

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**COASTAL DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES FOUNDATION**  
**MAY 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2020**  
**ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joseph Allen  
Joan Elaine Anderson  
Nilo Choudhry  
Cammy DuPont  
Elizabeth Espinosa  
Zoey Giesberg  
Myra Mezquita  
Betty Pearson-Grimble  
Todd Rubien  
Alejandro Soschin  
Russell Tanner  
Sofia M. Vergara  
Vanda Yung

MEMBERS ABSENT: Austin Dove, Philip Jackson, David Wyles

STAFF PRESENT: Thompson Kelly, Cesar Garcia, Danny Franco, Hillary Kessler, Mary Lou Weise-Stusser, Liz Spencer, Sonya Lowe, Kate Harvey, Rhiannon Maycumber, Aga Spatzier, Alyssa Delagnes, Ana Da Silva, Anjanette Robinson, Anna Bonilla, Barbara Marbach, Corey Conroy, Cristina Azantian, Cristina Azantian, Elaine Wright-Forris, Ereida Galda, Feben Fantu, Hien Tran, Joanne Manese, Julie Danneker, Lidenira Amador, Linda Butler, Maria Fukuda, Maria Lipstein, Martha Thompson, Megan Tommet-Ramirez, Megan Mendes, Mina Gomez, Myriam Garcia, Paul Roberson, , Rosalba Orteg, Sandy R. Cabanatan, Stephanie Lee, Stephen Browning, Tamori Parmer, Young You

GUESTS: Marcia James, Judy Mark, Christofer Arroyo (SCDD), Jo Mullins (DDS), Mary Hernandez (DDS), Sonia Hernandez (Interpreter), Pamela Shepard Garcia (Interpreter), Yazmin Lope, Adriana Madrigal, Alyssa Jackson, Beverly Hutchinson, Christina Cannarella, Cristina Azantian, Desiree Boykin, Elena Bustamante, Esther Kelsey, Felicia Ford, Francis Gomez, Kecia Weller, Leticia Antonio, Lisa Basiri, Lisa C Anderson, Martha Chavez, Nichole Mikkelson, Patricia Crook, Teresa Garcia, Tomasa Scaccianoce, Tresa Oliveri, Veta Simpson

## **CALL TO ORDER (ACTION\*)**

Meeting was called to order by Board President, Sofia Vergara at 6:04pm.

## **ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM:**

It was established that the members present represented a quorum necessary pursuant to Section 3.03 (g) of the bylaws of Westside Regional Center which states:

*(g) Quorum*

*A quorum of the Board of Directors shall consist of nine (9) members of the corporation. Provided, however, that a quorum of the Board of Directors shall consist of a majority of the Directors then in office at any time when the number of Directors then in office is less than ten (10)*

## **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Sofia Vergara, Board President, welcomed everyone to the first Zoom Westside Regional Center Board meeting. She explained the procedure for using the Zoom interpretation features, as well as the procedure for public comment. She also thanks everyone for their patience in this “new normal”.

## **OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chris Arroyo with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) let everyone know there is a total of \$20,000 available through their 2020 Program Development Grant focusing on the identified areas of Housing, and Health and Safety.

Judy Mark let everyone know that DVU has pivoted to work on mostly COVID-19 issues since March. They have created a website with resources for everyone (<http://disabilityvoicesunited.org/cv>), and it is updated regularly. DVU has also been holding weekly webinars (next on Friday) to discuss self-determination and other participant-directed services that have been expanded under the governor’s orders due to the pandemic. Finally, they have a survey that they are conducting, and it will be on their website.

Zoey Giesberg, Board Member, let everyone know that there has been a movie made by Spectrum Laboratory and it will be debuting at an LGBT film festival, this Saturday. Information about the film, “Boys Don’t Wear Dresses” here: <https://threedollarbillcinema.org/translations/films/shorts/joy-catharsis>

Alex Soschin, Board Member, asked that moving forward the Executive Team could track and better publicize the outreach and communication efforts made by the WRC staff.

Elizabeth Espinoza, Board Member, requested that Dr. Kelly post COVID-19 statistics on the WRC website. She also posed the question of if vendors are being paid, or if they are filing unemployment.

