

**Wyoming Independent Living  
Board Meeting  
July 28, 2017**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting began at 1:12 pm

**Attendance:**

Board members attending in person: Joe Schaffner, Garrett Roark, Vicki Swenson; via phone: Doug Cermak. Staff attending in person: Amy Burns, Dermot Thiel, Brenda Thomson; via phone: Rick Geringer, Tina Bennett, Robin Miller.

Quorum was not established at the beginning of the meeting. Amy met with Sharla prior to the meeting to discuss the budget proposal. She will be on the road and unable to call in, but when it is time to vote on the budget, we can call her to establish a quorum if needed. The board began with the informational part of the meeting. Quorum was established in time for required voting items.

**AGENDA REVIEW:**

Amy reviewed the agenda and asked for any additions. The following items were added to the agenda:

Action Items:

- Review of a new board member application

New Business:

- Eclipse Day August 21<sup>st</sup>

Executive Session:

- Proposed federal budget and potential implications for WIL

**MINUTES:**

The minutes from the May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting were up for approval. Doug joined the call in time to review & approve minutes.

*Joe made the motion to approve the minutes; Doug seconded; Motion passed.*

**REPORTS:**

**Financial Report**

Brenda Thomson gave the financial report. The financial statements provided in the board packets are current through June 30th, the 9th month of the fiscal year and end of the 3rd quarter. Expenses and revenues should ideally both be around 75% of what we budgeted. As reported at the last meeting we were underspent in most grants / programs across the board. We have been remedying this over the last quarter, and are getting closer to the mark. There are 2 primary ways we're doing this: 1) Staff salary adjustments went into effect on June payroll, and were retroactive to the beginning of the fiscal year. There is still some underspending in salary and benefits due to vacancies, wellness program starting 6 months into the year, underutilization of retirement, over-budgeting in unemployment and a credit received from Workers' comp. We will spend what we can in these categories by the end of the year, but excess will need to be used in other categories. This will require budget modifications for Part B and VIP grants in particular. The Part B modification discussed earlier in the year has not yet been submitted, so we will finalize spending expectations for the year, then submit modifications all at once.

Underspending in Case dollars has been applied to expenses to get Centers up and running as agreed by the Board early this year. Yearend spending will include finishing touches for the Casper, Laramie and Cheyenne meeting spaces, as well as costs to get the Sheridan office up and running.

Medicaid programs as a whole are in the black, although Project Out continues to just break even. We have seen increased billing for the Case Management program this year, so while expenses are higher than budgeted, this is due to added staff hours to keep up with the increasing caseload.

The Youth Transitions Workshops ended up in the black this year. Because this started as a pilot program as part of our agency's transition services under our IL grants, this means we will need to spend down all funds received on expenses related to the program by the end of the year. In the coming year, we expect to separate this as it's own self-supporting fee-for-service program.

#### GRANTS SUMMARY:

According to the board's decision in January to reallocate 20% of case dollars to get center-based services up and running, we have been outfitting the Laramie and Cheyenne offices. Although some finishing details are in process, both spaces are now operational. Remaining funds will be used to provide door openers in Laramie, outfit the Sheridan office, and provide training supplies for the activity rooms such as projectors and kitchen equipment.

The transportation grants are pretty well on track, so do not require significant adjustments or spending for yearend.

The holdup with the WYTAP program funds from last year has been resolved. Our accounts are now up to date with First Interstate's new broker, and funds transfers can be completed in a timely manner going forward. We are up to date through FY16, and have setup a timeline with the bank personnel to ensure all reporting, payment of interest and reimbursement of WIL expenses should be completed no later than December for the fiscal year closing in September.

### Banking

As mentioned at the last meeting, WIL's money market account at Hilltop was somehow missed when WIL has updated signers and authorized individuals. That account lists only one current board member and hasn't been updated since 2006. The board agreed to update signers to be the same as other WIL accounts and signed the resolution provided by the bank to make this change.

