

**Minutes of Regular Meeting  
of  
North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees of North Los Angeles County Regional Center, Inc., a nonprofit corporation, held their regular board meeting via Zoom on **April 12, 2023**

Trustees Present

Ana Quiles  
David Coe  
Lety Garcia  
George Alvarado  
Andrew Ramirez  
Jordan Feinstock  
Nicholas Abrahms  
Rocio Sigala  
Sharmila Brunjes  
Suad Bisogno  
Cathy Blin  
Sylvia Brooks- Griffin  
Lillian Martinez  
Brian Gatus  
Alma Rodriguez

Guests Present

Lori Walker - SDLAC  
Richard Dier - SDLAC  
Nancy Gallardo – Interpreter  
Shelly Lugo - Interpreter  
Jasmine Barrios- Minutes Services  
Anthony Rodriguez - George’s Coach  
Victoria Berrey - FFRC  
Jason Francisco - DDS  
Hugo Ortiz  
Suzanne Paggi  
Vivian Seda  
Elizabeth DeFrancis  
Adriana  
Jacquie

Staff Present

Ruth Janka  
Vini Montague  
Lizeth Chavez  
Lilliana Windover  
Cristina Preuss  
Malorie Lanthier  
Donna Rentsch  
Chris Whitlock  
Robert Dhondrup  
Gabriela Eshrati

Trustees Absent

Jennifer Koster

**1. Call to Order & Welcome – Ana Quiles, Board President**

Ana called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. Housekeeping**

**A. Spanish Interpretation Available**

Ana informed attendees that instructions for Spanish Interpretation are located in the chat.

**B. Public Attendance**

Ana asked public attendants to note their names in the chat.

**C. Board Support Updates**

The Board was asked to submit interest in upcoming open Board Officer positions to Board Support.

**3. Board Member Attendance – Lizeth Chavez, Executive Administrative Assistant**

Lizeth Chavez took attendance of Board Members; a quorum was present.

#### 4. **Introductions**

##### A. Sharmila Brunjes, Board Member

Sharmila has served on the Board for almost one year. She is the parent of a consumer, on and off with NLA since 2016. After relocating from another state, Sharmila had issues returning to NLA for services which sparked her interest in the Board. In addition, she works as a reality television producer and has worked on shows such as The Amazing Race and Vanderpump Rules. She looks forward to continuing to collaborate on important issues in the disability community.

##### B. Cristina Preuss, Consumer Services Director

Originally from Mexico City, Cristina has lived in Los Angeles for 41 years. She has undergraduate and graduate degrees in Early Childhood and Special Education. Her interest in the field was prompted by her tenure as an employee at a Mommy & Me Special Needs program. She serves as the Consumer Services Director at NLA, where she started as an In-Home Visitor and became a Service Coordinator. Cristina is also an Adjunct Faculty at Mission College. Outside of work, Cristina enjoys spending time with her two grandchildren and also loves to read.

#### 5. **Public Input**

Lori Walker, the co-Chair of the Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee, raised a concern in November 2022. A previous request from the SDLVAC and NLA read, “The SDLVAC would like to know “if there is a way to waive the vendor insurance policy” as it relates to transition services. The last update that Lori received was in January 2023, when she was told that this issue would be added to the Executive Committee agenda. She implored the Board to provide clarification on the insurance requirements for the vendor insurance policy.

Richard Dier introduced himself as the co-Chair of the Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee. He echoed Lori’s sentiments, expressing that people will be apprehensive about attempting to become vendorized if they cannot pay for the required insurance.

Victoria Berrey, from the Family Focus Resource Center, shared information regarding recently held events. The Antelope Valley Disability Resources Fair in Lancaster was a big success and well attended. She thanked their partner, AV Seed, and Grow, for their assistance. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Coffee & Conversation event is being held today in Santa Clarita and directed the Board and guests to the FFRC website for information on the upcoming outreach events planned for all three valleys.

Rocio Sigala thanked NLA for their sponsorship at the AV Seed and Grow Egg Hunt that was recently held. The event was a success, and she thanked Cynthia, the parenting specialist, and Chris Whitlock for their assistance.

