addition to funding from the Office of Head Start. This year, no CSBG funding is expected to be needed. Ashley did note that the \$101,000 in STARS funding is in question after this year, and the loss of this funding would have significant impacts on the program. The majority of expenditures for Head Start are included in salaries and fringe benefits.

Andy Hunthausen made the motion to approve the 2024-2025 Grant Proposal and Budget. Bruce Day seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Head Start 2024-2025 T & TA Grant and Budget – Ashley Peña-Larsen

Ashley noted that Head Start receives \$27,000 as a Training and Technical Assistance Grant, which is funding for training purposes that cannot be reallocated to other areas. The plan and budget retain similar goals as were set at the beginning of the five-year grant. The four goals of the grant include

providing opportunities for parents to understand their role as their child's primary educator, ensuring staff credentials, participation in professional development activities, and implementation of trauma-informed care practices. The presented budget explained the distribution of funding to be used within each of the goal areas.

Jerry Loendorf made the motion to approve the 2024-2025 T & TA Grant and Budget. Eric Schindler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Head Start Policy Council Update – Ashley Peña-Larsen

Ashley reported on behalf of the Policy Council, who met earlier this week. A quorum was present. In addition to items discussed at today's Board meeting, the Policy Council also discussed their upcoming fundraiser, which will be a gift card raffle held at the end of the school year.

Other Business

Kathy Marks mentioned that a Rocky gear online store is currently open, and all Board members are welcome to purchase Rocky apparel there. The link will be sent via e-mail, and delivery of items is expected by the next Board meeting.

Daniel Pocha mentioned a recent discussion in the Augusta community regarding marijuana use at Rocky Mountain Front Properties, which is a USDA Rural Development housing entity. Liz Mogstad reported that clients have been educated and informed about federal regulations regarding any drug use on the property.

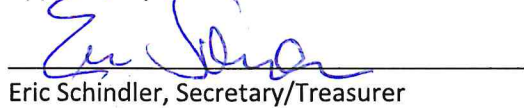
The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Diane Edgar
Executive Assistant

Approved by the Board of Directors:


Eric Schindler, Secretary/Treasurer
Date