

**Wyoming Independent Living
Board Meeting
September 15, 2017**

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting began at 11:02 am

Board members in attendance: Joe Schaffner, Garrett Roark in person; Rose Rennell, Vicki Swenson, Doug Cermak via phone.

Staff members in attendance: Dermot Thiel, Brenda Thomson, Amber Alexander, Laurel Henry, Amy Burns in person; Robin Miller, Cindy Livingston, Rick Geringer, Nick Wiseman via phone.

AGENDA:

Amy requested the board add a discussion of computer system / server to the new business section.

Vicki made the motion to adjust the agenda as proposed; Joe seconded; motion passed.

MINUTES:

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

REPORTS:

Financial Report

Amy gave the financial report. WIL is in the process of final spending for the fiscal year and expects to spend down all grants fully. We ended the year with a larger amount to spend than expected due in part to the reallocation of 20% of case dollars for getting center-based services up and running and complexity and time required to anticipate and coordinate those purchases for multiple locations simultaneously. Several other areas of the budget have been underspent all year either due to lower needs than budgeted, or intentional cost savings. In those cases, most available funds have been funneled into needs for center-based services, as this was indicated as a board priority earlier in the year. A budget modification has been requested and received from DVR for the Part B and Chapter 2 grants.

Board members discussed how the strategic focus on center-based services may affect traditional numbers we have tracked for individual consumer services such as durable medical equipment purchases and other one-on-one services. Concerns were expressed regarding putting consumers on-hold in order to setup center-based services.

Sheridan staff members provided input on how they continue to meet with consumers and fit center-based services into their existing services. Casper staff members reported on how relationships

between consumers and staff and peer-to-peer have deepened since beginning regular center-based services.

Amy explained the need to continue balancing and re-evaluating staff work capacity, budgets, and existing services as we pursue the strategic goals the board has set out. While the board's goal to establish WIL as a hub of the disability community has resulted in changing how we spend our money and some of our time, we believe it will have the desired impact over the long term. We will continue to evaluate progress toward that goal.

Additional discussion surrounded how offering skills training and peer support at centers in some cases diminishes the need for home visits as consumers receiving the information they need often feel confident making things happen for themselves. For those who still feel the need for one-on-one help those resources are still available, but it is no longer the automatic first choice for service delivery. While no services are being eliminated, the needs may be met in different ways, which we anticipate will mean changes in how staff spends time and therefore how the agency spends its budget. The new year's budget was created with this in mind.

VIP Program / Chapter 2:

As previously reported to the board, 2 staff members are in the process of completing their O&M certifications. Both have been gracious in using their paid leave time as much as possible to fulfil their internship requirements. In return the agency has been able to cover the additional time spent in training beyond their accrued leave so that both staff receive their full salary. We see these certifications as a great benefit to the organization, even though the services provided and partnerships may go beyond the traditional services of WIL.

Where the VIP program came in lower in expenses than budgeted (such as Per Diem), WIL has looked at using those funds to beef up inventory and/or provide devices for staff and consumer training.

Transportation:

For the Mobility and Transportation grants through WYDOT, spending is right on track. There have been some recent changes in government programs, such as availability of funds for dialysis patients, adding strain on existing transportation budgets. In Wyoming, transportation needs already far exceed transportation spending. Specialists have worked very hard on providing additional information and referral services to those consumers on our waitlists to help meet as many needs as possible.

WYTAP

The WYTAP program is funded via the investments related to that program and is paid once per year. Spending is as expected and revenues will be coordinated following the end of the fiscal year as normal.

Fee-For-Service Programs:

FFS programs operate differently than do the grants, as growth in program participation can then increase revenues, providing opportunities for additional services. In the FFS programs we are currently netting approximately \$41,000 for the year.

We have seen much growth in the CCW program in the last year. We originally expected that growth to level off in January or February, but instead caseloads have continued to grow. Each month we are able to bill several thousand dollars more than the month previous. We are working to add staff to the program to handle increased caseloads and administrative responsibilities. Robin has already picked up some case management responsibilities in Sheridan. We are working on adding a part time case manager out of a home office in Rawlins, but have not yet been able to fill that position. The goal is to use excess funds to staff the program accordingly, not run our staff ragged. We will also build in some administrative support with excess funds, as state requirements have also increased documentation, file sharing, and other administrative tasks specific to that program.

Our WYDOT Match expenses are as expected and are already covered prior to the \$41,000 net gain reported for FFS programs as a whole.