## 6. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

**M/S/C** (J. Feinstock/ B. Gatus) To approve the agenda as presented

B. Approval of March 8, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes

**M/S/C** (J. Feinstock/G. Alvarado) To approve the Minutes as presented

## 7. Committee Action Items

A. Discussion of upcoming FY23–24 Committee Meeting Schedules- Ana Quiles

Ana reminded the Board that each Committee would need to determine the Committee Meeting format and frequency before the end of the FY. She encouraged Board Members to consider their decision for discussion at each upcoming Committee Meeting.

B. Executive Committee – Ana Quiles

1. Approval of FY 2022–23 Board vs. Expenditures

Approved Budget: \$101,500.00

YTD Expenses: \$22,012.47

Remaining Budget: \$79,487.53

Percentage of Budget Utilized: 21.69%

Concerns were raised regarding a budget amount for Item 7: Meals for Board and Board Committee Meetings in the amount of \$3,000.00. NLA noted that the allocation is for meals provided at in-person meetings but has not been provided since meetings have been conducted virtually.

**M/S/C** (R. Sigala/A. Ramirez) to approve the FY 22-23 Board vs. Expenditures as presented

2. Approval of Revised Critical Calendar

Ana reviewed the revised calendar as presented in the packet to reflect changes to the remainder of the FY to accommodate the bimonthly format.

**M/S/C** (A. Ramirez/C. Blinn) to approve the revised Critical Calendar as presented

C. Government and Community Relations Committee – Jordan Feinstock<sup>[SEP]</sup>

1. Approval of Revised Government and Community Relations Committee Policies and Procedures - Ana Quiles

The recommendation from the Committee is to update the Committee Responsibilities to include a disclosure of the requirement for Committee Members.

The requirement was always in place but was not noted in the document. The revision includes the statement: “Committee members must visit at least one disability community organization, service provider program, or an elected representative. Typical disability community organizations include the Office of Clients Rights Advocacy, Disability Rights California, and the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. Elected representatives include federal, state, county, and local officials. In addition, any board members or interested persons are invited to participate in committee meetings at any time. The Committee may also invite the participation of consumers or representatives of other agencies as appropriate.”

During the discussion, it was clarified that this addition would apply to all Board Members in conjunction with the requirement already in place for Government and Community Relations Committee; this is not an additional requirement for GRC Committee members. The revised policy would go into effect at the beginning of the next FY.

**M/S/C** (L. Martinez/D. Coe) to approve the revised policy as presented. The motion passed with one opposition from J. Feinstock and one abstention from S. Brunjes.

2. Approval of Revised Board Member Responsibilities Policy - Ana Quiles

Similarly to the last item, the policy is being revised to include the requirement for Board Members to attend at least one legislative event. In addition, the amendment includes Visitation to at least one disability community organization, service provider program/event, or legislator/legislative event. For example, visits to NLACRC vendored programs inform board members about the developmental disabilities service system. Programs include various residential and day programs and providers who deliver a specific service (e.g., school setting or transportation)”. It was shared that this could include legislative events with or without NLA participation, but Board Support should be contacted for confirmation.

Rocio Sigala proposed that NLA provide informational handouts for Board Members to hand out while at the community outreach and legislative events and name badges for legislators to identify Board Members as such.

Ruth clarified that the GCR Committee Members’ requirement for participation in the legislative-related event would also satisfy the requirement for the Board Responsibility policy.

**M/S/C** (G. Alvarado /A. Ramirez) to approve the revised policy as presented.

D. Additional Action Items:

1. Administrative Affairs Committee – David Coe
  - Approval of Contracts - Vini Montague
  - a. G & C Adult Residential Facility, Inc. PL2059

POS Contract Amendment – to provide startup funding to develop one Specialized Residential Facility (“SRF”).

Term Length: June 1, 2021 – March 31, 2023 <sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

The First Amendment extends the term from March 31, 2023, to May 26, 2023.

b. Elwyn California PL2058

POS Contract Amendment – provides startup funds for FMS

Term Length: June 1, 2021 – March 31, 2023 <sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

The First Amendment extends the term from March 31, 2023, to May 26, 2023.

Term date was extended to April 30, 2023, per 1<sup>st</sup> amendment, to March 31, 2023, to May 26, 2023.

For both contracts, the second change NLA sought is to change the payment terms for Milestone #8. Under the original terms of Milestone #8, the vendor would receive a partial payment, a partial milestone payment for the transition cost of each consumer referred to the home for up to four consumers. The change would be to the terms of Milestone #8, to pay the full milestone for the transition cost of the first consumer referred to the phone on the total payment amount does not change the total amount.

