**Statutory Advisory Board (SAB)**

**June 6, 2023**

**Minutes**

SAB Attendees: Blair Wong, Brian MacDonald, and Kathy Petkauskos

MCB Staff Attendees: John Oliveira, Nathan Skrocki, Thelma Williams, Lucy Evangelidis, Loran Lang, Nathan Empey, Jay Rufo

Brian MacDonald stated that Howard Purcell is no longer the chair. The first item on the agenda will be voting in a new chair.

Meeting Held via Zoom; Recordings made available to public on MCB YouTube channel

Public invited to participate through Q&A made at end of the meeting.

Election of new Chair

Blair asked if they could elect an interim chair until there is a full board.

Acting Commissioner Oliveira said it could take months to get a full board due to the process in the governor’s office.

Loran Lang does not necessarily recommend having an interim chair.

Blair wants to make sure that whoever becomes chair today is comfortable in the role. Someone might want to try it out for the next month and make a formal decision in August.

Kathy could not be considered chair at this point.

Kathy nominated Brian as SAB Chair. 3 votes yes. Brian MacDonald elected new Chair of the SAB.

Minutes

Call to accept Minutes from May 2, 2023 meeting.

Moved and accepted.

Commissioner Update – Acting Commissioner John Oliveira

MCB survey is completed. There were about 3,000 replies from consumers. MCB will receive a report by June 30th containing the results. The results will be shared with the SAB.

Internship Program is continuing to move forward. 60-70 interns in program. Soft Skills training completed with 90% intern participation. Closing ceremony will be in person. More meetings will start to be held in person, but we will still use Zoom as it is more convenient for some segments of our population.

National Industries for the Blind program updates. 3 people went through the program in the first batch and an additional 3 just starting to receive the training. They have also expanded to other states.

Next Generation Partnership Grant with the Mass Rehab Commission is pretty much fully staffed. We have 15 consumers working with them at this point. The grant has another couple of years to go until it is terminated.

State funding and earmarks updates. We had lots of referrals this year and folks received additional training through vendors such as the Carroll Center, Mass Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the Polus Center. Funding has been pretty much exhausted, and time is running out this year.

MCB staffing updates. We are still seeking a CFO. John is doing the best he can to support the fiscal unit during the fiscal year closeout and the beginning of the new fiscal year. We have received the Governor’s budget, the House budget, and amendments added onto the budget. The vendors have lobbied and gotten some earmarks attached to the budget. There was additional funding put in to hire additional staff for MCB.

What’s Your Vision ad campaign updates. We received reallotment funding to be used on MCB ads across media platforms around the state. This is an effort to bring more employers to work with MCB. There will be a phone number on most of the ads with a number that will be answered 24/7 from an outside company.

Brian asked if the people doing the 24/7 phone service are also doing the analytics for the calls.

The company managing the entire campaign will be coordinating everything and bringing the results to MCB. The ads will be in print, radio, and television.

Kathy asked what the timeframe of the campaign is. John said they are hoping to roll out the ads in late June through September 30th into a little bit of October due to some free opportunities to advertise.

John shared job fair updates. There is a reverse job fair in October where MCB will look for new employers.

Blair asked if the ad is on cable and TV audio described and is the phone number read out loud? John said the number will be read. They have not discussed this in detail yet.

Kathy asked if there is anything the SAB can do to help fill the CFO position. John said to send people to mass.gov under MCB to find the job posting. That is all handled by HR.

Kathy asked if MCB can get any support from EHS during this time? John said we have received help from MRC’s (mass rehabilitation commission) fiscal department to answer some questions. We also have support from the Comptroller’s Office and A&F (administration and finance).

Kathy asked if the additional funding for staff would only be for one year or ongoing. John thinks it would be an increase in funding but it is a lobbying effort that was done by our union. We are not involved at the agency level.

Brian asked if any of the additional funding can be used to fill the gap between the CFO salary issue. John said it is a struggle overall to fill positions. The current funding is specifically targeted at filing certain positions. The CFO position is not included. It is more of an HR matter.

Fiscal Update – Budget Director Nathan Empey

John described the new fiscal spreadsheet which shows how much money MCB has gotten in through each appropriation, how much has been encumbered, and how much has been actually paid out.

Nathan read through some of the main appropriations describing the columns and what they represent. The federal grants are on a different fiscal year than the state. The spreadsheet also includes the House 1 and Senate budgets.

Administrative Update – Brian MacDonald

There will be no SAB meeting in July.

Regional Structure Overview – Jay Rufo

Jay is the regional director for region 4 which is the metro west region. His region includes 60 towns and cities. 15 employees work in this unit. There are 2 supervisors who work below Jay. On the vocational rehabilitation side there are 4 case managers. On the social rehabilitation side there are 4 case managers, 2 standard case managers, 1 OIB (older individuals who are Blind) case manager, and a child services’ case worker. There are also 2 rehabilitation teachers. The region has 2 ADA coordinators.

Jay discussed the flow of someone registering with MCB and getting services. Central Registration captures the information showing that someone is legally blind and then will send cases to different regional directors based on where an individual lives. Regional Directors decide if the case should go to the VR or SR unit. The supervisors disseminate the cases to actual case managers who contact the individuals.

Dashboard Overview – Nathan Skrocki

Nathan shared his screen and read through the main numbers included in the dashboard. We are moving through registrations in 1-2 days. No surprises overall.

Brian asked if the SAB could receive the dashboard monthly. Nathan will send before each meeting.

Questions from the Public

Nona Haroyan suggested extending the meetings so there is time for questions without feeling rushed. She also mentioned that the meetings used to be held at 12:30pm which might be easier for some people. She asked if remote/virtual work is a trend that can be seen in employment at MCB.

John said there are more work from home jobs available today which works great for some people, but some clients prefer to be in an office. He guesses that most of our job placements are in person.

Blair would be available to meet in July if other board members would like to. The board will speak offline to discuss Nona’s suggestions.

Kathy said it would be difficult for her to attend an hour and a half meeting.

Brian would like to have the next meeting in August, but the SAB can meet internally before then.

Meeting adjourned.