

**Wyoming Independent Living
Board Meeting
Friday, May 12, 2017**

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 1:09 pm by Vice President Joe Schaffner. A quorum was not yet established. The board proceeded with non-voting items until Sharla was able to join the call.

Attendance:

**Board members attending in person: Vicki Swenson, Rose Rennell, Joe Schaffner; via phone: Sharla Ulrich. Staff attending in person: Amy Burns, Dermot Thiel, Brenda Thomson, Robin Miller, Cindy Livingston, Amber Alexander, Heather Meier; via phone: Rick Geringer.
Guests: Brad Williams & Nanette Dunkle from Grooms & Harkins**

Correspondence:

AGENDA REVIEW

Vicki would like to add an informational piece re: WY Senior Citizens, Inc.

REPORTS

Auditor's Report

Brad Williams and Nanette Dunkle with Grooms & Harkins presented the Auditor's report for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2016. Board members were provided with copies of WIL's financial statements and 990 tax forms. Highlights included:

- G&H issued an unqualified opinion of WIL's financial statements, which means there was nothing that needed to change so greatly that they need to bring it to the board's attention. Overall, WIL's books are pretty clean. Auditors do not tie accounts out to the last penny – they are looking more for big discrepancies. So there could be some minor errors in the books, but no significant findings.
- Starting on Page 22 of the financial statements is the "Single Audit," required of WIL because the organization has federal grants in excess of \$750,000. This year was the first year in a number of years where we had no single-audit findings. In the two years G&H has worked with WIL, financial statements were produced so late in the year due to WIL's account being dropped by the former auditor, that findings were required. Late filing with the Federal Audit Clearinghouse is still listed as a 2015 filing for this reason.

- This year's audit went smoothly, has already been submitted to the FAC, and contained no findings for the current year.

Nanette gave an overview of WIL's financial position, beginning with the balance sheet on Page four, comparing FY16 with FY15. WIL listed a little more unrestricted cash the prior year, but overall activities and changes in net assets were fairly similar.

Brad commented that WIL seems to be pretty steady in terms of funding and expenses. We don't hear much about federal funding going up, but at least it has remained steady.

Vicki asked if the auditors see significant changes in funding, expenditures, or specific budget areas, do they bring these to the attention of the agency? Nanette replied that they do review WIL's expenses by account type and any significant differences are pointed out to the business director and/or executive director. If there is a valid reason for the change they explain it and the auditors simply make notes of why the change occurred. If Amy or Brenda can't explain it, it usually comes down to an accounting issue, where something got applied to the wrong account, and the auditor would look at documentation to determine the reasons and recommend changes as needed.

Amy reported that WIL did received a letter from the Office of Inspector General regarding the late filing of our audit report, and received official responses from ACL/HHS and WYDOT. Neither is assessing any penalty or fine.

Sharla joined the conference at this point and Joe brought her up to date with a summary of the audit report.

Joe asked Brad whether what PMCH did to WIL is considered unethical and whether there is anything WIL can do about having been dropped at the last minute, thus ending up with late filing findings. Brad replied that it is not something that could cause their license to be taken away, but he would call it unethical treatment of an organization. If we had received a financial penalty for lack of filing, there's something at issue there. Brad recommended that WIL try to get the audit scheduled as soon as possible after year end to avoid any similar issues in future.

Vicki asked how WIL is ensuring we will not have any further findings in this regard. Brenda explained the annual calendar the admin team has setup which tracks our annual deadlines, reporting responsibilities, and other general administrative needs so all members of the admin team are aware of upcoming deadlines. The executive director has ultimate responsibility for ensuring filings are completed on time.

Vicki moved to accept this year's audit report as presented and printed. Rose second; Motion passed.

MINUTES

Due to cancellation of the March meeting, the January 27 minutes still needed to be approved.

Rose motioned to approve the January minutes as submitted; Vicki seconded; motion passed.

REPORTS - Continued

Financial Report:

Brenda gave the financial report. Financial statements current through April 30th were provided with board packets. This being the 7th month of the fiscal year, expenses and revenues should ideally be around 58% of budgeted amounts. WIL is slightly underspent across the board.

