

MINUTES-WSAA Board of Directors Meeting  
November 16, 2005

Present: Directors Michelle Lewis, Paul Meyer, Jennifer Robohm, Royalee Bishop, Alyce Anderson, Lee Ann Beebe, Brenda Desmond, Jane Tremper East and alternates Sunny Terry, Mike Smith, ex officio members Dan Ladd, Alexandra Volkerts, and Charles Baker, Lori Holley, and Ellen Simmons. A quorum of directors (8) was present.

- Opening Comments – The meeting was opened at 10:10 by vice Chairman, Michelle L however, a quorum was not present. The Board members discussed options for proceeding until an additional 3 directors arrived, at which point, Michelle L opened the meeting for business at 10:27.

During the discussion period, two members of the Hamilton LAC indicated they would represent Hamilton. Charles B is a consumer and Lori H, a provider, would be the alternate. After a quorum was present,

**Paul M. made a motion, which was seconded and passed unanimously to recognize Charles B as the Director from Hamilton LAC and Lori H as his alternate.**

Thereafter 9 directors were in attendance.

- Minutes - Alexandra, standing in for Heidi D, passed out the minutes from the last meeting for review and noted several changes from the draft minutes emailed to directors by Tom B. Discussion followed re: paragraph on fiscal agents and contracts with the state. Paul clarified that if the fiscal agent changes, the state must enter into a new contract with the WSAA. Several members noted that the discussion about transportation at the last meeting also included mention of video conferencing as an alternative to bringing people back from MSH for their preliminary hearing, the problems that created in delaying local attorney contact with his/her client to develop a defense and the need to provide incentives to the Sheriff's offices to obtain training and use humane methods of transport.

**It was moved, seconded and unanimously passed to accept the October 19, 2005 Minutes with the forgoing amendments.**

The September 21, 2005 minutes were not available for review or approval

Treasurer's report – Paul M. reported that the transition from Geoff Birnbaum to him has occurred. Geoff reported he would transfer \$11,274, however, he received an additional \$5000 from AMDD and paid additional expenses for the October meeting. He transferred \$12, 649.90 to Paul. Paul anticipates paying the expenses for this meeting and Directors' participation in the SAA Summit in Great Falls. However, he also anticipates that WSAA will receive an additional \$5000 in Dec and another \$5000 in Jan, 2006. One Director asked Paul to delete WMMHC from the top of the computer generated report, which he agreed to do.

**Lee Ann B. made a motion to accept the Treasurers report. The motion was seconded and passed.**

- Additional LAC's Treasurer's and formation issues – Hamilton is still forming and has not yet elected a Treasurer. Alyce and Michelle have both filled out EIN numbers for their LACs. Alyce has received an EIN for Libby, but Michelle has had difficulties. One LAC was told they must incorporate to open a bank account. The Board discussed various solutions to obtaining an EIN and opening a LAC bank account. One member suggested taking the SAA enabling statute into the bank showing the LACs are authorized under 53-21-1013. Another suggested Dan Ladd obtain a letter from Joyce DeCunzo informing the banks that LACs are an official component of the Service Area Authorities, which Dan agreed to request.. Another director noted that the LACs could obtain a DBA name and use that to show their official status. Finally, one director pointed out that the LAC must have some money to open the bank account.

**Charles B made a motion to allow the LACs to receive their funding from the WSAA if the LAC has obtained an EIN and elected a treasurer with the expectation that the funds would go into a bank account once opened. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

- Transportation to/from MSH – The Board discussed Tom B's request for input to Sen. Dan Weinberg regarding improving transportation for people with mental illness to Montana State Hospital. One director noted that the Sheriffs' offices are reluctant to change practices and it will require a concerted effort or pressure to bring about more humane transportation practices as there have been no changes for 10 years or more. One director suggested that AWARE or other personnel be trained in MANDT who could do transport. Apparently, AWARE management are at least open to the idea of providing transport to and from MSH, have an existing fleet of vans in Anaconda and other vans and staff throughout the state, and have staff trained in working with people in crisis. It was suggested that the Board form a committee to look into improving transportation for people with mental illness, not only to and from MSH. The Directors are requested to put their suggestions into an email to Tom B. So he can forward them to Sen. Weinberg as soon as possible.

Jennifer distributed her Business Plan section on Mission Statement and Objectives, explaining that the information came from the WSAA Mission Statement and various enabling statutes and other sources. She slightly amended the Mission Statement to conform to the Statute. She and Alexandra will work together to conform the differences.

- Report from SAA Summit. Michelle noted that the SAA Summit in Great Falls has requested that the President and Secretary of each SAA be empowered to act for the SAA between Board of Director meetings on issues that came up and required a timely response. Copies of the SAA Summit minutes were distributed and discussion followed.

