

Rocky Mountain Development Council, Inc.
Board of Directors' Meeting
September 24, 2020, 3:30 p.m.
via Zoom Conference Call

Members present: Kate Anderson, Bruce Day, Mike Delger, Trever Kirkland, Jerry Loendorf, Bob Mullen, Mary Pat Penley, Daniel Pocha, Lois Steinbeck, Paula Wright, Mark Young

Members absent: Dannai Clayborn, Jim McCormick

Others present: Gale Anderson, Joan Anderson, Jonathan Ballew, Mindy Diehl, Tommy Driscoll, Diane Edgar, Joanna Halland, Taya Hovan, Chrisy Irej, Lori Ladas, Samara Lynde, Jim Marks, Kathy Marks, Liz Mogstad, Kelley Moody, Ashley Peña-Larsen

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Lois Steinbeck made the motion to approve the August 27, 2020 Board of Directors' meeting minutes and the June 25, 2020 Finance Committee meeting minutes. Bruce Day seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Director's Report – Lori Ladas

Lori mentioned the Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality policies included in Board packets this month. These must be signed annually by all current Board members. She asked everyone to return their signed copies to Diane Edgar. Rocky Mountain Preschool Center is preparing to open its classroom at the Jan Shaw property for children under age 2 by October 1. NorthWestern Energy has agreed to allow work on their contract again, though there are still some unanswered questions and no contract amendment has been received yet. Lori thanked Lewis and Clark County for including Rocky in its membership for reduced rates at the YMCA Child Care being held at the Fairgrounds. A question was asked regarding the COVID-related LIEAP season; Jonathan Ballew reported that approximately 50 applications were submitted for the special season, which was much lower than the state had expected.

Finance Report Update – Chrisy Irej

Rocky's Finance Committee did not meet today. Cash balance is \$1,296,854, and accounts payable is \$23,405. The cash total is comparable to last month, and remains higher than usual due to Area IV funding and child care grants awaiting allocation. Budget Analysts are closing funds for FY2020, along with tracking grants and additional COVID funding to confirm reporting is correctly completed. Rocky is also in the middle of its Retirement Plan audit; the audit report may be presented at the October Board of Directors meeting.

Committee Reports

a. Personnel Committee – Lori Ladas

Lori referenced the four draft personnel policies provided in the Board packet. These were created as a result of the COVID pandemic, and with the exception of the Hazard Pay policy, their intent is to formalize procedures that have been followed since the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 was established. The Personnel Committee met earlier

this week and approved all four policies, with two small changes which will be noted during today's discussion.

a. 4.6 Payment of Wages and Benefits During an Emergency, Disaster, or Extraordinary Circumstance

Lori noted that both Head Start and the Corporation for National and Community Service directed that wages and benefits should continue during the COVID-19 pandemic, if such payment is consistent with Rocky's policies. Rocky also applied for Paycheck Protection Program loans for Facilities, Weatherization, and Rocky Mountain Preschool Center, so staff in those programs could continue to be paid as well. This policy approves the payment of wages and benefits in such circumstances with Executive Director approval, grantor approval, and if adequate funding is available.

The need for a definition of "Emergency, Disaster, or Extraordinary Circumstance" was discussed. Gale Anderson confirmed that the personnel manual does contain a definitions section and those terms could be more specifically defined in that section of the manual.

Lois Steinbeck made the motion to delegate authority to Lori and Rocky staff to create definitions for emergency, disaster, and extraordinary circumstance at the national, state, and/or local level. Jerry Loendorf seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The necessity of mentioning "extraordinary circumstances" was questioned. Situations where the policy might be considered for use which would not be declared emergencies or disasters were noted. Concern about the possibility of equity troubles between programs with available funding and without was expressed, but Jerry Loendorf confirmed no legal issues related to program equity.