- Budgeted salary increases have not yet been put into effect – this will be rectified once employee performance reviews are completed.
- The Wellness Program began 6 months into the year, so will not go through the total budgeted amounts. The wellness committee will work on spending down that funding on program-related expenses.
- The Audit budgeted amount was what PMCH quoted us prior year but G&H charges us less. We plan to use the remainder for financial consultation to get remaining procedural questions ironed out. This includes final policies for handling fixed assets, writing off stale checks, and finding out what we can do with the HRA monies which are no longer going to be used so they can be applied to other organizational needs if possible.
- Utilities are intentionally decreasing and will be applied to other office expenses
- Indirect costs are underspent partly due to figuring out this new process and how expenses should be coded day to day. We're still working out what counts as indirect costs and how they affect our individual program reports.

FFS SUMMARY:

- Medicaid programs are \$35,000 in the black after the WYDOT match is figured in and billing is up to date. From February onward we are logging revenues in the month they were generated, which will give us a better picture of how those programs are functioning on a monthly basis.
- YTW is listed separately to show how it is doing, but is still subsidized with part C funds this year. At this point it looks like we will just about break even.

- The TBRA program has grown a bit this year and will generate slightly more revenues than budgeted, easily covering expenses assigned to that program.
- JCWE repayment is now complete.

GRANTS SUMMARY:

- Part B is significantly under-spent (44%), with staff salaries and case dollars being the primary areas of underspending. Much of this will be applied to meeting room expenses as approved by the Board in January.
- Salary adjustments for time worked are now happening in real time, so if staff is spending more or less time in a program than budgeted, the salary line item will show it on a monthly basis. This is in compliance with our grants, and responding to prior citations from DVR.
- We are in the process of shifting the majority of our grants to request funds on a reimbursement basis, as has always been stated in our financial policies, but in practice, funds were requested in advance. This is possible due to getting Medicaid billing up to date, and stopping the JCWE program, since we were fronting significant amounts of salaries and not being paid back for up to 6 months or longer. Cash flow is now much higher, and we can request grant funding after expenses have been incurred.

Banking

- Requesting grant funds after the fact is becoming necessary to keep WIL's bank account within federally insurable amounts (\$250,000 per bank, per institution). With the combination of our savings, checking, HRA and Flexible spending accounts, WIL's balances have been challenging that limit.
- Hilltop MM Savings account attached to checking account – signers have not been updated since 2006; updated resolution ready for signing, but not all signers present at meeting. This will wait until next board meeting.
- FIB Investment account – we had to complete updated paperwork due to FIB change in broker, need Joe's signature on the Release to Transfer Funds Electronically, then we can transfer WYTAP funding for last year. Signature provided at this meeting.

Retirement

- A recent change in DOL laws regarding retirement plans has caused Edward Jones (our agent on retirement accounts) to no longer work with us. Our plan continues as stated, but we've been informed that we cannot add anyone to the plan or make any significant changes without a new agent assigned. Mass Mutual will not provide us with a

recommendation or list of agents in our area that they work with. They just pointed us to the FINRA Broker Check website and said we'd need to talk to financial advisors ourselves to find one who will service our plan. Admin staff requested board support and guidance on how to proceed. Joe asked that the broker list be emailed to him, and he would look into it.

Bookkeeping

- Amy introduced WIL's new Bookkeeper: Ilene Whitely.
- We are in the process of updating WIL's accounting policies. The current version has no adoption date, and this is definitely a set of policies the board needs to be aware of and involved in adopting. Also, many of the policies/procedures refer to our previous grantors, or previous federal rules, so needed to be updated in general. Brenda has done a comprehensive review / rewrite with the aid of sample CIL financial statements provided by ILRU and consulting with our auditor when discrepancies between practice and recommended policy occurred. The updated version will be presented at the next board meeting with details on the major changes, allowing the board time to review the policies and then adopt them in September for the new fiscal year.
- In tandem with updating the financial policies, Brenda has been working on a comprehensive set of bookkeeping procedures, something that WIL has never had for that position. This has been very helpful in training a new bookkeeper, and will put the organization in better shape should a bookkeeper leave the organization, or need backup in the future.

