

Alta California Regional Center
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, January 23, 2025
Minutes

Present: Carmen Aguilar, Jackie Armstrong, Garrett Broadbent, EunMi Cho, Johnny Deng, Tom Hopkins, Dan Lake, Amy Lampe, Kelly Pennington, Akkia Pride-Polk, Steven Sanchez, Ceasar Seabron

Absent (* excused): Anwar Safvi*

Staff: Lori Banales, Iqbal Ahmad, Amy Arguello, Eli Barquero, Jennifer Bloom, Tracy Brown, Tara Cawthon-Argerich, Monica Chadwick, Julie Chan, Charlotte Clarke, Maribeth Dabuit, Evelin De La Cruz, John Decker, Jordan Eller, DeLayna Eskridge-Brown, Barbara Friedman, Kristine Gamberg, Toby Golden, Annie Gray, Camelia Houston, Kenisha Hurd, Christy Iwasa, Herman Kothe, Mechelle Johnson, Jaspreet Mann, Bailey Norman, Ryan Patchin, Julie Rachfal, Faye Tait, Bethaney Temby, BJ Thompson, Barbara van Ingen, Andrea Williams, Diane Williams, Lisa West

Facilitators: Amy Fulk, Naomi Smith

Visitors: Jacalyn Balanay, Alondra Bowens, Loretta Duncan-Fowler, Maureen Fitzgerald, Yasmin Herrera-Vilchez, Shaniece Hill, Melissa Kelly, Andrew "AJ" Lebov, Karen Mengali, Jessica Walker, Richard Walker

1. **Call to Order – Reading of ACRC’s Mission & Vision** – The Board of Directors met at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 23, 2025. Ms. Armstrong read aloud ACRC’s Mission and Vision.
2. **Meeting Our Mission**
 - ♦ Ms. Brown introduced A.J., his mother, Karen Mengali, and A.J.’s Service Coordinator (SC), Bailey Norman. A few months ago, Ms. Mengali emailed Ms. Brown, sharing that Ms. Norman has helped A.J. tremendously and provided her with guidance, knowledge and patience in assisting A.J., as well. A.J. then emailed Ms. Brown to say that Ms. Norman had changed his life forever.
 - Ms. Mengali shared that at the end of this month, A.J. will start his job with the State of California.
 - A.J. presented a “Certificate of Appreciation”, that he made himself, to Ms. Norman. She recently assisted him with his Social Security benefits appeal hearing.
 - Both A.J. and Ms. Mengali are forever grateful to Ms. Norman and ACRC.

3. **Staff Recognitions**

- ♦ Ms. Banales noted that this is a new section on the Board meeting's agenda. Traditionally, we recognize staff at our Annual All Staff meetings. Due to our upcoming move, she wanted to start a new tradition by bringing staff recognitions before the Board. We currently have 769 employees, and all lift our agency to fulfill our Mission and Vision.
 - Recognizing five years of service: Ryan Patchin, Evelin De La Cruz, Julie Chan, and Annie Gray
 - Recognizing ten years of service: Maribeth Dabuit and Barbara Friedman
 - Recognizing 15 years of service: Andrea Williams and Bethaney Temby
 - Recognizing 25 years of service: Julie Rachfal

4. **Community Comments/Announcements**

- ♦ No comments/announcements were shared.

5. **Consent Agenda – By consensus, the following consent agenda items were approved: a) excused absences of Anwar Safvi; b) regular session Board meeting minutes of November 21, 2024; and c) Board Development Committee (BDC) [approve Jackie Armstrong's and Anwar Safvi's Terms of Office], Client Advisory Committee (CAC), Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) [approve new PAC member – Jay Kolvoord] minutes.**

6. **New Business**

- ♦ *Finance Committee*
Issue 1: Monthly Financial Report

Discussion and Action: The minutes from the January 13th Finance Committee meeting are under Tab 5 and the November 30th financial report is under Tab 7 of the Board packet.

Mr. Ahmad noted that over the next two months, our agency's expenses will have an uptick due to the upcoming move of the Sacramento office (Operations [OPS]) and the implementation of the last phase of the provider rate increases from the Burns Rate Study (Purchase of Services [POS]).

M/S/C (Armstrong) To accept the monthly financial report as submitted.

Issue 2: Independent Audit Report

Discussion and Action: The “Finance Statements and Supplemental Information with Independent Auditors’ Reports June 30, 2024” is under Tab 8 of the Board packet.

Mr. Ahmad shared that Paul Stroub, with Devant CPAs, provided an overview of this report to the Finance Committee on January 13th.

Like last year, there were no material findings; it is a clean opinion. ACRC’s management continues to have proper internal controls in place.

After the Board’s approval, Mr. Ahmad will send the audit report to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). It will be posted on our agency’s website, as well.

M/S/C (Hopkins) To approve the independent audit report as presented.