No additional fraud has been seen in our bank accounts since instituting positive pay in January. The small cost of the program is well in-line with the benefit we are receiving from it. We have, however seen recent fraudulent activity on our phone accounts. A third party company switched our long distance provider without permission, then racked up a bunch of fraudulent long distance charges on our account. I am currently in the process of sorting out this mess. Unfortunately, fraud and scams and the like are becoming increasingly prevalent, requiring us to be more vigilant about our agency accounts than in the past. For this reason, we will be rolling out new staff guidelines for purchasing and becoming more strict on ensuring paperwork is turned in on time so we can ensure all charges to WIL accounts are valid and catch and resolve any fraud issues in a timely manner.

### Grant Compliance

DVR performed an on-site review of WIL's IL and VIP grant activities in June. Overall we did not encounter any problems. The DVR staff seemed impressed with the changes we have made in the past year, and their cursory look at our updated financial policies yielded favorable results.

### Insurance

WIL is due to review our insurance contracts and put these out for bid this year. WIL's insurance requirements have changed somewhat this year, so we expect to consider some potential changes in coverage. With the shift to center-based services, adding the COMS

specialty in the VIP program, and adding staff and volunteers, we will need to consider insurance needs carefully. Suggested timeline:

- September Board meeting
  - Discuss agency insurance needs & specifications
  - Authorize Amy & Brenda to solicit bids
- November Board meeting
  - Receive preliminary information / bids to review, generate any questions for insurance companies / final concerns & details.
- January Board meeting
  - Final decision on insurance company / authorization to begin contract
- First February check run – insurance check completed & signed by board member
- February 21 – current insurance expires, new insurance must be in place & paid for

### **Director's Report**

Amy Burns gave the director's report.

WIL is moving full speed ahead with the emphasis on center based services. It has been great to see folks embrace the idea and start figuring out meaningful ways to bring people together. A copy of the newsletter is included in the board packets, which includes activity calendars for each Center, and will expand to include Sheridan once that office is ready to open. This gives you a sampling of items offered through the IL program. In our strategic planning process, the very first goal set was to make WIL the hub of the disability community.

### **Independent Living**

We're working hard to fulfil the title of "center" as a place where people can come to the table. Some events are more free-form without a set agenda. Others are more structured.

Coloring has been a popular activity so far, with benefits including stress relief and mental decluttering. In Sheridan they are planning to call it "Therapeutic Ink." In Laramie, staff noted that "Adult Coloring" has some odd connotations, and have changed their title to "Keep Calm & Color On." It has been good to see staff and consumers in different areas take ownership of their own events.

Living Well with a Disability is something we will keep offering, with workshops planned to start in Cheyenne, Torrington, Laramie & Rawlins. Doug in Cheyenne has put together a workshop to show folks how to install their own grab bars, or use common durable medical equipment. These are small jobs many people can either do for themselves, or have a friend or family member who could – they just don't know the options.

Some events will be in the recreation and leisure category, some more focused on skills training. It has been cool to see how the peer support component just naturally takes off. For years, WIL talked about setting up a formal peer support program, but we have never been able to really make that happen. What we're finding is that if we create meaningful ways to bring people to the table, they will start engaging with one another of their own accord.

One example was a group of men in Laramie that want to go fishing. The group started talking about accessible fishing sites, and wondered why there aren't any in town and what it might take to get one setup. This may be a potential advocacy issue they choose to take on. In the meantime they've found an accessible fishing area out of town, but transportation is an issue for one or more members. One young man face-timed a friend who has a car right then and there, and asked if he'd be willing to drive for the group. He agreed to join the group, but didn't have the money for a fishing license. The group agreed to pay him gas money to take them fishing, and that gave him enough extra to buy his fishing license.

Think about the possible impact we can have when we provide the opportunity for people to create lasting relationships, and initiate their own supports! This is a great example of what we're trying to do across the board.

As agreed at the last board meeting, we have secured the proposed lease in Sheridan. Admin staff went up to check it out earlier this month, and we're in the process of getting the finishing touches coordinated. Cindy & Robin did a great job finding potential properties, and have really gone above and beyond to get a center going in their community. The Landlord has provided a \$6,000 allowance for finishing. Money reallocated for center services earlier this year will be put toward the rest of the office furnishings and final details.