## **CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

Dr. Sofia Vergara started by thanking everyone for their hard work through these difficult times. She encouraged everyone to share how they are feeling at this time during public comment, as she and the rest of the board would love to hear from everyone. She everyone know that the work of our committees has continued virtually, and that everyone will hear from those representatives during this meeting. Finally, she requested that Dr. Kelly and the WRC provide more information about their efforts during the COVID-19 shut-down.

Dr. Vergara noted that there will be two action items for approval at the June meeting: the BOD Code of Conduct & Responsibilities (specifically for BOD members) and BOD Code of Conduct for everyone and

anyone who attends the meeting. The intention of these documents is to put forth guidelines to make Board of Directors meetings more productive and positive, and provide a safe place for all to feel heard and maintain an open dialog. These action items are being spearheaded by Board Member Cammy Dupont. Also at the June meeting will be the Board Annual Elections. More information regarding that is forthcoming.

Dr. Vergara also thanked the DDS technical team for the productive meeting with them this past Friday, which had lots of information and open dialog.

Finally, Dr. Vergara let the other board members know that there will not be a closed session following this meeting.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MARCH 4TH, 2020 BOARD MEETING** **(ACTION\*)**

**Nilo Choudhry, Board Member (Motion) and, Alejandro Soschin Board Member, (Second) the approval of the March 4th, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes.**

**RESOLUTION: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MARCH 4, 2020 BOARD MEETING.**

**No public comment. The motion passed.**

**13 AYES**

**0 NO**

**0 ABSTENTIONS**

### **REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dr. Tom Kelly reported on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Westside Regional Center and on our staff, families, vendors, and community. He described both the challenges faced, and some of the creative solutions that have been found in order to continue serving families and providing support to all who need it. Dr. Kelly stated that over 3200 medical-grade N95 masks have been given out to direct care providers who are providing essential support to the individuals we serve. He also noted that WRC has been able to obtain and distribute over 2500 high-quality cloth masks (made by local clothing manufacturer Liz Hirsh Naftali) to families, vendors, and others in our community. Dr. Kelly concluded with expressing his gratitude to the individuals served by Westside (for their tenacity and courage), the staff (for their hard work and creativity), the Board of Directors (for their support and collaboration) and to the families of Westside (for their positivity and input). Dr. Kelly's full report can be found in the Board Packet that was emailed out to meeting participants.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **➤ FINANCE**

Danny Franco, WRC CFO, reported that we have gone through 71% POS budget 66% of operation budget. In OPS we have implemented hiring freeze and avoiding new service contracts, evaluating IT projects non critical. DDS asking for COVID expenditures to be tracked. The Governor of California has made 1.4 million dollars avail for COVID-19, and the state plans on seeking 75% coverage of COVID-related expenditures. However, DDS has not given additional funding to the Regional Center due to COVID-19. There is added support that has not been distributed yet. An analysis can be put together for distribution.

The Finance Committee met April 27 to discuss the annual fiscal audit. The audit is being finalized and will be reported to board at next meeting.

## ➤ CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Esther Kelsey, Vice President of CAC, read the report on Todd Rubien's behalf. This past month CAC focused on a number of self-care related action items to help members during the COVID-19 outbreak. These included: creative ways to do virtual activities as a group, conference calls every day to keep connected, taking steps to learn how to protect yourself and how to fight the virus until there is a cure, and cooking healthy meals (and learning to cook). During the daily CAC phone calls, there have been multiple guest speakers, and these meetings continue open to everyone who wants to call in and speak. CAC sends their thanks to Liz Spencer and the FREC for donating masks to members and their families. CAC also posed a question to the board if they know a therapist to call in to the daily call. They currently have both a personal fitness trainer, and artist who call in regularly.

Zoey Giesberg, Board Member, commented her thanks to CAC for keeping human connection during this COVID-19 crisis and social isolation. This connection has been really great for mental health and morale.

## ➤ EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Dr. Sofia Vergara reported that work with Matt Kamin from Envision Consulting has continued virtually. Matt is providing the search committee with weekly progress reports and updates to the recruitment efforts. On April 6 phone interviews were conducted by Envision, followed by virtual in-person interviews on May 4<sup>th</sup>. A majority of the candidates are from the southern California area, but there are a few from out of state. In total, there are twelve active applicants at this time. The final interview panel, with most qualified candidates has yet to be scheduled, in order to find the most safe and productive procedure.