♦ *Committee Updates*

- CAC
 - Mr. Hopkins shared that the CAC met on January 14th.
 - Ms. Banales provided a brief overview of the Governor’s proposed budget for the 2025-26 FY.
 - Sharon Kurpinsky, ACRC’s Victim Advocate, shared a presentation entitled “Keeping My Money Safe.”
- PAC
 - Mr. Broadbent shared that the PAC met on January 9th.
 - The group has been discussing how the DDS rate reform is going to be implemented – how some services will be integrated into the rate model, while other service codes are being phased out. At the time of the meeting, the department had not yet released guidance regarding transportation.
 - DDS recently created a Provider Directory, which is a centralized directory of all providers in the State of California.
 - With the 90/10 rule, 10% of provider rates needed to be “earned” by completing their enrollment in this directory; this is considered an incentive with certain criteria to be met.
 - The portal had some issues, and the PAC commends ACRC staff for their efforts in keeping the provider community up to date when DDS released updates.

- With Jacquie Foss' recent retirement, the PAC elected Jay Kolvoord, Strategies to Empower People's (STEP's) Chief Executive Officer, to the PAC.

◆ *President's Report*

- Mr. Lake expressed appreciation for everyone in attendance today.

◆ *Executive Director's Report*

- Ms. Banales noted that this is our last Board meeting at the Harvard office. ACRC's new address is 4151 E. Commerce Way, Suite 100, Sacramento 95834. The building is situated between Del Paso Blvd. and Arena Blvd., parallel with I-5. Mr. Ahmad's team is working tirelessly to make this move as seamless as possible.
 - We will be putting together an Open House to welcome the community to our new home office.
- She provided a state budget overview at the Executive Committee meeting earlier this month and it has not changed. New factors will come into consideration, such as the fires in Southern California.
 - The Governor will release a May Revise with updated numbers.
- Ms. Banales noted that the year-end Client and Family Satisfaction Survey is complete and will be posted on our agency's website.
- Ms. Bloom introduced Kristine Gamberg, ACRC's Education Support Manager, and Tara Cawthon-Argerich, ACRC's Special Education Specialist. They shared an overview of their purpose, roles and responsibilities, and professional background. Ms. Gamberg's position is a Policy position funded by DDS. Ms. Cawthon-Argerich's position was originally a part-time role and is consultative in nature.
 - ACRC's Education Support Team launched an Education Consultation Clinic (ECC) on June 18, 2024. This clinic provides an opportunity for SCs to staff simple and immediate education concerns with the Education Support Team.
 - As of September 2024, a large percentage of ACRC's clients ages 3 to 22 years old (totaling 16,606) have either an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a 504 Accommodation Plan, or are in the process of being assessed for special education to determine eligibility.
 - Beginning this fiscal year, the team started conducting SC and Community Workshops covering various topics.
- Mr. Decker introduced Jordan Eller, ACRC's Specialized Services and Supports Manager, and Christy Iwasa, ACRC's Transition Specialist. They noted that over the years the Board has approved Community Crisis Homes (CCHs) contracts, and they wanted to share an update on the clients that have transitioned into these homes.

- The goal of these homes is to work to help clients live more successfully in their communities. These models set-up staffing per the client's need. The maximum stay in a CCH is 18 months.
- Since 2018, ACRC CCH's have assisted 29 clients.
 - 24 of the 29 individuals are still in the same living situation they transitioned into from the CCH.
 - Two clients are in a less restrictive setting than the initial transition from the CCH.
 - Two clients are in a more restrictive setting than the initial transition from the CCH.
- The Association of Regional Center Agencies' (ARCA's) Grassroots Day is scheduled for Tuesday, March 4th, at the State Capitol. This is an important day where regional centers can promote the service system to our local legislators.
- Ms. Bloom and Mr. Barquero provided a brief overview of the final evaluation report of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded Early Start Pilot Project. In response to the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ARPA provided supplemental grant funds for early intervention services for infants and toddlers under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The premise of the project was to provide services to those individuals who have historically faced barriers to accessing Early Start therapies (e.g., families who live in an undeserved area, needed services during non-working hours, or lived in a remote area). Data collected includes:
 - Over 2,000 in-home early intervention services were provided to 735 families in the Early Start program.
 - As a result of ACRC's outreach efforts, early intervention providers hired 17 new staff and 33 interns; nearly all were bilingual and/or bicultural.
 - 323 individuals were served in a variety of different languages.
 - 927 families were served during non-working hours.
 - 1,485 children received services in remote or underserved areas.
 - This year-end report will be posted on our agency's website tomorrow.
- ♦ *ARCA-CAC Rep. Report*
 - Ms. Lampe shared that the group is scheduled to meet tomorrow from 11 a.m. to noon.
- ♦ *ARCA Delegate Report.*
 - Ms. Pennington shared that ARCA met last week.
 - She asked that Board members place ARCA's Grassroots Day

on their calendars. It's important to have our voices heard.

- As Ms. Banales mentioned, the estimated growth to our statewide service system is staggering.
- ARCA is committed to increasing the number of direct support professionals (DSPs) across our state, as well as supporting the ongoing rate reform efforts in order to sustain our service system.
- The group will meet again in March.

7. ***Closed Session*** – At 5:31 p.m. the Board adjourned to closed session to discuss personnel issues.

8. ***Announcement of Closed Meeting Discussion*** - At 5:58 p.m. the Board reconvened in open session following a closed session in which personnel issues were discussed.

9. ***Adjournment***

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Lisa West
Executive Secretary

cc: Lori Banales