Laramie office was able to get materials for its kitchen and activity room pretty much at cost through Lowe's donation program, so spent less than originally expected. Joe noted that if we need help with activity center projects, to let him know, as he would be willing to help / donate time.

In Casper, we have had some interest from volunteers who wish to work with us. Ant Bankhead in particular has become the master of our newsletter. Amber provides support and guidance as his volunteer coordinator. Each issue features a consumer story on the front, and additional content from staff within. We are finding the newsletter to be a really powerful PR tool, which helps us get conversations going with consumers and share with organizations what we are doing. One example was a consumer who has been using our services for years, but

didn't realize we are a peer-run organization. This revelation really got her thinking about our services and involvement in her life.

This next year we'll really be focusing on Peer Support, using volunteers to add support from a peer level. Looking at next year's budget, we have that expectation built in as well.

### VIP Program

We are in the process of finalizing contracts for the Part B and VIP programs with DVR. We were the only organization to bid on the Chapter 2 Older Blind contract, so are simply in the process of finalizing details. We know our services will begin to look different in the coming year, with two certified Orientation & Mobility specialists on board, so have built the next budget with that in mind. Those who qualify for the VIP program would receive some O&M training as part of the services we offer. Those who don't meet the Older Blind criteria would have to be served through other funding, such as DVR or VOS. At this point we can't predict how much business to expect on a fee-for-service basis. We've made our best guess on how much time those two might be spending outside of the VIP program providing O&M services, and will have to adjust from there.

Previously our VIP contract has been heavily focused on individual consumer needs. However, the federal statute has a huge emphasis on community capacity. Going into this contract we are putting a little more emphasis on creating strong partnerships with senior centers, WSIL, home health agencies, and other community partners positioned to assist older individuals who are blind. Training / partnership may consist of basic blindness etiquette, skills training, and train-the-support-person activities, so if we can't get to a consumer right away, they have at least some resources available as a stop-gap.

### Transportation

The Transportation program is clipping along. We currently have 143 consumers waiting on our half of the state; the list has grown significantly. Our program staff is spending a lot of time on I&R, helping folks find other resources. In some communities we have been able to use CSBG funding to provide vouchers while consumers are waiting for our program.

With the waitlist, we are better able to make a case for this unmet need, and will continue to work on other funding possibilities. At this time, TCP funding came through at 100%. We do of course wonder what the next fiscal year will look like if congress makes sweeping cuts, however we are thankful that for the coming year we have been funded at the same levels.

### Case Management

Our consumer base for this program has exploded to 185 active consumers; nearly double what it was when Amy was program manager. Since conflict-free case management was put in place, our caseloads have nearly doubled. This has changed the dynamic, especially in the more rural communities, where we are seeing even more growth. Robin volunteered to pick up cases in the Sheridan area due to growing needs in the northern part of the state. Most likely within a few months, we will be at a point to hire a part time case manager out of the Sheridan office. We are planning for a 3<sup>rd</sup> workstation in that office for this reason. It will act as a mobile workstation for staff traveling through, as well as a launching point for a new case manager when we are ready.

Casper has a new case manager in place – Brianna Gowen relocated from Iowa in June and is excited to be in Wyoming. She comes with great training and experience with blind services, and was nominated for nationwide disabilities consultant for a major organization.

The Casper office is undergoing a little bit of shuffling of positions. The IL vacancy will be filled by a combination of both Austin and Celine moving over to each cover half of the position. Austin has worked in IL previously, and is very excited to get more involved with center-based services. Celine, currently our office assistant, is planning to get a degree in social services and has already brought a lot to the IL program by providing I&R services from the reception desk.

### Project Out

This program is doing really well; we continue to stay just barely in the black. Although we don't expect this to be a huge moneymaker, the program lines up with our core services, so we are happy to break even. Brianna Bruce moved into the lead specialist position vacated by Amber earlier this year, and has been working on training with Patti, who started with WIL about 3 months ago as our PO specialist in Casper.

As discussed at the previous meeting, mandatory cuts were made across the board for Medicaid providers this fiscal year. Long term services including Project Out were supposed to be spared from that cut because they represent a cost reduction for the state. However, our PO funding was in fact cut – when submitting for reimbursement, they were taking 3% off the top. We were told this was a funding oversight, and Medicaid is in the process of reinstating our funding at 100%. We are still waiting for the logistics of how they're going to get that reversed.