The Project Out program currently shows a significant deficit, partly due to expenses being listed in real time while revenues are billed after-the-fact. Although there has not been direct turnover in staff positions, we have had several staff "changing seats" within the year, which means lower revenues while staff are spending more time on training. The last quarter of the year also included staff in-service, which takes staff out of the field. The dip in funding is larger than we anticipated, but is fortunately covered with excess funds from the CCW program.

In the coming year we are realigning accounts so we can look at Medicaid programs as a whole, in addition to individual services. One such individual service is Project Out direct reimbursements. In theory all expenses should be reimbursed at 100%. However, we did not begin the year at a 0 balance so these reports still show a deficit for this year. With our new system in place we will be starting the new year with a 0 balance and be better able to track whether or not we are receiving full compensation for these services.

Board members discussed how cuts to Medicaid and other programs may affect WIL and its consumers. Although the Project Out and CCW programs provides significant cost savings to Medicaid over other service options and so have traditionally been excluded from funding cuts, other scaled back services have affected the demand for these options. Recent cuts in mental health programs are already affecting the demand for and implementation of waiver services.

The Youth Transitions Workshop program has been broken out separately from the IL grant for your information. This program is part of WIL's transition services. Because it is supported by IL funding, any profit is considered program income and will be spent in accordance with grant requirements.

The TBRA program provides rental assistance to individuals qualified through the Wyoming Department of Health. WIL handles the contracts and rent payments and receives a 10% fee over expenses in exchange. While not a huge money maker, this FFS program does provide some revenue with relatively little added time/expense.

Private Funds include miscellaneous expenses and are funded with unrestricted; direct contributions.

Rose made a motion to accept the financial report; Joe seconded; Motion passed.

Director's Report

The next round of quarterly reports is due to grantors in October, so will be provided at the next board meeting. For that reason there are no official reports to share now.

Independent Living:

We have put a lot of emphasis on core services & establishing centers this year, working hard to beef up the concept of a comfortable place for people to gather with true skills training opportunities such as, living well workshops, financial resources, etc., as well as leisure activities and opportunities to build friendships and peer support networks. We know many individuals who experience disabilities tend to experience isolation and fear of getting out in the community. Creating a place that feels comfortable and accessible helps remove those barriers and provide an environment where individuals become comfortable sharing experiences & support. We have found it takes little time for individuals to go from seeking services to wanting to offer services in return for the benefit of others at the center. With the center-based approach we are giving people the opportunity to both serve and be served.

Visually Impaired Program:

This program has seen some drop in numbers and slowdown of referrals. In some programs our referrals come somewhat in spurts. As lead Laurel has been digging into this, talking with staff about

outreach efforts and building relationships with those who provide referrals. Some loss in referrals may be due in part to cuts in services from VOS, our main partner.

Laurel and Kelly will soon be finishing their internship hours, which will expand the services WIL is able to offer, and the timeliness of individuals receiving this essential service within our state. Discussion included the possibility of increased referrals / funding due to O&M specialization and potential impact on other services in the VIP program. Amy discussed the potential for some Fee-For-Service partnerships around O&M services.

VIP staff will also be receiving training in the coming year on braille and technology options for individuals who are blind or have low vision, and equipment for such training is being purchased as appropriate.

Board members discussed possibilities for partnerships or funding for such training through Wyoming community colleges and potential contacts that may be made in that arena.

TCP – As discussed previously, the main issue for this program is the waitlist, and continuing to put customer service at the forefront, even while WIL does not have funding for additional plans.

Project Out and Case Manager – the majority of progress was covered during the financial report. With significant growth in case management, we are excited about being able to extend the IL approach beyond just those directing their own care. Even for those on the agency option or receiving assisted living care, this shouldn't dictate the control you have over your services. The expanded scope allows us to share our approach with a wider population.

Staffing:

Brianna Gowen recently joined WIL as the new Case Manager in Casper. We are in the process of hiring an administrative assistant, and in the last 2 weeks have conducted interviews for the Area Manager positions. We expect to wrap up that process next week. Once basic training has been completed and both managers are onboard, we will then turn our attention to hiring part time peer support specialists to provide support for centers and volunteers in our smaller offices. These positions are budgeted as of October 1, but will likely be filled a little later on.

OLD BUSINESS

Strategic Plan:

WIL continues to seek new ideas and guidance on providing the kind of Centers the board and staff envisioned when writing the strategic plan. Amber has used her connections from the APRIL conference to get WIL into the CIL mentor program. This technical assistance grant allows us to select

another CIL of our choice and offsets expenses incurred to receive training / mentoring from their staff and Center. WIL interviewed several centers with a similar rural focus who have strong experience with building youth programs. We selected Summit ILC in Missoula Montana. Dermot and Amy will be visiting the CIL in mid-October.

