

**NLACRC BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
JANUARY 16, 2025 6:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

ZOOM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Ana Quiles, George Alvarado, Nicholas Abrahms, Sharmila Brunjes, Leticia Garcia, Juan Hernandez, Anna Hurst, Alex Kopilevich, Jennifer Koster, Laura Monge, Andrew Ramirez, Alma Rodriguez, Rocio Sigala, Curtis Wang

ABSENT:

Alma Rodriguez, Cathy Blin

STAFF:

Angela Pao-Johnson - Executive Director, Evelyn McOmie, Vini Montague, Betsy Monahan, Megan Mitchell, Chris Whitlock, John Van de Riet, Kim Visokey, Arezo Abedi, Lindsay Granger, Sandra Rizo, *Arshalous Garlanian, Donna Rentsch, Roy Ortega, Ana Maria Parthenis-Rivas, Victor Vitalis, Silvia Renteria-Haro, Sarah Yap*

GUESTS:

Mark Wolfe – DDS Tech. Advisor, Tresa Oliveri – DDS Tech Advisor, Xochitl Gonzalez – DDS, Nicholas Mendoza, Michael Hickman—Musick Peeler & Garrett LLP, Michael Klein—Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP, Ricky Valle—Interpreter, Giselle Franco—Interpreter, Mark Angela Flores, Fernando Gomez, Ana Hernandez, Jekora Robinson, Judy Mark, Lori Walker, Lillian A. Martinez, Micaela, Elena Tiffany, Elizabeth Tom, Jacqueline Gaytan, Janeth, Jose Javana, Josefina Romo, Kristianna Moralis, Lourdes Rojas, Patricia, Samantha Moreno, Theresa Quary, Venus Rodriguez-Khorassani, Vero, Victoria Berrey, Rebecca Ernewein

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

The Chair shared the mission and vision of the NLACRC and reminded attendees of the Board of Trustees Civility Code.

2. HOUSEKEEPING

The Chair noted that Spanish interpretation was available to attendees. Board members and guests on Zoom were reminded to include their full name and affiliation in the Zoom chat.

3. BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE/QUORUM

Board members were confirmed in attendance on Zoom.

4. AGENDA – APPROVAL

On a motion made by George Alvarado, seconded by Curtis Wang, it was resolved to approve the agenda as presented.

5. PUBLIC INPUT & COMMENTS—RESERVED FOR AGENDA ITEMS

Ana Quiles discussed the actions taken by DDS in response to the Board's support of Bill AB-1147. Ana Quiles provided an overview of how the Board responded to DDS's actions, wherein the Board hired an outside agency to perform an investigation.

Ana Quiles expressed gratitude to all members and stated she would resign from the President position for her mental health.

Lori Walker requested that Board or Committee meetings not be scheduled at the same time as the Self-Determination Program (SDP) meetings, noting that members were unable to attend the SDP meeting as a result.

Rosie Sigala further comments on the actions by DDS and expressed concerns about how the actions and response impacted the Committee. Rosie Sigala resigned as the second Vice President.

Andrew Ramirez repeated the concerns expressed by Ana Quiles and Rosie Sigala, and resigned from the role of Board treasurer.

Sharmilla Brunjes agreed to continue the meeting.

6. CLOSED SESSION

On a motion made by George Alvarado, seconded by Curtis Wang, it was resolved to move to a closed session to discuss ongoing legal matters at 6:18 p.m.

On a motion duly made and carried unanimously, it was resolved to terminate the closed session to discuss ongoing legal matters at 6:39 p.m.

7. CONSENT/ACTION ITEMS

On a motion duly made and carried unanimously, it was resolved to defer approval of all consent and action items listed to a future meeting.

8. ACTION ITEMS

8.1 Removal of Board President Discussion

Musick, Peeler, & Garrett LLP confirmed that they were hired to provide a thorough and neutral investigation of the letters provided by DDS, and provided a detailed overview of their investigation. Musick and Peeler confirmed the allegations by DDS were supported by independent evidence, and a summary of conclusions had been provided in the report along with additional recommendations.

Sharmila Brunjes expressed concern over the conclusions. Musick and Peeler confirmed that all conversations had been detailed in the report, while specific statements were not attributed to specific employees to avoid retaliation. Musick and Peeler further emphasized a broad variety of input was received during the investigation.

Sharmila Brunjes stated that a letter of support should have been referenced in a set of minutes from 2023 regarding Bill AB-1147, and Musick and Peeler explained that the investigation determined that the deliberation and analysis had not been robust enough to support the Board's decision to back the bill.

Sharmila Brunjes raised concerns about an alleged smear campaign being directed at trustees, Musick and Peeler confirmed they were not contacted, nor coerced by DDS regarding the results of the investigation.

Laura Monge expressed further critique of the investigation.

9. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

9.1 Review Executive Director Performance Evaluation

Betsy Monahan confirmed that additional redlines may be added due to being unable to approve this meeting's action items. It was suggested that the current bylaws be referenced to ensure the evaluations go through the correct committee, along with including an updated timeline within the evaluation policy. Angela Pao-Johnson noted that the updated bylaws have been approved to go to DDS, but are pending adoption awaiting their response.

Leticia Garcia congratulated Angela Pao-Johnson on their fourth month as Executive Director, and requested that the Board give Angela Pao-Johnson additional time to finalize the three-to-six month check-in on the Board's successes and challenges.