## ➤ CLIENT SERVICES

Cesar Garcia reported that David Wyles, Board Member and Client Services representative, is still recovering and sends his well wishes. The hope is that the Client Services committee will be able to meet this month and report back at the next BOD meeting.

## ➤ BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Nilo Choudhry reported that the information from the Sacramento ARCA training in February is now available online, and that Zoey Giesberg has passed it along to the board members who were unable to attend in person. Nilo also noted that the Board training in April, during which DDS was going to present, was cancelled due to COVID-19, but will be rescheduled later in this calendar year. Finally, Nilo reminded the Board members that the annual BOD election will be held in June. More information is forthcoming.

## ➤ POLITICAL ACTION & ARCA

Zoey Giesberg, Board Member and ARCA representative, reported that ARCA voiced concerns about COVID-19 prior to the government safe-at-home initiative, and therefore the March ARCA board meeting was cancelled. However, ARCA has continued to give lots of digital updates to budget and procedure. To that point, the budget will change tremendously due to COVID-19. ARCA's position is that they will still try to advocate at state level for the budget approval process. Once the May budget revise comes out, it will help define the talking points about future budget use. Overall, we don't know for sure if the budget will be flat or if there will be cuts, but there is anticipation for cuts.

Zoey also reported that due to COVID-19, WRC has increased efforts in digital training and education. LA County is offering free COVID-19 testing. Finally, Zoey reiterated that the community needs to talk to our

Federal representatives about including disabled folks in their distributions. There are more resources, as well as the full reports that can be found in the Board Packet that was emailed out to meeting participants.

➤ **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Dr. Tom Kelly reported that the Strategic Planning Committee has had two meetings via Zoom, one in March and one in April. In those meetings, the committee was able to finalize and post the Request for Proposals (RFP) on the Westside Regional Center website. Megan Mendes, committee member and WRC staff, created a rating tool for the subcommittee evaluating submitted RFPs. The committee also discussed how the COVID-19 crisis has impacted Strategic Planning, and how it will shape the “new normal” by pushing for more use of technology and creativity. Full meeting minutes for both meetings can be found in the Board Packet that was emailed out to meeting participants.

➤ **SERVICE PROVIDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

JoanElaine Anderson, Board Member, gave thanks to the all of the vendors and to WRC for the information and training materials being put out on the website regarding COVID-19. She talked about how all the vendors have really stepped up in partnership in order to tackle the challenges faced in creative and resourceful ways.

➤ **FAMILY EMPOWERMENT CENTER**

Liz Spencer, Director of the FREC, reported about the many changes that the world is experiencing due to COVID-19, and noted that everything can change as quickly as one hour to the next. Liz reiterated that the FREC is open and here for everyone no matter what it is that you need. FREC continues to have multiple projects and groups that are running virtually during this time, including CHADD and The Asperger Parent Support Group. The FREC also plans to launch the virtual meetings of the African American/ Black Parents support group, SibShop, Siempre Amigas and the IHSS class.

Liz also discussed the donation letter written to help build up the WRC Client Help Fund which assists families and clients in need. Because of recent legislation, up to \$300 of any COVID-19 related donation will be tax deductible. That letter is available on the WRC website.

Finally, Liz noted that the FREC staff has been helping to contact WRC families, and has been critical in distributing supplies (such as gloves, masks, diapers, and wipes) to those in need by holding weekly supply distribution drives. She shared some of the positive feedback that she and her staff have received from families, and thanked our community for their continued resilience.

The full report can be found in the Board Packet that was emailed out to meeting participants.

## ➤ EQUITY

Dr. Tom Kelly reported that the Equity Committee met on April 29 via Zoom. The committee discussed their current project “Creating Successful Transitions”. This project has funding of \$106,018 and will last 12 months. There will be two workshops: Early Childhood Transition, and High School to Community Life. The full presentation that includes details for both workshops can be found in the Board Packet that was emailed out to meeting participants. At this meeting, the committee also heard from SCDD Representative Chris Arroyo who talked about the resources being collected on the SCDD website. These resources span a variety of topics and are written in plain language, available in both English and Spanish. The committee discussed the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on families in transitions and how more information will be crucial moving forward. Full meeting minutes for this meeting can be found in the Board Packet that was emailed out to meeting participants.