As Amy concluded the director's report, Joe asked whether she was familiar with the recent changes to the EID program (Employed Individuals with Disabilities). Unfortunately recent

changes have converted this program from a work incentive to a disincentive. Joe suggested board members call their legislators. Joe will find out more information soon.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **FY18 Budget**

Amy began the budget overview by talking about the retirement plan. As reported at the last meeting, recent changes in DOL legislation caused Edward Jones to no longer represent us as an agent. The retirement product we currently have is an annuity through Mass Mutual, and is considered an insurance product. The recent laws change who can sell / advise you about this kind of product, and require additional fiduciary responsibility on the part of our agent, for which Edward Jones is not licensed.

Our current 403b plan is an annuity product. Brokers/agents are compensated not by our company directly, but by the individual investing in the plan. This makes a 403b attractive to many nonprofits because it is low-cost to the agency, and allows us to create vesting schedules and use the plan as a longevity incentive as 401ks are often used. It has never been our goal to use the retirement plan as a longevity tool. With limited resources for benefits, we want to provide the best possible benefits we can to employees within our financial limitations.

We discussed options with a financial advisor recommended by Joe. It was recommended we change over to a simple IRA in lieu of our current 403b. Benefits to WIL include the elimination of the significant reporting and fiduciary responsibilities now attached to the 403b plan. Once we have contributed our portion to the employee's IRA, it is theirs to manage – no vesting schedule or hidden fees. All fees are still paid by the investing employee, but are simple and disclosed up front. Overall employees will pay less than with the annuity plan because of all the additional administrative fees charged by the broker.

The one potential downside to employees is that there is no longer a specific broker/financial adviser to work with. It is up to the individual to educate themselves on their options or choose a financial advisor to work with on their own.

The contributions function differently as well. Instead of designating a dollar amount, employees will designate a percentage of their salary to be deferred pre-tax. Anyone who makes \$5,000 or more in a year is eligible. WIL has 2 choices for matching: either we do a non-elective 2% match for all employees; or we can do an elective match for up to 3% of salary, based on the amount the employee is contributing. Unfortunately with this plan, all contributions by the employee are salary deferrals – there is no post-tax Roth IRA option.

We did a staff survey to identify likely participation to understand the potential budget implications of this change: 80% of staff responded that they would participate at the 3% rate, which represents a significant increase in WIL's contribution, bringing the budget for retirement up to \$27,000.00. We feel this will be a good way to round out our benefits package and invest in employees' futures. The proposed budget includes the expectation that WIL will adopt a simple IRA plan with elective 3% matching. Because we are talking about changing benefits, we believe the type of plan we choose is up to board discretion, so would like you to consider this as a proposal separate from the budget.

For the overall budget, we continue trying to streamline as much as we can, taking time to make sure we're not paying things we're not supposed to, and are getting the most bang for our buck. In addition to the areas where we have saved on costs, we have seen increases in the Medicaid FFS programs, allowing us to expand some services. The Case Management agency option pays more per participant than the self-directed option, so we have seen increased revenues within our current caseload, in addition to expanding caseloads. We are currently around 60% self-directed option, and 40% agency option. The most growth has been in the agency option, so funding in that program has grown exponentially. With that has come increase paperwork and support needs for our existing case managers. We have added staff hours to that program, and are considering adding administrative support specific to that program as well. On the grant side, this is the fourth year we have seen no increases in grant funding. So while our overall agency budget and services have grown, it is due to the reallocation of resources and increase Fee-For-Service revenues.

Salaries / Staffing: Overall the staffing budget looks similar, with a little bit of growth as indicated. We would like the board to consider a revised organization chart reflecting the need for additional administrative support. The last organization chart we adopted was intentionally pretty lean on the admin side, with only the 3 directors to cover all supervision, management, human resources, etc. We are recognizing as WIL becomes more and more active, that we need more supervision and support throughout the agency. This was evident during our review process with specialists. We are unable to keep as regular contact with specialists as we'd like. We did add 2 coordinator positions as part of the Admin team to make sure specific programs are going in the right direction, but this was not a supervisory position. Lead specialists continue to act as the local expert for their particular program. What we're missing is regular contact between supervisor and specialist.

