



**MINUTES**  
**THRIVE UPSTATE**  
**BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 28, 2017 - 4:30 PM**  
**PATRICK CENTER ANNEX**

Notice of the meeting was sent to all Board Members, The Greenville News, The Greenville Journal, WYFF-TV 4, Fox-TV 21, and the Clerk to Council, Greenville County. Notice and agenda were posted in the lobby of the Patrick Center Administration Building and the Patrick Center Annex and the Thrive Upstate Website prior to the meeting.

**Members Present:** Bob Ariail, Chair  
Bryant Nixon, Vice Chair  
Clyde Baucom, Treasurer  
Cindy Baughan  
Bern Mebane

**Members Absent:** Jade Cox  
Peggy Farmer  
Paul Hamberis  
Alex McNair

**Senior Staff Present:**

Al Hill  
Sandy Brown  
Nicky Lanford  
Stacy Whitsel

Anne Arrington  
Alicia Grubel  
Nicole Lomax  
Peggy White

Julie Black  
Elise Hardin

**DDSN Staff Present:** Kevin Yacobi

Eric Baker

**Call to Order:** Bob Ariail, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:45 PM. The Board of Directors invited all Thrive Upstate employees to attend the Board meeting to hear from the Board and share their concerns following the terminations of the Executive Director, and the Development and Greenville CAN staff. Following introductions of Board members, staff, and DDSN auditors, Mr. Ariail recapped that DDSN auditors prepared an internal audit report performed at Thrive Upstate and presented it to the Board on September 12. The audit will be finalized in 30-60 days and will be made public at that time. The Board had previously developed concerns about the former Executive Director's performance. Following the presentation, the Board of Directors went into Executive Session and engaged in extensive discussion about the audit findings, as well as the issue of the Executive Director's leadership and management. The Board unanimously agreed that the best interest of Thrive Upstate would be served by new leadership. The Board is moving quickly to fill the Executive Director position, and a number of potential candidates have been identified.

Mr. Ariail addressed a second issue involving an article in the newspaper in which the former Executive Director disputed he had resigned and said he was fired. Mr. Ariail recounted that the Executive Director in public session at the September 12 meeting said he wanted to resign and agreed to sign resignation papers. He later refused to sign the resignation papers, and was then terminated per the motion of the Board.

Another issue discussed was the termination of the Development and Greenville CAN staff shortly thereafter, and the three positions were eliminated. The internal audit report stated that Medicaid and Medicare funding must be spent on services for the individuals served, and the development and marketing results were not significant enough to support the costs. Mr. Ariail wished them well in future endeavors. He stated there are no plans for further terminations at this time.

Mr. Ariail invited staff to share their thoughts and concerns with the Board. Some items mentioned were:

- Increased cost of vending machines used by consumers.
- Direction desired for new Executive Director.
- Use of individuals' food stamp money.
- Inviting staff and individuals to attend Board meetings to share accomplishments.
- Staff recognition.
- Status of Final Rule.
- Pay increase for direct care staff and its effects.
- Project Search, a hospital program to increase employment of those with disabilities.
- Christmas party was not allowed last year.
- Training to make direct care staff more creative to enrich services to individuals.
- Hiring part-time workers.

Appreciation was expressed to the Board for their service and the invitation to attend the Board meeting and share communication.

At 5:35 PM, the Board began to address the agenda items.

**Announcement of New Board Appointees:** Mr. Ariail reported that three Board members' terms were expiring on November 30. Notice was received that Greenville County Council had appointed three new Board members as replacements, who will begin serving upon approval of the governor. The appointees are Christy Bright, Jason Morris, and Amanda Walkup. New appointees will be invited to attend the November Board meeting as guests.

**Approval of September 12, 2017 Called Board Meeting Minutes:** The month listed on this agenda item was corrected to read "September." Bern Mebane requested the wording on his motion at the September 12 meeting to read, "Mr. Mebane moved to accept John Coccione's resignation since the Board had lost confidence in his ability to perform, and if he did not resign, his employment would be terminated." Mr. Mebane motioned to approve the September 12, 2017 Minutes with the above correction. The motion was seconded by Clyde Baucom and was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Financial Report:** Clyde Baucom reported favorable financial reports in the first two months of the fiscal year, and revenue was above budget. Year to date, revenue is \$115,000 above budget. Revenue over expenses was budgeted to be \$61,000, amounting to a favorable variance of \$54,000.

The Finance Committee is concerned about a dip in Contract Services revenue beginning in late June into August. Income dropped from \$65,000 per month contracted revenue and is now achieving \$44 - \$45,000 per month. Charles Randall and Dee DiCarlo will meet and present a report on what can be done to create revenue.

At this time last year to date, there was a loss of \$20,000. This year to date, there is an \$115,000 profit, with a positive variance of \$135,000. He commented the cash flow report looks encouraging.

There was discussion on re-allocating money saved by the elimination of three positions. Mr. Baucom requested staff to report to the Board on where these funds could be used to address some of the concerns mentioned earlier. Mr. Hill will prepare the requested report, and also informed on events being planned such as a Halloween costume party at the Shrine Club, a Valentine's dance, a gala formal, and an employee appreciation event. None of these events will be funded from Medicaid dollars. Points earned on maintenance purchase cards were redeemed, and \$15,000 was earned.

Mr. Ariail requested the Dashboard Report be re-instituted.

**Payment of the McNair Law Firm Bill:** An invoice was received for attorney fees incurred for completion and filing of foundation documents. Brief discussion on the payment method followed. Mr. Mebane moved that payment of the McNair Law Firm invoice be made from donations allocated for the foundation. Bryant Nixon seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Mebane complimented the three outgoing Board members and said they made great contributions and would be welcome as advisory members.

**New Business:** Mr. Hill reported all known findings of the DDSN audit had been addressed and sent to the DDSN audit department.

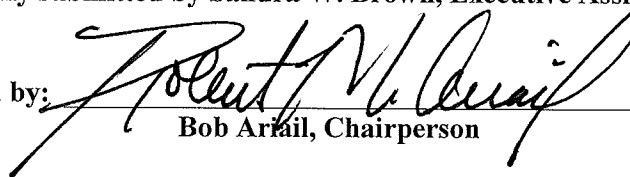
**Public Comments:** Carolyn O'Connell, who advocates for people with disabilities, said she was very involved on a state level and attends DDSN Commission meetings. She said boards are not being reimbursed enough to cover needs, and DDSN is in favor of keeping the band system. She said DDSN should use a direct pay system, and encouraged the Board to ask questions about reimbursement procedures.

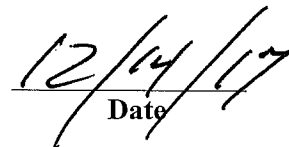
Cindy Baughan noted the concerns raised by staff earlier in the meeting exemplified the purpose, shared vision and passion she experienced as a Board member and found it energizing to be a part of the organization. Mr. Nixon commented on the room full of people who love the work they do. Mr. Ariail said the Board needs to be more in touch with the staff. Ms. Baughan added the Board is here to support the staff.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Bryant Nixon motioned to adjourn, with a second by Cindy Baughan. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Sandra W. Brown, Executive Assistant.

Approved by:

  
Bob Ariail, Chairperson

  
Date