North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
Government & Community Relations Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
January 17, 2018

Present: Melissa Ferman, Jessica Gould, Pat Grayson-DeJong, Michelle Heid, Erika Hernandez, Ismael Maldonado, Lillian Martinez, Meagan Miller, and Tamar Witmer – Committee Members  
Sharoll Jackson – Vendor Advisory Committee Representative  
Steve Miller – Guest  
Evan Ingber, Sara Iwahashi, Ruth Janka, Jennifer Kaiser, and Michele Marra – Staff Members

Absent: Manual Alfaro and Reinwick Pole

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Tamar Witmer, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. and introductions were made.

II. Public Input

A. Jessica Gould is a member of the Association of Regional Center Agencies’ (ARCA’s) Consumer Advisory Committee. That committee is going to be helping ARCA in its push to have camp and social recreation services restored.

B. Michele Marra introduced Evan Ingber, the center’s new training and development supervisor. He will be working closely with Michele and Sara and will begin coming to these meetings on a regular basis.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

Several items were added to the agenda and 1 item was deleted.

M/S/C (M. Miller/P. Grayson-DeJong) To approve the agenda as modified.

B. Approval of Minutes of the November 15th Meeting

M/S/C (J. Gould/M. Miller) To approve the minutes as presented.
IV. Committee Business

A. Vendor Advisory Committee Letter to the Board of Trustees (Michelle Heid)

The VAC presented a letter at the last board meeting requesting that the board work with DDS to come to a viable solution to address the bridge funding needed by providers who are required to pay the LA County minimum wage that is higher than the State minimum wage. This could be disastrous for providers and the consumers and families they serve. Action on this letter was referred to this committee for discussion and recommendation.

Michele Heid provided copies of a letter that was written by Assembly Member Chris Holden (who authored AB 279 last year) to the chairs of the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees about the need for bridge funding for service providers in order to maintain critical services. Assembly Member Holden recommends that they address this issue in the FY 2018-19 state budget.

After further committee discussion, the following actions were taken.

M/S/C (J. Gould/P. Grayson-DeJong) To recommend that the board write a letter to DDS requesting that they work together on a viable solution to provide needed bridge funding to providers. [Due to the urgent need to get the letter out, it was presented to the Executive Committee instead and was approved by that committee on behalf of the board.]

M/S/C (I. Maldonado/L. Martinez) To recommend to the Executive Committee that they approve sending letters to Assembly Member Holden and the 4 budget chairs supporting the bridge funding for service providers.

B. Digital Democracy Webinar

Digital Democracy, a free website that can help you track bills and enable you to watch hearings in Sacramento, was discussed at the last committee meeting. The site was created by 2 students from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, who had spent time working in the senate and wanted the public to have an easier time tracking legislation and legislative activities. Sara spoke to the creators and they offered to provide a webinar on the site; the following committee members expressed interest in participating: Michelle Heid, Steve Miller, Manuel Alfaro, Jessica Gould, Pat Grayson-DeJong, Ismael Maldonado, and Meagan Miller (and Sara too, of course).
**Action:** Sara will set up the webinar sometime before next month’s committee meeting.

**Action:** Sara will contact George Stevens, Ruth Janka, and Michele Marra once the date and time for the webinar has been set in case they are able to watch. Sara will also contact Jennifer Kaiser with the date and time so she can send an e-mail about it to the entire board.

Ismael reported that he tried to use the website but it didn’t work with his reading program.

C. **Report on Legislative Advocacy Project** (Steve Miller/Michelle Heid)

Steve and Michelle are compiling the data from the needs assessment survey and will summarize the results in a report. A town hall meeting will be held sometime in early April to report on the survey results and to bring representatives from each level of government to discuss the issues identified with our community. They are also interested in holding town hall meetings in the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys. Lots of data was generated by the needs assessment survey results, which could also be used by the center for an educational project. Also, it has proven to be difficult to organize a gubernatorial candidates’ forum prior to the June primary. Steve and Michelle provided the committee with a 3-page written report on the status of their community and legislative educator project activities; please see either of them with any questions.