To accomplish this in the coming year, many of the coordinator duties will be absorbed back into the Program Director role – things like program maintenance and support, reporting,

innovation and expansion of programs. New program development will rest with the Executive Director, who will carve out time to devote to resource development and funding diversification. In place of the coordinator positions, we will add two regional / area manager positions, on a geographic, rather than programmatic basis. They will provide direct support and supervision to specialists within their geographic area. The northern manager would cover Casper, Sheridan and Gillette; the southern manager, Wheatland, Laramie, Cheyenne and Rawlins. These would be part time designations for each manager, who would continue to carry a smaller caseload within their own program. We would retain the lead specialist positions as the nuts & bolts experts for their specific programs, while the regional managers will provide direction on implementing IL philosophy across all programs and general supervision and mentorship. These positions would be open internally only. Depending on which staff is chosen to fill the position, we will adjust caseloads within that program accordingly.

In terms of authority level, the regional managers will have discretion to address disciplinary problems initially and take informal action, provide support, and redirect staff as needed. If the time comes for formal action, they will escalate issues to the Program Director, who will keep the Executive Director informed on progress and actions. Final hiring and firing decisions will still rest with the Executive director. Although this does introduce a chain of command between specialists and the Executive Director, we will make sure the same open door policy is in place. This will provide the additional administrative and supervisory support needed while keeping as flat an organizational structure as possible given our current needs.

Another new position we have built into the new budget is that of Peer Support Specialist. In the past, offices outside of Casper have always had limited public hours based on when staff happen to be in town. As we move to center-based services, it is difficult to run a vibrant and active community center when staff aren't always in the office. There are still logistics to work out, but the idea is to have a Peer Support Specialist a few hours a week who provides general reception and I&R services and coordinates peer volunteers to keep the Center open throughout the day when staff may be traveling or otherwise busy.

In the travel category, we have scaled back a little bit on mileage with the expectation that more center based services will include some decrease in direct services. We are not expecting this to be a dramatic shift, but as staff work more on center-based services, we expect they may invite folks to the center to meet their needs in place of traveling to their own homes quite as often.

Another big shift has been in the service supplies category, again related to center-based services. We need to reflect dollars that are spent directly on consumer services, separately

from administrative type expenses such as general office supplies. Service supplies are things like workshop materials, food for cooking class, batteries for equipment, and other goods that are not tied to one specific consumer, but nevertheless are directly serving consumers as a group. We designated \$18,000 for service supplies, leaving \$40,000 for individual case dollars.

These represent the significant changes in budget line items – most other lines have seen no significant adjustments.

After some discussion of indirect cost rate and budgeting process, the board voted on three motions related to the budget discussion:

*Vicki made a motion to approve the budget as proposed; Joe seconded; motion passed*

*Joe made a motion to change WIL's retirement plan to a simple IRA at the elective 3% match as proposed; Doug seconded; motion passed.*

*Vicki made a motion to accept the changes to the organization chart as proposed; Joe seconded; Motion passed.*

#### Board Member Application Review

The board has received an application for membership from Roger Arendt. Amy read the application and the board discussed. Joes said he has known Roger for a long time. He's a good guy, has a degree in business. He used to manage the Parkway Plaza. He's very sharp and will be a good asset to the board. Joe identified Roger as a person with a significant disability and said he would likely have to call in sometimes due to dialysis, but Roger did not self-identify as such in his application.

Discussion included the makeup of the board and whether the board would be maintaining the required 51% individuals with significant disabilities if Roger were to be added. Board members agreed Roger sounds like a great addition to the board, but that they need to confirm whether or not he identifies as having a significant disability.

*Vicki made a motion to provisionally approve Roger Arendt as a board member, with the caveat that disability identification must be clarified; Joe seconded, motion passed.*

#### Financial Policies & Procedures

Brenda presented the revised financial policies and procedures manual and gave an overview of the reason for and types of changes made. The previous manual includes hand-written notes, obsolete or incomplete policies, and has no adoption date. This is a set of policies that

should be board-approved, so we suggest the board thoroughly review the proposed documents for discussion / adoption at their September annual meeting. In future, financial policies should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the agency is in compliance and operating accordingly.