Director's Report:

Although the last board meeting was canceled due to lack of a quorum and there was nothing that needed approved at the time, there has been a lot of progress achieved in the four months since. Amy reported that the SILC report was submitted at the last meeting and provides an overview of WIL's work program by program.

At the last board meeting we had just announced that Amber Alexander was appointed to the newly created IL/YT coordinator position. She carries the same responsibilities of leads of other programs. The added coordinator piece recognizes that we are in the midst of a big process in realigning with the IL philosophy and reinvigorating the core services of a CIL. We needed to dedicate someone to that

process itself, assessing training needs and working one on one with other specialists. The position and changes to the IL program are directly guided by goals set in strategic planning last May.

The agency's spring in-service was held in April. It is always good to bring our staff together under one roof to get people connected and have face-to-face time as a whole staff. This year we took a different approach, bringing a group of consumers in to assist with staff training. We focused in-service activities on how to change up the conversations we have with people so that it is more of a partnership and less assessing the services we can provide.

We brought in a handful of consumers - current or past participants in the Living Well Workshops - and asked that they act as interviewees for our staff and provide feedback. Our staff conducted interviews and practiced approaching the conversation with the intent to get to know the person, discover their interests, expectations, and areas they would like to change, rather than focusing on just what we can provide them. Shellie Holzhausen, Ms. Wheelchair Wyoming, presented her own story, in addition to acting as an interviewee.

Two staff members, Ilene and Jude, graciously stepped in as interviewees as well.

We went on to brainstorm about center-based activities, and how WIL can give people the opportunity to come together in order to provide opportunities for peer support. One-on-one services in the home are good, but tend to perpetuate the isolation many individuals with disabilities experience. Our goal is to enhance the center as a whole and cultivate a sense of community.

Adding consumer input and involvement to our in-services is a practice we want to adopt for future trainings as well. WIL staff does spend a significant amount of time planning and thinking about services, but in the past have not had participants / consumers involved in that planning, thinking and conversation. They should be at the table every step of the way. Every person involved in this last in-service has said they want to be involved further, either by volunteering, or being employed with WIL.

Board members expressed support for this approach and requested occasional email updates on exciting new events like this. Vicki asked whether WIL will establish an advisory group of consumers.

Amy replied that our Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is actively getting underway. We're excited to use the boundless energy and enthusiasm of young consumers to influence our programs. WIL designated four communities we serve to setup YACs: Gillette, Casper, Laramie & Cheyenne. We're currently in the first stages of accepting applications. Once we've gone through that process and designated council members they'll be able to participate in community service, develop leadership skills, and we'll incorporate the voice of the youth into our agency and services we provide. Each

specialist involved is connecting with other agencies. We've reached out to councilmembers, disability organizations, personal contacts, school districts and special education departments.

The IL program has been working on activity spaces, such as the one we have setup here in Casper. Staff are creating more activities and filling up a calendar of events to bring people into their centers. We have been working on Cheyenne and Laramie; getting those spaces setup with chairs, tables and other supplies. Kelly in Cheyenne has already offered iPad training. In Casper we now have an active monthly calendar. We hosted Living Well workshops on site for the first time, host a weekly coloring group, and an employer support group for CCW self-directed option (this group is already working toward some systemic advocacy regarding the CCW program!).

It has been a learning process, and we're finding it takes some time to get traction. It's essential to be available and welcoming from the moment people come in the door. If you sit and listen to the conversations people are having, the activities so far really are tapping into the power of peer support. We're working with staff to figure out our role in these events - how much guidance we provide as staff, vs facilitating meaningful consumer interactions and participation.

As an agency we're learning how we blend center-based, peer support-focused activities as a key component of the IL program. We are intentionally bringing core services to the forefront. This means that where IL specialists put their time and energy is looking very different than their day-to-day job 5 years ago. For those without a storefront office we are working on the logistics of co-locating, or utilizing other community resources to provide center-based services.

