

Avita Community Partners  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

DATE: March 22, 2023	TIME: 7:00 PM
PLACE: Avita Administrative Offices and Zoom	PRESIDING: Kent Woerner, Chair

Attendance

Seth Barnes, Jr.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Alice Worthan	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Angela Whidby	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Barbara Bosanko	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Terry Hawkins	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Carol Williams	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Angie Brown	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			Kent Woerner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sharon Bucek	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Bruce Palmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Rachel Mathis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Kathy Cooper	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Penny Penn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Brenda Hardy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sherry Estep	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Bo Garrison	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA	Shanna Prather	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Executive Team Member Attendance

Greg Ball	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Lori Holbrook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Hannah Quinn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Cathy Ganter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Cindy Levi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Allan Harden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Agenda Items	Key Discussion Points/Outcomes/Decisions/Action Items
Call to Order	The Board Meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by Kent Woerner.
Determine Quorum	A quorum was present with 11 out of 16 members.
Approval of Agenda	Motion to approve the agenda made by Penny Penn, and seconded by Brenda Hardy, passed unanimously.
Approval of Minutes	Motion to approve the February 22, 2023 minutes by Sherry Estep, seconded by Brenda Hardy, passed unanimously.
Board Chair Report	Kent welcomed everyone. Shared a story of the technology industry macro economy employment.
OATH OF OFFICE	Bo Garrison had a scheduling conflict and was not able to be sworn in this evening.
CEO Report	<p>Cindy reviewed the following in her report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy continues throughout this Legislative Session. Unfortunately, SB 198 which called for the creation of “The Georgians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Innovation Commission” didn’t make it passed Crossover Day. HB 520, the Mental Health sequel Bill to HB 1013 from last year’s legislation did make it past Crossover Day and is gaining momentum as well as controversy. A Senate subcommittee, established to review HB 520, met with as much support as resistance on March 13<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• I was granted an opportunity to testify before the Senate Health and Human Services Appropriation Committee on March 9<sup>th</sup>. I spoke in favor of expansion of Behavioral Health Crisis Centers (BHCCs) and support for an increase in the number of NOW/COMP Waivers. Concern was shared regarding having the workforce to provide the services necessary to those new Waiver recipients based on the draft report from the IDD Rate Study. Our request is that no new rates are lower than what Providers are currently paid for services rendered and that the Direct Support Professional (DSP) wage rate used in the calculations be based on the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of wage calculations with a minimum of \$18.86 per hour.</li> <li>• The Hall County Courts are addressing the issue of the long wait time for competency to stand trial and competency restoration evaluations. Two Hall County Psychologists have been trained to perform these evaluations; however, there is no funding available to pay for them. Currently, all such evaluations are done by Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability (DBHDD) staff through the State Hospital System with an extremely long backlog. Some are waiting over a year for these evaluations and they are held in County Jails until the process is complete. DBHDD’s Commissioner, Kevin Tanner will meet with Avita leadership and Hall County Court staff on April 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss possible local solutions to this backlog.</li> <li>• The “CSB is Me” social media campaign continues to grow. During March, several Facebook posts were made with emphasis on the IDD services provided by CSBs with the hashtag “# The CSBisMeIDD.” These posts assist in bringing awareness to the IDD services provided by Avita.</li> </ul>