**Action:** If possible, Steve and Michelle will send a link of the survey results to those who completed the survey with a message, “Thanks for completing the survey – here are the results!”

D. **Legislative Bill File** (Sara)

Sara provided copies of the updated bill file, highlighting the following bills:

1. **AB 11 (K. McCarty–D/Co-Author A. Nazarian-D):** This will would add developmental screening services to the list of those provided under the Early & Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, & Treatment (EPSDT) program. NLACRC’s subject matter expert recommends that the board take a support position on this bill; ARCA will likely take a support position on the bill as well.
M/S/C (I. Maldonado/P. Grayson-DeJong) To recommend to the Board of Trustees to take a support position on AB 11 (McCarty/Nazarian).

2. **AB 1801 (A. Nazarian–D):** This bill would establish a public education program to inform pregnant women and women who may become pregnant about Cytomegalovirus (CMV) as it can cause birth defects.

M/S/C (I. Maldonado/P. Grayson-DeJong) To recommend to the Board of Trustees to take a support position on AB 1801 (Nazarian).

E. **Publications**

1. **Drafts of the Center’s New General Brochure:** We had hoped to make the new foldable brochure with English on one side and Spanish on the other, but there is so much information, the print becomes too small. We may have to turn this into 2 pamphlets, one in English and another in Spanish. Sara is working with the printer to find out if the brochure could still be an option as that would be our preference.

2. **Commonly Coordinated Services Guide by Age Group:** Case management staff are currently reviewing the draft guide.

3. **Family Services Guide:** This guide is still in process of being drafted and will take some time as it will contain a lot of information.

F. **Begin Considering Ideas for the Annual Legislative Event in April**

After discussion, the following actions were taken:

**Action:** The committee will recommend to the Board of Trustees that the board’s annual legislative event be the town hall meeting this will be held in early April (discussed in item IV.C. above).

**Action:** Jennifer will send an e-mail to the Board of Trustees asking for volunteers to serve on a subcommittee to help plan the town hall meeting.

G. **ARCA Grass Roots Day in Sacramento:** Tuesday, March 20th

After discussion, the committee took the following actions:
Action: The committee will recommend to the Board of Trustees that the main topic for this year’s local Grass Roots visits with legislators and ARCA’s Grass Roots Day be the bridge funding needed by service providers.

Action: Any committee members interested in going to Sacramento to visit with legislators on ARCA Grass Roots Day should contact Jennifer Kaiser.

H. Valley Industry & Commerce Association (VICA)

The center recently became a member of this group. As part of the membership fee, the center has been given 2 free tickets to a “State Officeholders” dinner on Friday, March 9th, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the Globe Theatre at Universal Studios in Hollywood. Many legislators will be there, including Senator Holly Mitchell who is one of the two senate budget chairs who was sent a letter by Assembly Member Holden (see Section IV.A. above). We need 2 people who would be comfortable with going to the dinner, introducing themselves, providing their 2-minute elevator speech, and networking with legislators and others.

Action: Tamar Witmer and Lillian Martinez both expressed interest in participating in the dinner.

Action: Michele will speak with George Stevens to find out if he would like to send a leadership group member to the dinner (e.g. Kim Rolfes, as she knows Assembly Member Holden).

Action: Michele will make sure the participants are contacted the details finalized.

V. Board Meeting Agenda Items

The following items were identified for the committee’s section of the February 14th board meeting agenda:

A. Minutes of the January 17th Meeting
B. Legislative Bill File
C. Approval of Letter to DDS re: Bridge Funding Needed
D. Approval of Support Position on AB 11 (McCarty/Nazarian)
E. Approval of Support Position on AB 1801 (Nazarian)
F. Recommendation re: Annual Legislative Event in April
G. Recommendation for Grass Roots Day & Week Topic: Bridge Funding
H. Valley Industry & Commerce Association (VICA) Dinner
VI. Announcements / Information / Public Input

A. Complete Meeting Evaluations
   Tamar asked the committee members to please complete their evaluation forms after the meeting and submit them to her with any comments.

B. Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 21st, at 7:00 p.m.

VII. Adjournment

   Tamar adjourned the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser
Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

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