Employee Policy Manual

This set of policies has taken a backseat this year due to the need for additional managerial support as discussed at the last meeting. With Area Managers coming onboard in the next few months, time will be freed up to focus on this again.

NEW BUSINESS

Mobility Management Grant Opportunity:

This item is no longer applicable. We wished to discuss some potential seed money for the Mobility Management part of our program, which would help with getting to certain types of medical appointments, and might connect well with efforts to build a volunteer driver base. Once we got into the details of the funding it became clear it is primarily for outsourcing research work which would significantly change staff focus for that program so is not a good fit for WIL.

New Server:

In the past WIL has never had a central server, but due to increasing need for centralized data, secure communication between multiple sites, information backups, and security of information, we are considering a server purchase and service agreement as part of yearend spending. Brenda explained the need to consider how technology needs have changed and how WIL staff are, or could be, using technology to our advantage with proper IT supports. After following the multiple-bid process for such expenses, Admin staff has chosen TEAM networks' proposal as the best fit for WIL's IT needs and ongoing support. With donated software from Tech Soup factored in this bid comes in slightly higher than the \$5,000 threshold requiring board approval. Although this is not the lowest-price option found in the bidding process, the company's total solution is a better fit for WIL than the other company offered, providing sufficient HIIPA knowledge, security software, and onsite support in addition to adequate server equipment. Joe requested some details on the server specifications and verified that the bid seemed reasonable given his past experience with similar purchases.

Joe made a motion to approve the Admin team's recommendation and proceed with purchase of the server. Doug seconded; motion passed.

Board members took a 15 minute break and resumed meeting at 1 pm.

ACTION ITEMS

Financial Policies and Procedures:

Brenda reviewed the need for board-adopted financial policies and procedures and the process used to create the draft document provided to the board at the last meeting. After an opportunity for questions or clarification, Brenda reviewed specific changes the board may wish to consider:

- Page 4-5: Financial controls, #5 – Clarified wording to contracts exceeding \$10,000 per year
- Page 29: Capital Expenditures – Threshold for tracking Capital expenses changed from \$250 to \$1,000; Added criteria that item have a useful life of more than 1 year.
- Page 21: Joe mentioned that the language regarding EFT payments infers that these are only to be made in rare or pre-approved cases. He has no problem with WIL using EFT for additional monthly bills, rents, utilities, phone, etc. in addition to the pre-approved types listed. Board members discussed and agreed to change the first paragraph under that heading to read “When available and cost-effective, payments may be made by EFT. With the exception of payroll...”

Rose made a motion to adopt the financial policies and procedures as amended; Vicki seconded; motion passed.

Board Terms:

Roger Arndt was provisionally approved at the last meeting, pending clarification of whether he identifies as an individual who experiences a significant disability. Joe reported that he does indeed identify in this manner, so the provisional acceptance becomes effective as of this meeting.

Two board members have terms up for renewal. Rose and Joe both indicated they would like to continue serving as board members.

Vicki made a motion to renew Rose and Joe’s terms as board members; Doug seconded; motion passed.

Sharla will be unavailable for the next 3 months due to taking a substitute position. Board members discussed the need to talk with her about her commitment to the WIL board and whether she wishes to continue. Garrett will initiate this conversation with Sharla.

WIL Name Change

Amy spoke with the board about their previous discussion about potentially changing WIL’s name to get away from the senior services connotation now carried by “Independent Living” and work to broaden WIL’s audience and incorporate other disabilities and ages. Amy acknowledged that changing names / rebranding is a huge effort and asked whether this is truly up for discussion, and if so, how the board would like to proceed. Board members agreed they do not wish to proceed with a name change.

Insurance:

Brenda mentioned to the board that review of insurance was tentatively scheduled for the next meeting and asked at what point the board would like to be involved in this process. After discussion it was decided Amy and Brenda will begin looking into insurance bids and hope to have some proposals available at the next meeting to allow for board review, followed by voting at the January meeting.

Executive Director Evaluation

Rose asked what the board had decided in regard to evaluation of the executive director at the July meeting. Previous discussion included reviewing the board's strategic goals and incorporating those into the form used for evaluating Ken. Rose requested that Amy re-send her copies of the goals

PUBLIC COMMENT

None offered.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Board members discussed preferences for meeting time and chose to move the November and January meetings back to 11 am.

Vicki requested board members bring their calendars to the next meeting to consider dates for the next calendar year. Brenda will provide a list of check-signing dates to help coordinate meeting dates with administrative travel schedules.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm.