Self-Directed Advisory Committee

06.17.20

(Virtual Meeting via WebEx)

Chair: Nancy Alterio

Board Members : Andrea Lunden, Jeff Keilson, Anne Fracht, Robin Foley, Lindsey Foley, Barbara Pandolfi, Leo Sarkissian, Kimberly Truong, Megan Hamilton (sitting in for Julie Flaherty), Julie Westwater, Jeffrey Paquette, Karla Murphy, Val Bradley, Rich Santucci, Liz Sandblom

DDS Staff: Jane Ryder, Elizabeth Morse, Ed Wilson, Beverly McGovern, Jennifer Benoit, Laney Bruner-Canhoto, Anne Marie Stanton, Victor Hernandez, Terry O’Hare, Gail Gillespie, Teryl Smith, Pamela Hickey, Tim Cahill

Absent: Carol Bird, Lea Brown, John Nadworney, Julie Flaherty, Tom Sannicandro

1. Nancy Alterio called the meeting to order, welcomed the group, took roll call, and introduced Commissioner Ryder
2. Commissioner Ryder gave the following updates around DDS activities during the COVID-19 pandemic:

<DDS has responded aggressively to the crisis

<DDS offices were closed; and all face to face visits were stopped.

<No visits were allowed to group homes by family members until recently. Currently, family visits must be held outside, incorporate social distancing and the use of masks. While many families would like more contact, this is a first step.

<DDS staff particularly service coordinators and support brokers are conducting their work remotely through email, calls, texts, and on-line meetings. They are regularly checking on the needs and safety of individuals. That connection has been important for families.

<DDS is sponsoring testing through Fallon Ambulance for individuals in group homes (mobile testing) and for direct care staff (pop-up testing in facility or agency parking lots).

<The Department is tracking all individuals and staff who test positive for COVID- 19.

<DDS is working with providers to plan a gradual opening of day services in the safest way possible.

<Day program openings are challenged by transportation. Changes need to be made in transportation in order to safely transport individuals to/ from their day services.

Commissioner Ryder will keep the group updated. Nancy Alterio acknowledged the Commissioner’s difficult decisions during this crisis and thanked her.

Commissioner Ryder introduced Liz Sandblom, the new Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Operations. Liz is the new DDS lead on self-direction and comes from working as Area Director in Greater Boston- a large and challenging area.

Liz talked about her background and role. Liz has worked for DDS for (26) years most recently in the Greater Boston Area where she learned more about self-direction and understood its value. She will start full time in her new role 06.29.20.

She talked about her interest and excitement in self direction. Her goal is to move forward and sustain self-direction with the support of leadership teams in DDS by providing training, developing and making tools accessible by enhancing website and technical resources, working closely with leadership/ the field/ self-advocates, and providing guidance to enhance person-centered thinking so that informed decisions can be made through transparent budgets and clear responsibilities.

1. Regional Updates

Ed Wilson/ Southeast talked about his work during the pandemic:

<The Southeast Region had its largest enrollment yet- 100 new enrollments

<Ed has worked with many individuals and families through Zoom

< He has worked with area leadership and support brokers through this time

<He is currently focused on end-of-the-year budgeting

Pam Hickey/ Central/ West talked about her work:

<Pam has worked hard to maintain the mission

<Their region has embraced opportunities to meet virtually

<Their staffs have reached out to provide individuals with technology to get connected

<Many individuals have maintained their services throughout the crisis

< Pam has conducted virtual sessions to reach out to individuals and families

<She is looking forward to working with Liz

Commissioner Ryder welcomed Jen Benoit in her new role in Metro. Jen reported:

< She started as Self-Direction Manager in February

<Her background as Human Rights Specialist led her to self-direction and supporting individuals with a person-centered lifestyle

<She has been able to work with individuals from her past in a new way

<She is getting to know the work and is excited to be working with the self-direction team

Bev McGovern from the Northeast was not able to present due to technical difficulty.

Nancy Alterio asked for feedback/ questions from the members.

Leo Sarkissian asked the managers how they were getting the information out to families and offered to help with that.

Pam Hickey talked about her approach- working 1:1, trying not to overwhelm families and individuals. She has seen an increase in self-directed services in the wake of closed day programs.

Liz Sandblom commented that individuals who recently turned 22 were trying self-direction. The closure of day program sites has created an opportunity to try self-direction.

Robin Foley said that the managers were making a big difference in advancing self-direction. She also added that the flexibility around technology and purchase of technology for families who don’t have it has been helpful.

1. Mass Advocates Standing Strong- Anne Fracht – Anne reported the following:

<MASS has been through a lot the past few months. The organization lost their chairperson and their office at 500 Harrison Ave due to the flood

<MAS S is working remotely now and making good use of Zoom

<Anne is working in the area of supported decision making

<Anne also reminded the committee of the importance of involving the individual in services first

1. Review of 12.04.19 Minutes- Members moved that the minutes be accepted. The motion was accepted and carried unanimously.
2. Ideas for future meetings:

<Update on AWC training manual

<Hear from individual/ family who self-directed during the crisis

<Presentation of DDS website changes by Chris Thompson (carryover from this meeting)

<Community of Practice (Charting the Life Course tools)

<Review of past tools and guidance on AWC

1. Videos- Ed Wilson- Ed talked about an AWC video and fraud and abuse video that are now in production with a videographer. There are also three video clips of stories previously viewed on the DDS website.

Next Meetings (likely virtual)

September 2, 2020 10-11:30 December 2, 2020 10-11:30