In updating these policies we knew there were some written policies that were not previously being followed. Since adopted, our federal guidance on grants and granting agency had changed. Also, several staff positions and responsibilities were reconfigured during WIL's directoral transition process, so the policy statements related to who does what and separation of duties didn't match up. Additionally, with the frequent turnover in the bookkeeper position during 2015/2016, we found that WIL's policies were too vague in many areas to provide actionable information to new employees or those taking on fiscal duties for the first time. We consulted our accountant, the Uniform Guidance, and sample financial policies provided by ILRU to thoroughly overhaul the financial policies and procedures, as presented in your board packets.

Key points:

- Reorganization and labeling of policies for easier day-to-day use
- Addition of required policies listed in Uniform Guidance or by specific grantors (whistleblower policy, conflict of interest policy applicable to all potential purchasers, competitive bidding / procurement policy, expanded expense policies detailing allowability and allocation of employee time, travel expenses, allowable costs & purchasing authority).

Clarified with auditor:

- Separation of duties & who can do which tasks to keep us in compliance
- Cash handling best practices

Updated capital expenditures definitions and threshold; recommending \$1,000 threshold and 3-year usable life as minimum level for capitalizing assets.

Need to clarify contract authority of executive director: Currently stipulates contracts over \$10,000 require board approval, but this could arguably include our larger home modification projects (which have not previously had prior board approval). Also, at one point prior director David Arocho's contract authority was set at \$5,000. We have continued to honor that, but it should probably be reviewed, as that level includes a wide variety of general purchases such as storage unit contracts and phone service.

In tandem with the policy overhaul, a comprehensive set of bookkeeping procedures was generated for training purposes and to spell out how we put these policies into practice on a day-to-day basis. Once the financial policies are board-approved and any adjustments made, I will modify the bookkeeping procedures if needed, and provide updated purchasing and timekeeping procedures to staff members who wouldn't normally receive the accounting policies to ensure we're all aware of our individual part in the fiscal processes of the agency and operating from the same rulebook.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **Strategic Planning Update**

Center-Based Services are our key focus in terms of the strategic plan, as mentioned in the director's report. We're in the process of getting the center up and running in Sheridan. In Gillette, Tina worked with a local church to use their fellowship hall, co-locating there one day per week and providing a variety of programs on that one day to establish a regular presence in the community.

### **Board Review Process**

Amy asked where the board is at with their review process, and whether any action is needed. Vicki said there is no action but there needs to be. Board members agreed to table discussion until the next meeting when all members should be in attendance. In the meantime they will look at ideas individually and bring them to the next meeting.

Board members discussed the need to focus on recruiting youth and younger individuals. Sometimes they may not feel qualified, but involving them in center activities may help bring them on board and encourage them to seek positions of leadership.

### **Sheridan Lease**

Addressed previously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Eclipse Day**

All reports indicated Casper will be overrun on Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, as it is reportedly one of the best places from which to view the total solar eclipse. If open, transportation is a concern for several staff members, and it may be hard to get around town just in general. Amy proposed the board declare Eclipse Day as a one-time holiday for which staff receive holiday pay. Vicki added that the board really appreciates staff's hard work to get centers up and

running and the momentum that has been generated from our strategic plans, and would like to do this as a way to thank staff for their work and commitment. The rest of the board agreed this holiday should be declared for August 21<sup>st</sup> and appreciation for their hard work expressed to staff on the board's behalf.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

### **Thank-You Notes**

Vicki received a thank-you note in response to a previous thank-you the board sent out and read it to the group. The note was from Ron Halligan, who participated in WIL's last in-service.

Two additional thank-you requests have been received from staff. Vicki will write notes on behalf of the board.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None provided.

## **WIL BOARD MEETINGS 2017**

- September 15, 2017 – Annual Meeting
  - Because this will be the annual meeting and there is a lot on the agenda, Amy proposed a start time of 11 am. Board members agreed
- November 17, 2017
- January 26, 2018

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Meeting adjourned at 4:31 pm.