Cindy and Robin noted that in Dayton, they have been utilizing community partners to provide meeting spaces and get events up and running where WIL does not have an office presence. A Living Well group has been meeting at the Tongue River community center, and has rallied around the cause of audible crosswalks, as it is getting dangerous to cross the street in Dayton. In addition to this potential advocacy opportunity, the group is excited to participate in WIL's next activity offering, Therapeutic Ink.

The executive and program directors are in the process of performing employee reviews as discussed at the January meeting. We are now looking at the third year in a row with no increase in funding from our major grants. We're thankful there has been no decrease, but nevertheless, no increases. The board has expressed a commitment to rewarding longevity, as well as performance based raises. We took the time to get a good process in place to implement these raises, so employees would understand what the expectations are and how evaluation would happen.

Salaries have been underspent so far this year due to unimplemented raises. This will be corrected once this round of staff reviews is completed. We will make salary adjustments accordingly in July. We're happy to have a really motivated group of people who are excited about what they're doing, and want to let them know their efforts are recognized and rewarded accordingly.

Visually Impaired Program

As reported in January, we have 2 employees working on O&M certifications. Both will be completing internship hours this summer.

The Chapter 2 Older Blind grant is out for public bid now (up for bid every 3 years). Last time WIL was the only agency that put in for it. We do intend to apply and are actively working on the grant application. Reapplying for the contract gives us the opportunity to step back and decide how this is going to look, esp. with added O&M specialties on board. We don't know for sure what that anticipated impact is going to be. Given the low availability of O&M instructors in Wyoming, our staff could potentially spend all of their time and more just on O&M services. How do we balance that out? How do we strike a balance between their services and what we've provided before? The perennial question has been: How do you provide a statewide program for just \$225,000?

We are thinking of ways to build community capacity in the areas where it is harder or more expensive for us to provide direct services, utilizing local community partners and resources in order to provide more timely and consistent services.

Transportation Check Program

As reported in January, we initiated a waitlist because we've maxed out our funding. Mobility Managers are doing a good job managing their waitlists, and work to provide I&R and other resources even to those who will be waiting to join our program. CSBG funding has been used creatively to provide rides to those on the wait list. Our staff are working on good strategies to help people get around in the meantime.

Mobility Management needs to be a focus for this program going into the next year. Two thirds of our funding is for administration of TCP. One third of the funding is designated for systems coordination and systems advocacy. There has been a tendency for this portion to take the back seat. This grant has been submitted for next year, and we don't anticipate significant changes to budget or funding.

Community Choices Waiver

We are excited about the employer support group started in Casper and are hoping to replicate it in all the communities we serve.

Ashley Royce, Case Manager in Cheyenne has left the agency – she was with us a short time but did very well, and has left to open a child development center in Cheyenne. Our new case manager in Cheyenne is Stacey Wren, who has long-time experience as a case manager with the DD waiver and is excited about the independent living approach. She’s been a really good fit. Her first day was our April in-service. In the interim, Sheri & Beki picked up most of the caseload, but Amy also got the opportunity to do some home visits.

Project Out

This program saw staff changes as well, due to Amber moving into the IL coordinator position. Patti Robinson joined our team as the Casper PO specialist. She previously ran her own home health agency and has a lot of case management experience. She’s a natural at working with nursing homes, social services, etc. and has picked up the caseload very quickly. We usually expect significant financial impact with turnover in PO as that program is just barely at the break-even point. We’re very pleased to say that even with this transition; PO stayed above water the whole time.

As you can see, it is a fun, exciting time at WIL. There’s a lot of energy, and we have amazing staff working here.

ACTION ITEMS

Budget Amendment

The budget amendment required to reallocate 20% of case dollars to provide center-based activity spaces has not yet been prepared, but will be submitted soon. We needed to get a good breakdown of where costs would end up, since the budgeted amounts included increased rents and utilities we’ll only partially pay this year, and will need to be moved to other line items to get the centers up and running. Amy will present the amendment to Garrett for review before submitting it to DVR.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board Review Process: The board has identified the need for reviewing the Executive Director, as well as the board’s self-review of its own workings. Amy asked how the board would like to address these issues.

Board members discussed how the executive director and board reviews tie into the strategic plan completed the previous year, and requested physical copies of the final Strategic plan. Amy agreed to send copies to board members.

