



## Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board

Monday, May 20, 2024 4:30-6:00 pm  
Hybrid Meeting – via Zoom and In Person

### Meeting Minutes

#### **Board Members Present:**

Raegen Miller  
Zosia Sherwood  
Jennifer Thistle  
Myla Musselwhite

Valerie Billmire  
Bruce Tabb  
Lyndsey Forman-Murray

#### **Board Members Absent:**

Todd Donovan  
Gina Bring

#### **Board Members Excused:**

Shannon Neely, DDA  
Janel Hammar-Erickson, DDA  
Kait Whiteside, Max Higbee Center

#### **Guests Present:**

Beverly Porter, The Arc  
Kristen Nguyen, Cascade Connections  
Paul Simon, DDA

#### **Staff:**

Jessica Lee, Program Specialist  
Beth Decker, Coordinator  
Naomi Seigel, Program Specialist

Amanda Burnett, Supervisor

#### **1. Call to Order & Introductions**

The meeting was called to order and introductions were conducted. Quorum was present.

#### **2. Minutes Approval**

There were no objections to the January minutes as presented. Valerie moved to approve. Bruce seconded the motion. The board voted and the minutes were approved.

**ACTION** January 22, 2024 minutes approved.

#### **3. Cascade Connections: Services Overview**

Jessica introduced Kristen Nguyen with Cascade Connections, to present on their services as a County contracted employment and Community Inclusion provider.



- Kristen shared a presentation and a short video about the work of Cascade Connections.
- She highlighted the organization's practice of recognizing a local employer each quarter.
- She shared stories of individuals with DD working with Cascade Connections:
  - Caitlin, a graduate of the Blaine school district, who was hired by Ace Hardware in Blaine.
  - Tim, who loves baking cookies, and was connected with a local bakery
  - Megan, a graduate of the Human Services program at WWU, who recently started working as an administrative assistant.
  - Charity, who has been working at Cascade Dafo for 15 years, creating sample packets of Velcro for prosthetic pieces and braces.
  - Teri, who has been working for the past 18 years maintaining a local food court.
  - Susanna, a recipient of community inclusion services, who volunteers at Habitat for Humanity.

Valerie asked about the waitlists at Cascade Connections.

- Kristen explained that they have a waitlist for employment, including people who are already in services but want another job. She mentioned that their community inclusion program also has a small waitlist.
- Kristen mentioned community inclusion rates as a factor in hiring and capacity.

#### **4. County Updates**

- By-Laws and County Code Amendments

Jessica sent out proposed amendments to the bylaws prior to the March meeting, which meets the 30-day notification requirements. She shared her screen to walk through the proposed changes.

- Reducing the mandatory number of board members from 15 to 9 is proposed
- Recent changes at the county require quorum to be based on the number of members defined in code rather than on the current number of members. This has resulted in issues meeting quorum resulting in cancelation of the DDAB.
- Reducing the target number of people with disabilities who sit on the board from 3 to 1, as we've had trouble recruiting for that position.
- The final change in section 3.4 was made to align with council requirements regarding termination from the board. Authority to terminate membership is at the discretion of council, not the DDAB.



- Jessica clarified that the reference to a “leave of absence” in section 3.6 is not a process currently available under county requirements. She proposed that if a member needs to take a break from the DDAB, they resign from the board. If they would like to rejoin, the DDAB can recommend them for appointment.
- The last change was to eliminate the requirement that each board member actively serve on a minimum of one committee. We have so few committees, that this did not seem like a reasonable expectation.
- Jennifer Thistle motioned to make the changes as presented, and Lindsay Foreman-Murray seconded the motion. The board voted, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **5. Ad Hoc Planning Committee**

### **Discussion on the approval of DDAB Guiding Principles**

- Jessica mentioned that Bruce, Gina, Valerie, and Beverly from the Arc made up an ad hoc planning group to review the guiding principles that appear in their county plan. They also provided feedback on the draft county plan.
- The draft county plan was introduced, and Jessica proposed that the board review and approve the guiding values today, and the County plan at the July meeting.
- Bruce mentioned that it was a thorough process and they had a good discussion. Valerie agreed.
- Bruce moved to approve the guiding principles, and Valerie seconded the motion. The board voted, and the changes to the Guiding Principles were approved.

### **Review and Discussion of Draft County Plan**

Jessica led the review of the county plan, highlighting changes since the last plan 5 years ago. Highlights of changes and discussion include:

- Updates to state services and policy in addition to demographic and service data etc.
- Paul suggested linking to the Developmental Disability Council and Informing Families’ webpage within the plan.
- Jessica reviewed demographic data by race/ethnicity which show that younger populations are more diverse, and that DDA enrollment largely parallels census data, with some areas for improvement.
- She noted an increase in the percentage of adults, 18 and over, living with parents or relatives.



- Paul suggested differentiating between own home and supported living.
  - Naomi suggested labeling it as “own home (supported living)”.
- Valerie asked about the definition of a companion home.
  - Paul explained that a companion home is for individuals that may have known this person for a very long period of time living in the community, and have agreed to have them live with them and provide support needed.
- Bruce raised concerns about the efficiency, routing, and frequency of public transportation.
- He suggested maintaining capacity for public transit and not confining it to rural areas.
- Kait asked about employment data, particularly trends during Covid.
  - Jessica responded that the County has returned to pre-pandemic employment levels.
- Jessica invited further comments or questions. She encouraged attendees to reach out if they found anything unclear or thought something could be said in a better way.

## **6. Developmental Disabilities (DDA) Updates**

Paul from DDA shared updates:

- DDA in our region is staffed up on case managers and getting an incredible number of requests for paid services.
- The DDA assessment tool has been updated to better track unmet needs.
- [House Bill 2008](#) removes the IQ requirement starting in July 2025, and DDA is preparing for an increase in applications.
- [House Bill 1188](#) Allows DDA eligible and DCYF dependent youth, of which there about 830-860 individuals statewide, to receive services from both agencies. (Previously considered duplication.)

## **7. Public Comment**

No public comment

**Next Meeting:** Monday July 22, 2024 - 4:30-6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Lee, Program Specialist.

### **HD Staff**

Jessica Lee

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