ACTION—Betsy Monahan will review the 360 feedback mechanisms to confirm if additional recommendations are needed to proceed for 2026, which she will present at a future meeting.

9.2 Retreat Venue and Awards Banquet Workgroup

ACTION— Betsy Monahan will e-mail all Board members regarding the Awards Banquet and include the date, planning and volunteer-related information

10. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Angela Pao-Johnson presented the Executive Director's Report. She highlighted the following items:

- NLACRC gained 72 employees during the fiscal year, 64 of which were CSCs, compared to the 85 employees gained during the 2023-2024 fiscal year.
- Reduced vacant case loads by 64% as over the last 12 months.
- The holiday gift drive was successful with 122 individuals receiving gifts through Board donations.
- Four in-person organization insight forums were hosted, resulting in an average rating of 3.81 for employee satisfaction.
- Pete Cervinka and JaRita B. Pichon were appointed as Director of DDS and the DDS Equity Officer respectively.
- The statewide IPP template has been implanted as of January 1, 2025.
- State budget cash revenues were approximately five billion above current-year projections, noting allocation to prior commitments and caseload growth.
- The total budget is expected to increase by 20.2% to reach approximately 19 billion dollars.
- As of January 1, 2025, service providers will now receive a transitional rate based on 90% of the full-rate model with potential QIPs, noting regional centers and service providers have until March 31, 2025 to finalize their service code alignment, rates and Service Acknowledgement form.
- Master plan work groups have been working diligently.
- The total number of positions filled at the center is 804 out of an authorized 956, with 18 new hires as of December 2024.
- Consultants of the Columbus Organization elected to leave appointments a month earlier than the contract end date, with Person-Centered Consulting to assist with finalizing employee workgroup proposals.
- DDS provided valuable feedback on NLACRC's Plan of Action and Angela Pao-Johnson confirmed efforts have been made to improve.
- A brief overview on outreach efforts was provided.

- Consumer statistics indicate NLACRC has served a total of 38,195 individuals.
- The Quality Assurance team conducted 199 residential visits in December 2024 and 141 unannounced in-person visits.

Angela Pao-Johnson and Anna Hurst expressed gratitude to the team for their overwhelming support during the recent wildfire emergency. They further confirmed that the team will be attending ARCA's Grass Roots event on March 3, 2025 and March 4, 2025, and a legislative town hall scheduled for February 25, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. CST. A legislative breakfast is also being organized with the expected date being in May 2025 or June 2025.

Angela Pao-Johnson confirmed staff retention efforts are initiatives pulled directly from staff's comments and concerns made during various interviews and surveys.

ACTION—Angela Pao-Johnson is to provide an updated organization chart on the Regional Center to all Board members.

11. **ITEMS 11-22 REPORTS RECEIVED**

The Board received the following committee reports for information:

- Self-Determination Program.
- Association of Regional Center Agencies.
- Administrative Affairs Committee.
- Consumer Advisory Committee.
- Consumer Services Committee.
- Executive Committee.
- Government and Community Relations Committee.
- Nominating Committee.
- Post-Retirement Medical Trust Committee.
- Recruiting Committee
- Strategic Planning Committee.
- Vendor Advisory Committee.

As reports were presented, the following speakers offered observations and comments:

- Leticia Garcia confirmed no report for the Association of Regional Center Agencies would be provided until the next meeting.
- Alex Kopilevich requested that the next meeting date for the Vendor Advisor Committee be updated to February 13, 2025.

12. **OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**

Angela Pao-Johnson confirmed the Meeting Evaluation Form is also a response to DDS's Special Contract Language to help chart progress and improve on specific areas.

13. **ANNOUNCEMENTS/INFORMATION/PUBLIC INPUT**

The members of the public attending the meeting via teleconference had an opportunity to present their concerns, questions, and comments to the Board.

Fernando Gomez expressed that this Board has been the most prolific out of the 20 regional centers, and a strong representative of the community it represents despite the recently faced challenges. Fernando Gomez offered criticism of Musick and Peeler's investigative report and requested that the report be made public.

Lillian A. Martinez expressed significant criticism regarding DDS's handling of recent events and their relationship with NLACRC, and voiced a negative assessment of the investigative report.

Judy Mark expressed concern with the health of the current Board due to the resignations, and stated that NLACRC's role is to support the community and not DDS. They further noted bill AB-1147 was supported by every member of the legislature, state senator and assembly member. They also offered criticisms regarding the investigative report.

Sharmilla Brunjes provided additional insight into the process of the investigative report and noted everyone involved, including the Board members who resigned, agreed for the investigation to take place.

14. NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Board of Trustees meeting is February 12, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

15. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

16. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMST

- *Board Support will put out an email with details about the Awards Banquet and Board Retreat Workgroup and that includes dates and volunteer opportunities.*
- *Board members will complete a meeting evaluation form for Board and Committee Meetings, which they will receive after this meeting.*
- *Public Information, Chris Whitlock and John van de Riet, will email details about the ARCA Grassroots event on March 3rd and 4th*
- *Vendor Advisory Committee will review applications for the four open positions.*
- *Betsy Monahan will update the Executive Director Performance Evaluation timeline for consistency and to research and present 360-degree feedback options for the Executive Director evaluation process by the next Board Meeting or the February Executive Committee meeting.*
- *Nominating Committee to conduct board member interviews.*
- *Angela Pao-Johnson to submit a report on successes and challenges within the next two months as part of the Executive Director onboarding plan.*

Submitted by:

Lindsay Granger

Executive Administrative Assistant