**M/S/C** (C. Blinn/A. Ramirez) to approve the amendments to the listed contracts as presented

2. Board Resolution of Authorized Signers for City National Bank Help Fund Account Vini Montague

Vini shared that NLA is seeking to update the authorized signers in light of the departure of Clarence Foster, who will end employment with NLA on April 19<sup>th</sup>. As a result, Clarence will be removed from the authorization and replaced by Evelyn McOmie and Malorie Lanthier.

**M/S/C** (S. Brooks-Griffin/L. Martinez) to approve the Essential Pay contract amendment as presented

**8. Executive Director’s Report - Ruth Janka**

Ruth shared that negotiations with the Union reached an agreement and were finalized. She also summarized the report’s contents as presented in the packet; highlights are outlined below.

Recruitment and Retention

NLACRC’s “Fall in Love with North LA” Career Day/Job Fair resulted in 15 new hires. A career day will be held in the Antelope Valley at our Lancaster office on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, NLACRC is participating in the American Job Centers of California Career Day at College of the Canyons on Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Effective March 13, 2023, new hires included 7 Consumer Services Coordinators (3 in Bilingual Spanish), Floater Specialist-Bilingual Spanish, Community Services Supervisor, Community Living Specialist, and Office Assistant II-Bilingual Spanish. Effective March 27, new hires include 11 Consumer Services Coordinators (3 in Bilingual Spanish), Office Assistant II-Bilingual Spanish, Administrative Assistant, Payroll Specialist, and Emergency Management Coordinator. Total of 26 new hires for March

#### Social Recreation Grants

DDS has awarded grant funding to entities directed toward improving accessibility of integrated social and recreational programs or utilizing/leveraging existing community resources to enhance and develop an integrated and inclusive social and recreational program that is safe and age-appropriate or to increase the number of RC vendored providers that offer integrated and inclusive social and recreational services to people with developmental disabilities.

#### Good Faith Letters

Mutual consent of a service denial, change, reduction, or termination must be documented; either in a signed IPP that includes the denial, change, reduction, or termination, a signed list of services that includes the proposal or denial, or written communication from a consumer, parent, authorized representative, or a good faith letter from the regional center to the consumer, parent, authorized representative regarding the agreed upon proposal or denial of service.

#### Legislation

Ruth reviewed bills that specifically affect the community:

AB 1157 (Ortega) - DME repair coverage- Would expand existing coverage mandates for durable medical equipment to include fixing said equipment.<sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

SB 299 (Eggman) Medi-Cal redetermination As part of the process when counties verify eligibility for Medi-Cal participation, current law states that they are mailed a form that must be mailed back. If this mail gets bounced back by the Post Office as “undeliverable,” they are automatically cut from Medi-Cal. This legislation will end this auto-drop outcome.<sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

AB1147 (Addis) - The Disability Equity and Accountability Act of 2023 is co-sponsored by Disability Voices United. It would require the department to develop a project charter focused on increasing services access and equity through several changes to legislation.

NLA has completed ten legislative events so far, with two more scheduled. There has been great feedback for support to fund Service Coordination fully.

#### Little Hoover Commission Update

The Little Hoover Commission has developed a draft report that includes the following recommendations for the state’s developmental disability services system:

- Increase consistency in policies and practices across regional centers.

- Address racial and ethnic inequities.
- Strengthen the state oversight of the system.
- Modernize data systems
- Standardize vendorization processes
- Enhance support for regional center governing boards.
- Improve service coordination streamline processes for accessing and applying generic services and issue a competitive grant for additional advocacy assistance.

#### Special Incident Reports

In regards to this report presented in the packet, the Committee requested the inclusion of Final Dispositions from the previous month in lieu of the special incident reports from the same month in previous years. The Committee pointed out that the Special Incidents listed as “CSC to follow up” would take longer to investigate if a Service Coordinator has left NLA.

#### Case Load Ratio

Lety Garcia shared that this report highlights what areas are affected by high caseloads. For example, SFV Adult Unit 5 has a ratio of 108:1, and DDS Mandate is a ratio of 66:1. Other areas follow the same pattern. Lety requested that NLA use this information to assign Service Coordinators as recruitment efforts continue most efficiently. Sharmila Brunjes pointed out that the lack of Service Coordinators causes a domino effect for those unable to obtain Early Start Services, leaving NLA unable to meet the community’s needs. Ruth clarified that statistically, 95% of children in Early Start Programs are eligible for services under Lanterman; she will follow up with Dr. D’Antonio for more clarification. In addition, the Board requested a review of the POS Expenditure Data by the office.