## ➤ SELF DETERMINATION

Judy Mark thanked the Board of Directors for their hard work. Judy read the report for Self Determination. The Committee was not able to meet in March, but met on April 29<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. It was reported that WRC currently has four individuals fully participating in the Self-Determination program, and there are another four who are ready to start. In total there are 86 people selected for the phase-in. At this meeting, the committee also heard from several participants who voiced their experiences with barriers to participation in relation to the COVID-19 crisis. These included not being able to do PCP meetings in-person, and having difficulty with background checks for incoming staff. Self-Determination will be available statewide June 7, 2021. Judy’s full report can be found in the Board Packet that was emailed out to meeting participants.

Cammy Dupont, Board Member, responded by letting everyone know that there is a 1-800 number available on the Department of Justice (DOJ) website that says which locations are open for LiveScan background checks.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Liz Spencer, Director of the WRC FREC, let everyone know that FREC has been participating with the Special Needs Network, who are providing excellent information and resources. They are having meetings Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays. More information can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/specialneedsnetwork/>

Alex Soschin, Board Member, let everyone know that there is a resource called LA Represents (part of a legal assistance initiative) to help people who have needs for legal services during this crisis. More information can be found at: <https://corona-virus.la/LARepresents>

Judy Mark expressed her concern for her family’s well being during the COVID-19 crisis, especially given her proximity to someone who was exposed. She also asked about day programs and how they are abiding to the HCBS rules.

Felicia Ford asked a question regarding Self-Determination; when is the meeting and who can attend? Judy Mark responded by letting everyone know that Jim Knight from DDS will be presenting, and that this meeting will be open to the public. More information and the link to join is forthcoming.

Elizabeth Espinosa, Board Member, reiterated that more communication from the Regional Centers is key in helping the families connected and informed during the COVID-19 crisis. She also commented on the dire need for a plan for safety as the world reopens and integrates back into normal.

Francis Gomez thanked the WRC Staff, especially Liz Spencer for the cloth masks that were given to her and to all the other families. She also thanked the Service Coordinators for their hard work.

Lisa Anderson asked about social distancing in regards to the Westside Jam, and inquired as to when it will be rescheduled. She also expressed difficulty in being able to connect with her SC during this busy time.

Chris Arroyo, from the State Council, let everyone know about the Pandemic EBT (PEBTs). Families will get who participate in CalFresh, Medical or Foster Care Benefits will receive up to \$365 dollars, with no application needed. Chris also commented that SCDD has been working with the Department of Social Services (DSS) in order to get them to broaden CalFresh. As a result, people can now use CalFresh to get food delivered. There is also a new guidance that allows families to pick up student meals provided by the school district without the children needing to be present. Finally Chris talked about the hospital visitation rights of our community. Folks are being denied access to their facilitators, and SCDD is working to change this. So far, 350 organizations signed a petition for PPE to be given to IHSS providers.

Zoey Giesberg, Board member, shared that there is a letter form, put out by ARC, that folks can fill out to demand the federal government to give people with disabilities, their families, and people who work with them COVID-19 relief. That form, and more information can be found here:

<https://www.disabilityadvocacynetwork.org/app/make-a-call?4&engagementId=506895>

Megan Mendes, WRC staff member, shared that WRC has partnered with a number of distilleries to procure hand sanitizer that will be handed out to our community. More information about all the distilleries that are making hand sanitizer at this time can be found here:

[https://www.distilledspirits.org/distillers-responding-to-covid-19/distilleries-making-hand-sanitizer/?gv\\_search=&filter\\_4\\_4=California&mode=any](https://www.distilledspirits.org/distillers-responding-to-covid-19/distilleries-making-hand-sanitizer/?gv_search=&filter_4_4=California&mode=any)

## **ADJOURNMENT (ACTION\*)**

The regular Board Meeting was adjourned by Dr. Sofia Vergara at 8:45pm and no public comment followed.



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Todd Rubien  
Board Co-Secretary



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Nilo Choudhry  
Board Co-Secretary