Agenda Items	Key Discussion Points/Outcomes/Decisions/Action Items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing with our recruitment efforts, our Human Resource Team attended 7 more job fairs hosted by colleges and universities since our last Board Meeting. They include: Berry College, Appalachian State, University of North Georgia – Gainesville, Georgia College and State, Valdosta State, Medical College of Georgia- Macon, and Kennesaw State. After attending Job Fairs at the University of South Carolina and Dalton State later this month, the team will have recruited staff at 18 colleges and universities over the past 2 months. In March we had 9 new Avita employees, 3 temporary employees, and 1 Nurse Practitioner intern begin employment with us. We will also be working with the Northeast Georgia Medical Center’s Psychiatry Residency Program starting in July.</li> <li>• Avita is working with both Forsyth County and Hall County to implement Data Platforms. Forsyth County’s IT Department is developing a platform and Hall County is implementing a referral platform called Unite Us.</li> <li>• The University of North Georgia Public Mural Class finished their final mock-ups of the 2 designs for the BHCC and began work in the Peer Living Room with the nature scene full wall mural.</li> <li>• One thing we have noted since the onset of COVID is that people coming to us for support have higher acuity levels than those before COVID. We are observing a higher incidence of aggressive behaviors as a result. A group of leaders in Hall County representing Avita, Northeast Georgia Health System, Gainesville City Police Department, Hall County Sheriff’s Office, and the Solicitor’s Office began meeting to discuss how each of us is handling this situation. Our number one goal is to keep people safe and avoid criminal charges when possible. The hospital has signs posted that aggressive behavior will not be tolerated. There is zero tolerance for all forms of aggression. Signs are posted throughout their facilities indicating that incidents may result in removal from this facility and security actions. Staff at the hospital are calling security and law enforcement when they feel their safety is threatened. Recently, one of our BHCC guests had to go to the hospital for medical reasons. He spit at a nurse and was incarcerated. This group wants to develop reasonable solutions to handling incidents of aggressive actions.</li> <li>• We have a new look at Avita’s Administrative Office. Thanks to the photography talent of one of our staff, Kenslei Krippner, the main hallways of the office are now sporting beautiful pictures of all Avita locations.</li> <li>• The SPARK Talent show was held at White County High School on March 10<sup>th</sup>. These were all special people sharing their skills. A group from Avita’s Demorest location of Community Access Services transformed into “Jail Birds” for the evening, dancing and singing an old Elvis favorite “Jailhouse Rock.” They were very lively and got the audience rocking!</li> <li>• Last month “Night to Shine” events were held across the country, sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. Avita’s Dahlonega location participated remotely at our Center. Folks served in the Blairsville location enjoyed participating in the event hosted by the United Methodist Church of Blairsville.</li> <li>• An IDD Trade Association Meeting was held on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Updates were provided by DBHDD in several areas regarding IDD services. They are hopeful that we will receive the 2% rate increases soon. I shared challenges we are facing with obtaining Provider Numbers for Host Home Providers and passed along some examples.</li> <li>• DBHDD is one of 15 states awarded a \$1 million state planning grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers (CCBHCs). There were 15 grants in total. To date, 10 of the 22 CSBs have received CCBHC grants either through SAMHSA or directly through DBHDD through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Avita has held off until DBHDD finalizes Georgia’s model and the expectations including funding are clearly outlined. This grant may help DBHDD to move this forward more expeditiously.</li> <li>• On March 21<sup>st</sup> Hannah Quinn and I provided an overview of services provided by Avita to members of the Pioneer RESA. They were interested in hearing about options available for students after they graduate from high school. We also shared information regarding</li> </ul>

Agenda Items	Key Discussion Points/Outcomes/Decisions/Action Items
	<p>Avita’s Family Support Services that can provide a variety of supports to families prior to their student’s graduation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The following staff were recognized for going above and beyond over the past month: Kristi Davis, Jawara Jefferson, and Shelley Sorells. Thanks to these staff who focus on quality of services provided by Avita and embody our mission.</li> <li>• <b>Upcoming Events:</b> A Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) survey will be conducted at Avita on March 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>. A presentation of Avita’s services will be presented at the Rabun County Rotary Meeting on April 6<sup>th</sup> from noon – 1:00pm. Avita will be represented at the annual Service Provider Association for Developmental Disabilities (SPADD) conference in Augusta April 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• Cindy finished by referencing her report for additional happenings around Avita and success stories.</li> </ul>
Financial Update	<p>Greg Ball reviewed the following in his report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• February saw a \$9,000 surplus.</li> <li>• Current year revenues are \$2.9 million (or 15.4%) above prior year revenues.</li> <li>• Current year expenses are \$2.6 million (or 13.9%) above prior year levels.</li> <li>• We have invested \$2 million of our reserve fund for a weighted average rate of 3.35% in high yield savings accounts or CD’s. This will net us \$67,025 per year in interest.</li> <li>• Our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) continued to exceed the targets established by DBHDD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cash on Hand is 83 days– still well above the 30 day minimum and 3 days less from last month</li> <li>○ Current Ratio – 8.3:1</li> <li>○ Days of Covered Expenses – 81 days –still well above the minimum of 60 days</li> <li>○ Long Term Debt Ratio – .12:1 – well below the maximum of 2.5:1</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Annual Corporate Compliance Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cathy Ganter shared an overview of what corporate compliance entails with the Board via a lengthy PowerPoint. Within the presentation she also shared year over year statistics on how Avita was doing.</li> </ul>
Policy 13-205	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The review of this policy was prompted by a DBHDD suggestion that all CSB’s be reminded of policy 13-205 for CEO compensation and hiring. The board reviewed the policy and was reminded that the most important part was that DBHDD needed to approve all wage increases and new CEO hires.</li> </ul>
Resignation of Avery Nix, “At large” selection from the Avita Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cindy shared that Avery had verbally resigned his position the week prior. This is an “at large” selection of the board and some discussion took place as to the best way to fill the remaining term of Avery which goes through 6/30/24. It was decided that board members would send Cindy potential nominations to be discussed next month.</li> </ul>
Adjourn at 8:25 pm	<p>Barbara Bosanko made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Sharon Bucek, and they adjourned unanimously.</p>

*Kent Woerner*

4/26/23

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

Respectfully submitted,

*Hariah Hutkowski*

Hariah Hutkowski, Recording Clerk