### 9. **Self Determination Program (SDP) – Gabriela Eshrati** SDP Report

Gabriela reviewed the SDP Report as presented in the packet.

As of April 1<sup>st</sup>

Participants have completed Orientation: 610

Total number of budgets that are certified: 250

Total number of budgets that are in the certification process: 4

Total number of spending plans that are approved: 192

Total number of spending plans in progress: 58

Total number of PCPs completed: 216

Total number of participants that have opted out of SDP after enrolling: 2

Total number of Inter-Regional Center Transfers (out):2

Total number of participants that have fully transitioned into SDP with approved spending plans and active SDP IPPs: 192

Regarding the FMS Providers Serving NLA Catchment Area, Rocio Sigala requested the inclusion of a column that describes the process for purchasing services (business to business, credit cards, Pos, etc.) for each vendor. In addition, include budget limits on

the list and current availability/start dates to inform consumers and families better.

**A. SDLVAC Liaison Report**

Issues were relayed during Public Input regarding required insurance rates for vendors was mentioned. Lety noted that the insurance requirement was set by DDS, not NLA, as a standardized practice across the state. Ruth referenced the DDS Directive for the Standardized Vendorization Packet, which states that regional centers are prohibited from deviating from the packet. Although the SDLVAC requested the insurance requirements to be waived, Ruth stated that guidance was requested from DDS before being brought back to the Committee.

**10. Administrative Affairs Committee -David Coe**

David reviewed the information as presented in the packet.

A. Next meeting: April 26, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

**11. Association of Regional Center Agencies - Lety Garcia**

**A. ARCA Liaison Report**

Lety shared that everyone is invited to the upcoming ARCA Academy session at the Pomona San Gabriel Regional Center on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Mileage reimbursement will be available, and Board Members who require transportation are encouraged to contact Lizeth Chavez.

**12. Consumer Advisory Committee – Jennifer Koster**

A. Minutes of the March 1, 2023 Meeting

B. Minutes of the April 5, 2023 Meeting - *deferred*

C. Meeting Format for FY22-23 - a decision was made to continue meetings in a virtual format for the remainder of the FY. A determination on the next FY will be made at the next Committee Meeting.

**13. Consumer Services Committee – Andrew Ramirez**

Andrew reviewed the information as presented in the packet.

A. Minutes of the February 15, 2023 Meeting

B. Next Meeting is Scheduled on April 19, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

C. Meeting Format for FY22-23 - a determination on the next FY will be made at the next Committee Meeting.

**14. Executive Committee – Ana Quiles**

Ana reviewed the information as presented in the packet.

A. Minutes of the February 22, 2023 Meeting - *defer*

B. FMRC Health Group PL2146-116 Contract

C. Annual Board of Trustees Retreat Status - Board Support has sent a Save the Date for July 29<sup>th</sup>

D. Next meeting: on May 31, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.



15. **Government & Community Relations** – Jordan Feinstock  
Jordan reviewed the information as presented in the packet. In addition, he reviewed the legislative events and discussed a Mission, Vision, and Values presentation by Evan Ingber.
  - A. Minutes of the March 15, 2023 Meeting
  - B. Grassroots Status and Update - Robert Dhondrop  
Robert reviewed the upcoming Legislative Grassroots Visits Project Plan:  
The grassroots team has two remaining visits with Senator Pilar Shiavo and Assembly Member Jackie Irwin; recruiting is continuing for these meetings. In addition, meetings are pending for Tom Lackey, Rick Zabor, and Chris Holden. Visits have been successful and positive, and three legislators have agreed to sign on to the Arambula Letter. Representatives will also be invited to the June 3<sup>rd</sup> Board Dinner. Ana Quiles requested that event invitations be included as calendar invitations.
  - C. Next meeting on May 17, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.
  