Lois Steinbeck made the motion to approve Policy 4.6, Payment of Wages and Benefits During an Emergency, Disaster, or Extraordinary Circumstance, as written. Mark Young seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

b. 5.8 Hazard Pay

Lori reminded the Board that at the August Board meeting, use of around \$362,000 in COVID funds was approved for Head Start. The budget provided by Ashley Peña-Larsen included items such as safety equipment and a temporary hazard pay increase for Head Start staff. Rocky's Pay Plan Administration Team (PPAT) considered the hazard pay carefully, and determined that operating an open program with in-person teachers and teacher assistants requiring direct contact with children could be defined as hazardous during the COVID-19 pandemic. Head Start determines hazard pay to be allowable as long as it's in alignment with policy and Uniform Guidance. Lori confirmed that Hazard Pay is considered a fringe benefit, and that it is not included in an employee's base salary. Also, it is paid only relative to actual hours worked, not vacation or leave time. Lois recommended a wording change to item C in the policy, removing some language to clarify that hazard pay will be paid at an interval of Rocky's choosing.

Lois Steinbeck made the motion to approve Policy 5.8, Hazard Pay, with noted changes to item C clarifying that hazard pay be payable at an interval determined by Rocky, with authority over specific wording changes delegated to Lori and the Rocky team. Mary Pat Penley seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

c. 6.9 Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA)

Lori noted that this policy formalizes the procedures that have been followed at Rocky since the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 was made effective in April. This policy had two noted wording corrections following review by the Personnel Committee. The suggestion was made to add a termination date to the end of the policy, in alignment with the effective end date of the Act. In item #6, the addition of the word “is” as the third word of the sentence was suggested. A question was asked about whether employees are truly entitled to the paid leave, as the policy states, or if it must be approved. As declared by the federal act, Rocky is required to provide the paid leave as explained in the policy.

Lois Steinbeck made the motion to approve Policy 6.9, Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA), with the following changes: adding the word “is” as the third word in item #6; removing the word “your” from line 2 of the Health Insurance Coverage paragraph; adding the word “leave” to the same line; changing the word “normal” to “regular” in the following line; and adding a termination date of December 31, 2020. Jerry Loendorf seconded, Daniel Pocha abstained from the vote. The motion passed.

d. 6.10 Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act (EFMLA)

Lori spoke about this expansion of leave time under the Family and Medical Leave Act for employees who need to care for their children due to child care or school closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A recommendation was made to include a termination date on the policy, in alignment with the effective end date of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020. For consistency, the addition of the word “leave” after “EFMLA” throughout the policy was suggested, when the text is referring to leave time as opposed to the Act itself.

Mark Young made the motion to approve Policy 6.10, Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act (EFMLA) with the noted changes to add a termination date of December 31, 2020, and adding the word “leave” after “EMFLA” throughout as applicable. Lois Steinbeck seconded, Daniel Pocha abstained from the vote. The motion passed.

Election of Officers for Board of Directors – Trever Kirkland

Trever reported that the current officers for the Rocky Board have agreed to serve another year long term in their respective roles. The officers for the next year are recommended as follows: President, Trever Kirkland; Vice President, Lois Steinbeck; and Secretary/Treasurer, Mary Pat Penley.

Daniel Pocha made the motion to approve the slate of officers as presented. Jerry Loendorf seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Head Start Update

a. Policy Council Update – Mark Young

Mark reported that the Policy Council met earlier today, and discussed the personnel policies reviewed by the Board earlier in the meeting. Mark noted that Head Start is still working to fill one Teacher and one Teacher Assistant position. Head Start is closing one classroom at Ray Bjork, to allow the teacher to teach online classes for the program. All of the children from that classroom were assigned to other classrooms in Helena and East Helena.

b. Director’s Program and Budget Report – Ashley Peña-Larsen

Ashley clarified that the Ray Bjork classroom closure was temporary, and that most of the kids displaced by the closure ended up in classrooms closer to their homes. Five additional children were also able to be added to in-person classes. Live preschool teaching will begin soon for remote Head Start families. Ashley reported that the budget is looking good, there are no concerns.

