

NHARCH Board of Directors Minutes 6/14/22

Present: Alex Amann, Kris Andreozzi, Deborah Burns, Gary Cahoon, Meghan Cook, Jeanne Donohoe, Matt Gatzke, Pat Gray, Linette Handschumaker, Alex Koutroubas, Eldon Munson, Sara Nadeau and Amy Rauert.

Absent: Chris Kelliher, Michelle Pelham and Jen Skelton.

ZOOM Board Meeting Called to Order: 1:34 PM

Approval of Minutes from May 10, 2022 Board Meeting: A motion was made, seconded. Approved.

Approval of Financial Statement for May 31, 2022: Alex reported the budget is on track overall. Currently, the organization has ~\$93K in assets with a few Accounts Receivable (AR) still pending (membership dues). The organization is on track for AR from members due in part to the return of prior members or new memberships. There is a budget for \$5 K for the educational conventions/training. On the expense side, Alex overlooked one item related to the website and this has been added to the financials. The organization has switched to QuickBooks Online so that formatting between the May 31 report and prior reports has changed. Matt reported there has been some lack of payment for training from attendees who registered as members who are not current members. Overall, Alex feels we are performing better financially than expected to date this fiscal year.

A motion was made to approve the financials as presented, seconded. Approved.

Convention/Education Update: Matt reported there will be another CARES training next Tuesday with 12 attendees currently registered. There was another medication administration training class in mid-May. The Education Committee met yesterday on June 13th. Plans continue for a “Summer Camp” convention that will include an hour with a representative from the Office of the Ombudsman. The topic of stipends and unemployment benefits during COVID was discussed as some employees are apparently having to return payments that were not authorized. At the training, Alex K. will discuss the new laws passed in 2022 with Administrators. The Ombudsman will discuss Advance Directives. Matt suggested contacting Harmony Homes to present on their new on-site workforce housing initiative to combat the workforce shortage. There will be two – four hours total of training for this convention.

Legislative Update: Alex reported the Legislative Committee will be meeting next week. He is planning to review all the bills that will be passed into law from the last legislative session. Specifically, the bill regarding the vacancy notice period (10-days) and visitation will be discussed. He will send a summary document of all the legislation tracked during the last session for those not able to attend the meeting. Alex asked that everyone think of topics for the 2023 legislative session as now is the time to start planning. It will be a budget year as well so any topics that will affect the budget need to be identified as soon as possible. Alex also noted that Governor Sununu will be running for his 4th term and Senator Tom Sherman has announced his candidacy. Alex expects some significant turnover in representation in several districts; eight Senators are not seeking re-election. There was discussion regarding requesting an increase in Choices for Independence (CFI) rates. Alex suggested something in the 4-7% range would be reasonable. Gary suggested consideration in reaching out to all Medicaid stakeholders (i.e. nursing

homes, HCA) to present a united request for the increase versus seeking the increase alone. There was support from the Board for this approach given it was successful in 2019. Lastly, Alex suggested considering any initiatives related to the workforce shortage.

Old Business:

Medication Administration Sub-Committee Update: Jeanne reported she did not have an update; she will be scheduling another committee meeting.

New Business:

Advisory Role Designation (Gary Calhoun): Eldon reported that Gary was offered an advisory role and has accepted. He will consult especially on legislative issues due to his years of extensive participation and knowledge in this area. Matt presented a plaque from the Board in recognition of Gary's years of service to the board and industry.

H2-B Visas and Health Care Worker Shortage: Sara presented information for the board's consideration regarding H2-B visas as a potential partial solution to the current workforce shortage issues facing members. H2-B visas are for "temporary" workers in industries where there is a known local workforce shortage. These visas are currently approved for and used most often by the hospitality, tourism and farming industries. For example, to handle the summer tourist influx, many hotels and restaurants recruit additional staffing through H2-B, H1-B and J-1 visas. While not exclusively, many of the staff on such visas are college-age students looking for an opportunity to improve their English and travel to the US. This would apply to non-licensed positions, such as personal care assistants, dietary aides, cooks, etc. but not necessarily RN/LPN staff due to licensure restrictions (not transferable). Sara reported that she is not an expert on these visas but feels it could be argued that the healthcare industry should be included in those authorized to recruit such staffing. To qualify, the shortage must be "temporary" (could look at projections until the end of the "Silver Tsunami"), short-term (visas may be for 12 months or less) and only for positions where licensure is not required. This could still address many of the areas of shortages being faced.

Sara reported she attended a State of the State breakfast with Governor Sununu on June 7th. The three main areas of concern he addressed were: workforce shortages, lack of affordable housing and lack of affordable daycare. He indicated that he is in support of proposing solutions, such as H2-B and J-1 visas. However, he referenced these specifically in the context of the hospitality and tourism industries. At the same time, he referenced several times that it is the healthcare industry that has been hit the hardest by the workforce shortage in NH and he is aware of the recent closures of several facilities strictly due to the labor shortage. Further, a banking industry contact of Sara's recently reported that Senator Susan Collins (ME) is working on a similar initiative to address the issue in ME. Sara reported that she was invited to participate in calls with Senator Collins which would be helpful to see what is being proposed.

Sara emailed Alex K. regarding consideration of these visas. Alex reached out to representatives at Argentum. We received a response that they are "weeks" away from a proposal that includes these visas and immigration reform. The board members expressed interest in pursuing this topic with the

understanding that this is probably something that would need to be approved at the federal level. Sara noted that it is not a perfect solution, given the lack of affordable housing and transportation, but could be a workable option for some facilities. This issue will be discussed further by the Legislative Committee at the next meeting.

Qualifications for MNA Certification: Sara reported that during the height of the COVID pandemic, while working with the COVID Alliance, she had sent a proposal to Kelly Keefe at DHHS regarding changing the current qualifications for MNA Certification. This was an effort to address the critical shortage of those authorized to pass medication. Kelly indicated support but noted it needed to be approved by the Board of Nursing. The Board of Nursing was scheduled to discuss the proposal around the June 2021 timeframe. However, with the end of the state of emergency in May, and the dismantling of the COVID Alliance, there was never follow-up. Sara had discussed the issue with the Medication Administrator Sub-Committee but had not received any feedback to the last email on the topic and therefore wanted to bring it to the full board. Sara reported her proposal reduced the requirement to: two years of experience as a LNA within the last five years and two letters of recommendation, one of which had to come from the Director of Nursing or equivalent. In addition, she had requested consideration that 3rd year nursing students be eligible for the certification course regardless of hours or LNA certification. The proposal also advocated for additional availability of certification courses. Sara asked if there would be support from the Board to pursue this again and received an affirmative response.

Gary suggested the group also consider reviewing the ~1994 plan that allowed non-licensed personnel in homes for the developmentally disabled (DD homes) to administer medication as this could be another model. Jeanne offered to research this for the next meeting and to determine if this was in rule or statute. There was consensus that modifying the requirements or looking at other models would be beneficial. The group agreed to discuss this further at the next Legislative Committee.

Additional New Business: Eldon reported the Ombudsman Advisory Committee met last week for the first time in 18 months. They reviewed the mission and vision. Bonnie Hamm has returned after 15 years. Judith Jones, Chair, has moved to the Senate Law Project. Meetings on a routine basis will continue to be scheduled.

The next meeting will be on July 12, 2022 at 1:30 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 2:38 PM.

Minutes submitted by Sara Nadeau