16. **Nominating Committee** - Lillian Martinez  
Lillian reviewed the information as presented in the packet.
  - A. Status of Board and VAC Recruitment  
Interviews have been conducted, and current nominees will be finalized on April 17<sup>th</sup>. In addition, recruitment continues for an African-American Board Member.
  - B. Interest and Recommendations in Serving as a Board Officer, ARCA Delegate, ARCA Alternate, CAC Chair, or CAC Vice-Chair in FY2023-24  
Anyone interested in serving as a Board Officer can request more information from Board Support. In addition, George Alvarado expressed interest in any open position.
  
17. **Post-Retirement Medical Trust Committee** – Ana Quiles  
Ana reviewed the information as presented in the packet.
  - A. Next Meeting on April 26, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.
  
18. **Strategic Planning Committee**- Lety Garcia  
Lety reviewed the information as presented in the packet.
  - A. Minutes of the April 3, 2023 Meeting
  - B. Next Meeting is Scheduled on May 1, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.
  
19. **Vendor Advisory Committee** – Suad Bisogno  
Suad reviewed the information as presented in the packet.
  - A. Minutes of the March 2, 2023 Meeting
  - B. Minutes of the April 6, 2023 Meeting – *deferred*
  - C. Strategic Plan Focus Area Review for Committee - Suad shared that the below were voted on at the last VAC committee to present for review and possible implementation to the Strategic Planning Committee.
    1. Housing
    2. Employment

**20. Old Business/New Business**

Ana reviewed the information as presented in the packet.

- A. Board and Committee Meeting Attendance Sheets
- B. Board and Committee Meetings Time Report
- C. Updated Acronyms Listing
- D. Meeting Evaluation Form - fillable

**21. Announcements/Information/Public Input**

- A. Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.
- B. Public Meeting Attendance presented
- C. Board Member Check-in with Executive Committee: Tuesday, April 25th at 5:00 p.m.
- D. LAUSD Parent Partners, April 12th at 6:00 p.m.
- E. Virtual Cafecito Entre Nos, April 13th at 11:00 am
- F. Filipino Support Group, April 17th at 9:00 a.m.
- G. Support Group Self Determination Program April 19th at 4:30 p.m.
- H. Virtual Aprendiendo Entre Nos/Learning Amongst Us, April 20th at 10:00 am
- I. Parent of Adult Consumers Support Group, April 26th at 6:30 p.m.
- J. SFV Life After High School, April 27th at 6:00 p.m.
- K. Cultivar y Crecer, April 28th at 6:00 pm
- L. Board Member ARCA Academy Training, May 6, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.
- M. Annual Board of Trustees Dinner Event, Saturday, June 3, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.
- N. Annual Board of Trustees Retreat, Saturday, July 29, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

**Action Item Review**

- A. Add agenda item to the Government and Community Relations Committee to provide education and support for advice to Committee and Board Members on events (Lizeth Chavez)
- B. Add agenda item to the Government and Community Relations Committee to determine what identifiers will be available for Board Members to be identified at outreach events (Lizeth Chavez)
- C. Follow up with Sharmila Brunjes regarding vendor issue (Ruth Janka)
- D. Confirming bandwidth and data for Final Disposition of the Special Incidents Report (Ruth Janka)
- E. To provide access to POS Expenditure Data by Location to compare to Case Load Ratio (Ruth Janka)
- F. To add VAC Strategic Plan Focus Area recommendations to the next Strategic Planning Committee Agenda (Lizeth Chavez)

**Public Input**

Suzanne Paggi shared that the Consumer Services Committee has not received the help it needs to support the Committee Officers. As a former Vice- Chair, she stepped down due to the lack of support.

Lillian Martinez proposed that the Guide for Consumers and Families be offered in-home or other natural environments as soon as possible. In addition, the guides are offered in physical or electronic format as soon as interest is expressed in services. Lillian clarified that she also would like to include the distribution of the Guides to nearby community offices. This item will be further discussed in the Consumer Services Co.

**M/S/C** (L. Martinez/G. Alvarado) to create an operational policy to offer Consumer and Family Guides to families in every format possible. The motion passed with one abstention from J. Feinstock.

Richard Dier shared that the Self-Determination Local Volunteer Advisory Committee will meet on April 20th at 6:30 p.m. He encouraged the Board to attend.

## 22. **Adjournment**

Ana Quiles, Board President, adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by:



Lizeth Chavez

Executive Administrative Assistant

for:



Lillian Martinez

Board Secretary

*(\* The majority of these minutes are taken from the Minutes Service submission and reviewed/edited as presented herein by NLACRCCRC staff.*