Mary Pat Penley made the motion to approve the Head Start Director’s Program and Budget report. Bruce Day seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Red Alder Update – Liz Mogstad

Liz reported that Red Alder will begin leasing apartments on October 19, provided all inspections are successfully completed and passed. This first phase of opening will include 37 apartments. An additional staff member has been hired to join the Affordable Housing team and will begin working to qualify tenants. Over 200 applications have been submitted for the property. The project is still on schedule for completion by January 15, and remains on budget. When the weather improves in the spring, Liz plans to hold a grand opening and ribbon cutting at the property.

Senior Corps Program Presentation – Mindy Diehl, Kelley Moody, Samara Lynde

Samara Lynde provided an update on the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Samara joined RSVP as Program Director in June. RSVP is one of the largest networks for volunteers over the age of 55 in America. There are no income requirements to participate, and no stipend is offered to volunteers. Rocky is funded for 70 RSVP volunteers; currently Rocky has 73 volunteers involved in the program. Current outcome-based stations for RSVP volunteers include Meals on Wheels, Helena Food Share, and Rocky Senior Center’s Be Well Clinic and exercise classes. Two new options for volunteers are with Montana Legal Services Association and at John McCrea’s legal clinics, when those start again. Volunteer opportunities that are not outcome-based include the Crafty Quilters, Rocky Senior Center Dinner Club greeters, Rocky Senior Center Advisory Council, and the Montana Talking Book Library, along with special projects that may arise during the year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most RSVP sites are currently closed. Samara noted that one of her goals with the program is to increase its visibility in the community. She also plans to allocate more volunteers to outcome-based stations, and brainstorm ideas to bring solidarity to the group, which is a challenge with volunteers spread around a variety of locations.

Mindy Diehl spoke about the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP). FGP is a program for “seasoned” volunteers aged 55 and older, who meet an income requirement of less than 200% of the poverty level. Volunteers mentor children who may be lagging academically, from disadvantaged families, and/or have a disability. Mindy referenced the data sheet included in Board packets, highlighting the breakout of volunteers by county. Silver Bow County has the largest number of volunteers with 42, with Lewis & Clark County second with 19. All volunteering through the program ceased on March 13, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ten volunteers have started serving this fall at Early Head Start

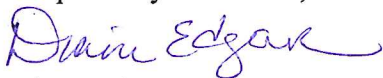
locations. The hourly stipend for volunteers increased this past year from \$2.65 per hour to \$3.00 per hour. A temporary stipend allowance has allowed volunteers to be paid throughout the COVID shut down, and may be extended again at the end of September. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is rebranding the Senior Corps programs to reflect AmeriCorps Seniors, so rebranding will be a project for all three of Rocky's Senior Corps programs. Mindy reported that the Rocky is funded for 60 VSYs in the Foster Grandparent Program. Last year, the program had 62 volunteers in September. Currently, there are 43 active volunteers, with 2 on a leave of absence. Mindy is not currently recruiting for the program, as there is nowhere to place new volunteers at this time.

Kelley Moody presented information about the Senior Companion Program (SCP). This program allows volunteers age 55 and older who meet an income requirement to help homebound seniors remain independent. Most services for SCP are tele-services at this time due to COVID-19, though a few volunteers have seen clients with limited contact. In FY2020, Senior Companions served 48,621 hours. A total of 60 volunteers served 312 seniors through their assistance and friendship. Per survey results, 100% of volunteers who completed surveys reported improved mental and physical health due to their participation in the program, and the financial benefit of the program was noted by both clients and volunteers. SCP is currently funded for 60 VSYs. The program closed FY2020 with 46 VSYs and 52 volunteers. Prior to the COVID pandemic, Kelley requested \$18,000 for recruitment funds, and she recruited heavily in the community and in the media. The program operates in 10 counties, with the greatest participation in Lewis & Clark and Silver Bow counties. Kelley has requested \$11,809 in unspent grant funds to be carried forward to purchase personal protective equipment for SCP volunteers.

Mark Young made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Jerry Loendorf seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Diane Edgar
Executive Assistant

Approved by Rocky Board of Directors via Zoom Conference Call
at 10/29/2020 meeting. (DE)