**Lee Ann B made a motion that the Board authorize the executive officers to represent the WSAA at the SAA Summits and that the President and Secretary be authorized to act for the WSAA between Board meetings. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

- Website Committee Report. Ellen S and Jane TE reported that there is a server with virus protection available free to the SAAs to use in Helena through Marion Thompson, Lou Thompson's husband. They also identified content including: News of WSAA, calendar of events and meetings, Blogs for comments, and pictures or maps. The Committee requested authorization to proceed to discuss contracts with potential web site hosts. The Board discussed the pros and cons of the suggestions, including costs and potential conflicts, making the site accessible to people with disabilities and possible domain names. Ellen requested and Alexandra agreed to send her information about accessibility standards from Bobbie's list. The Committee discussed the style of the website, noting it could be formal or informal. The directors indicated they would like to see a balance between a business like website and a user friendly website, described as "business casual". Several directors liked the idea of pictures of people interacting on the site and including a map of Montana, possibly showing the WSAA region. Dan agreed to provide an electronic version of the SAA regions to Ellen and Jane. ([jesuslvr@mtwi.net](mailto:jesuslvr@mtwi.net) And [janesfo@montana.com](mailto:janesfo@montana.com)) Paul M. suggested that the WSAA make a page or two on the website available to the LACs for their news.

**Lee Ann B moved that the Board authorize the Website Committee to enter into discussion with various website hosts regarding the details of hosting the WSAA website and that they reserve the domain names WSAAMontana and WSAA MT, if possible. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

- Newsletter. The Committee next raised whether the Board wanted to start a newsletter. The Board discussed various options for electronic or hard copy newsletters, and whether to wait until the website and other operational matters were finished before starting a newsletter.

**Charles B moved that the Board table the Newsletter issue until next meeting with the understanding that it be on the agenda every month until decided or six months pass and further, that the LAC directors request information from the LACs regarding whether to have a newsletter, its content and form of distribution ( ie email or hard copy or both). The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

- Concerns of LACs.

Butte: Michelle noted that the LAC has focused on organizational issues and transportation to/from MSH. The LAC is also working on completing the Crisis Response Assessment Tool regarding local issues.

Libby: Alyce identified transportation as an important issue to Libby, noting that they had 17 members, mostly consumers at their last meeting. They looked into the cost of purchasing a van, but found it difficult to obtain funding for a “capital improvement” However, coordination with the Mental Health Center director and Day Treatment Program coordinator worked out a deal with the local Senior Citizens center to utilize their van for transportation on 24 hours notice. Additionally, they will be transitioning responsibility for scheduling the van services from the providers to the LAC consumers. She reported on various staffing changes, including new staff to replace case managers and provide treatment and the start of a consumer run support group for people with bi-polar disorder. She noted that MH consumers are becoming more proactive, the mental health providers are working more cooperatively and admission to Pathways have decreased significantly. The monthly potluck has 23 consumers and 12 providers. The Libby LAC does want more participation by the Sheriff and county commissioners.

Hamilton: Lori and Charles reported that the first LAC meeting has a good turnout with law enforcement, county attorney, judicial and county commissioner representatives but only 4 consumers. At the next meeting the LAC expects to form its board and elect officers.

Lake County: Royalee noted that the LAC meeting was poorly attended with no consumer involvement. Discussion followed regarding ways to improve consumer participation and include Tribal representation.

Missoula: Jane TE Reported that Missoula LAC has been meeting for 17 months with good consumer involvement. She identified the top LAC priorities as preventing hospitalizations at MSH, restoring a 3-6 month transitional group home like the one AWARE had at SKYLA house but was unable to keep open, create a drop in center run by consumers that operates after 2 PM when the Day Treatment program closes, and support continued Medicaid funding for mental health community services to support people in their communities.

The Board then discussed various ways to encourage consumer participation in the LACs ( food, incentives, prizes, make it interesting and relevant), requested a checklist or work book on starting and operating LACS and discussed Billings successful funding of the HUB drop in center even after the legislature dropped the drop in center funding bill.

- WSAA 3 Goals. Michelle then asked the directors to think about identifying three goals to improve mental health services in Montana. The LAC reports identified 1) Funding for Peer to Peer support and drop in centers, 2) transportation to and from MSH and within communities, and 3) transitional group homes for from 3-6 months to assist people stabilize with supports. Directors are requested to obtain additional input on the three

most important goals for each of their LACs for the December meeting. Directors asked how these goals would interfaced with the 4 goals the SJ 41 Interim committee is trying to identify. Dan clarified that the SAAs need their own goals, which may or may not coincide with the SJ41 goals. The SJ41 goals focus on crisis response but the SAAs can focus on much broader issues. Our goals should focus on what we are asking AMDD, AWARE and WMMHC to do for people with mental illness in our communities so the LACs should look at preventative goals as well. Dan also noted that AMDD has only 3-4 months to finalize its legislative proposals and budget requests, so this issue is very time sensitive. The SJ 41 Committee meets again on Jan 26 and 27, 2006.

- Indemnity Insurance. Paul M reported that the availability of errors and omissions insurance for the Board was delayed until the WSAA finalized its Bylaws. He also suggested that because the WSAA has limited funding and is a non profit it has less risk than for profit corporations. He noted that ultimately, the WSAA directors will want insurance but it may not be critical right now.
- Reimbursement. Paul also clarified that consumers will be reimbursed for mileage to the Board meetings and Congress, but will only be reimbursed for overnight lodging and meals if they travel for more than 100 miles each way and leave within the time frames adopted by the Board.
- Bylaws. Alexandra passed out the latest correction of the Bylaws and asked the Board to please proof the draft as it has been completely retyped.
- The next Board meeting is set for December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 AM. There will be a lunch provided and the Congress meeting will convene at 1:00 PM until 3:00.

**A motion was made to adjourn and there being no further business, it was seconded and passed.**

Meeting adjourned at 1:23 PM