Board members discussed the need to build the size and capacity of the board, providing board recruiting materials, and the lack of a specific evaluation tool designed for the executive director position. Vicki requested a copy of the employee review tool the board could adjust for the executive director position.

The executive director review was discussed. Amy indicated that employee reviews included a standard evaluation tool, with agency as well as individual goals identified in advance. The review process included advance notice of the expectations, an employee self-review as well as supervisory review. She would appreciate a similar process where the criteria on which she will be evaluated be available up front and self-review be included in the process. Executive director goals are often based on the strategic plan.

It was also determined that the active executive director job description is the one used to recruit David, and may need to be reviewed or updated. Rose will check into this.

Technical Assistance Call

Amber coordinated a conversation with Paula McElwee & the APRIL technical assistance coordinator. WIL can apply for a mentoring program in which we'd select a CIL whose programs we like and bring them onboard as a mentor. APRIL will pay to bring them to our location (or us to theirs). Our primary goals would be to learn about center-based services and youth services, so we are looking at potential mentors with those things in mind.

WIL is also considering rebranding to some extent, shifting our standard approach to IL services in general. People are used to making referrals for DME or home modifications. We want referrals for center-based services, workshops, etc. We are embracing a different process (teach a man to fish rather than give a man a fish). How do we present that to the public? How do we promote those services? We want to be planful with the next phase of reshaping IL, so that specialists feel comfortable presenting the organization as a whole to the public. In many ways, we need to reinvent our image, so that's another potential area for technical assistance.

Vicki mentioned that even WIL's name might need work. To many people, the words "independent living" have come to be associated with "assisted living" or senior homes. Staff discussed what comes up when searching for our agency, and Joe suggested the potential of using google ads.

Laramie Lease

As discussed earlier in the meeting, the board had approved reallocating case dollars to add space to our existing leases in Laramie and Cheyenne. The Laramie center is now in the works. It began as a blank room, but we wanted to turn it into a combined meeting and skills training space. The landlord

was not keen on us installing a stove, but will allow cabinetry, counters and sink. We approached Lowes and Home Depot regarding the possibility of a corporate donation, but these processes are long and drawn out. Because we will not have to pay the full rent amount for the new space due to starting partway through the year, remaining funds can be used to get the space up and running.

Sheridan

Robin and Cindy in Sheridan have been exciting about the possibility of a storefront office in their community, and have put work into finding potential spaces. We've unfortunately found that Sheridan rental pricing is quite high in comparison to our other communities. We are still in the process of trying to see if we can make something work there. Robin and Cindy have several creative ideas about providing skills training and center-based services, and have sought CSBG funding for these ideas.

Wellness

Amy gave an overview of the agency's wellness benefit and how the program is going so far. We confirmed that this is considered by the IRS to be a taxable benefit, so have changed our process to provide incentives via payroll, rather than direct reimbursement checks. Staff can participate in monthly challenges, quarterly drawings, and direct reimbursement of wellness related expenses. The program also includes monthly support calls and occasional newsletters about wellness-related topics.

NEW BUSINESS

New Hire Announcements

These were made during the director's report.

Wyoming Senior Citizens, Inc.

Vicki gave an overview of services provided by Wyoming Senior Citizens, Inc., and her involvement as a benefits instructor. This agency provides good resources, training and benefits counseling on WSHIP (Wyoming State Health Insurance Plan), Medicare, Medicare Part D, and other services such as scam reporting and safety information available to seniors. She provided multiple brochures for staff and board members to use.

Although not all WIL consumers are seniors, many are; this agency shares a similar approach in that they focus on helping people maintain their independence.

CORRESPONDENCE

Sharla requested a packet of Vicki's brochures be mailed to her, and thanked Vicki for her presentation. Rick also requested a set, and both will be left at the Casper office for mailing.

Joe requested a Board Application packet be emailed to him, as he is in contact with a potential board candidate.

Brenda reviewed the thank-you note requests received from staff, and provided the list to Vicki for sending out cards. Cards/envelopes were provided following the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments received.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board entered exec session at 4:40 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

Friday, July 28 at 1 pm, Casper office

Meeting adjourned at 5:03 pm.