



September 10, 2020 (2:00 - 4:00pm)
Microsoft Teams

Board Minutes

Attendees:

Due to COVID-19 the meeting was held via video conference

Elissa Hardy, Jennifer Biess, Mike Malloy, Kelli Barker, Carla Respects Nothing, Brian Arnold, Rachel Vaughn, Ben Ryan, Eugene Wade, Alix Midgley, Shelley McKittrick, Ken Hayes, Kristen Toombs, Karissa Johnson, Jenna Hansen

MDHI Staff:

Layla Said, Matt Meyer, Jamie Rife, Rebecca Mayer, Sae Hong, Margay Witzdam, Midori Higa, Jackie Hernandez, Alex Rigberg, Elizabeth Murray, Megan Morales

Administrative:

Meeting began at 2:00 with a group activity from Brian with fun facts about the MDHI Staff. Matt informed us that Kelly Hellman is no longer Director of Finance and Administration, which was part of a planned transition. We are in the process of hiring a new Controller position within the next week, which should sufficiently take care of our accounting needs. In final interviews for the Jefferson County OneHome Coordinator position. About to make an offer for this position as well. The position for Coordinator for Consumer Engagement has been closed due to lack of exciting and qualified applicants. (See action plan for new approach to this position). Positions are out for the Improvement Advisor, between 6-12 applicants. Lots of promising people with backgrounds in homelessness and process improvement. Also some interest for the Data Capacity position, which is one that is between our HMIS and OneHome team. We are at a critical juncture as we begin to publish our dashboards and are expecting to need increased support in this area. We want to trust in the quality of our data. Brian asked Matt to elaborate on the funding pieces. Matt said we received a grant worth 50K that was unexpected in this cycle. Brian added there was a 25K added to the Flex Fund from COVID relief, with another 25K from Denver and Aurora. With this, the Flex Fund will remain viable for a few more months.

Consent Agenda

Brian covered the consent agenda.

Vote - Brian motioned to approve consent agenda, Rachel approved, Ken seconded, no opposed, motion passes by acclamation

Amendment to remove Alix from last month's minutes.

Vote - Brian motioned to remove Alix from the August minutes, all in favor, no opposed, motion passes by acclamation

Topics:

Governance

Rachel said a few members have resigned: Ved, Ayashe, and Karen. Although we currently have 22 Board member spots designated on the Board, this opens the discussion on how many seats we want to continue having on the Board. Both Policy Governance consultants were concerned about the large size of the board and the level of meaningful engagement that it allows. It might limit meaningful discussion. We are now at a Board of 15 active members, which includes Shelley and Karissa who will be ending their terms in December. The Board will then consist of 13 members. Rachel asked the group to revisit the number of Board seats we recruit for. She suggests having a flexible Board with a target number of 14-15 members, maybe even a few less, of Board spots we would absolutely need filled. There would then be a few floating spots. This gives us flexibility to add members who may have incredible diversity and experience. Brian asked if we still meet HUD requirements with a smaller Board. Matt commented that HUD has some guidelines for what systems are represented from the community on the Board, and he thinks that if we are deliberate for how we go about it we will be ok. He does not think any community fully meets, and does acknowledge that we are challenged geographically. Matt said it will depend on how we define the geography, and look at larger regions versus specific counties. Matt does not see this as a reason to *not* reduce the size of the Board. He thinks we would benefit from more productive discussions from having around 15 members versus 22. Shelley added she is not against making the group smaller, but asked how we would be hurt from a contribution and diversity perspective. Shelley wants to make sure we don't lose the provider voice, which has constant access to the voices of lived experience. Rachel wanted to add that we are not splitting the Committees but wanted to talk about the dual-role of the Board members. Less board members would probably mean a greater contribution from each. Rachel said the executive team talked about requiring Committee participation so that everyone is more engaged in the organization. Ben said that something else they talked about in the Executive Committee discussion was having more Board member participation in the Board Committees and then placing people with more specific expertise on the CoC Committees. Ben said that joining a Board Committee is a great way to maximize one's involvement in high-level logistics. Regardless, we still need solid representation in the CoC Committees. Karissa asked that we do interviews with the people that left, since some are POC and one was the Youth Board seat. Alix wanted to mention that people who aren't in a salaried position might have a difficult time contributing to our meetings and other Committees. She is worried we would be excluding some people because of their life circumstances. Rachel added she was just talking to Matt about these same concerns. Rachel has had concerns taking time off during the work day as a salaried employee. She thinks part of this conversation is talking about when and how we have our Board Meetings. Currently they are in the middle of a work day, which might pose a problem for some people. As we talk about reducing the Board size, we want to talk about our meeting time. Brian added we might have to add changing the time and adding child care are considerations we might need to add in the future.

Alix asked why the original decision was to have a 24-person Board. Matt deferred to Rebecca. Rebecca said it reflects the need to think about regional/HUD coverage, including having people with lived experience. It was also intended to have the Board engaged in a wide-range of MDHI activities. Ben feels that it was needed to build out the Committee structure, especially during a time of limited staff. Kelli Barker supports reducing the size. She feels it would make conversation more efficient and engaging. She asked if the idea of a flexible Board was the idea of the Consultant. Rachel said the Consultants were surprised by the large size of our Board, but the flexible nature of the Board was decided by the Governance Committee and intended to not limit us by a number. Someone added we might want to prioritize adding Board members on the Councils, since they feed up to the Board and create a feedback loop. Brian asked for Rachel and the Governance Committee to present the Board with some options regarding size and meeting time.

Update on Policy Governance and Retreat: Rachel said the Board Member retreat is being moved to Summer 2021. Matt hired Bill Charney, who has offered to consult with us until our retreat next summer. Until then, we plan on having a more specific training on Equity with more details coming soon. Shelley wants to know what names we are throwing around for the anti-racism, anti-oppression work. Matt thought Community Solutions did a great training with BFZ and would connect us better to that work at the same time, but is open to other suggestions. Karissa thinks this is a great time to reach out to a BIPOC organization, which is listed in our Equity Resources. Shelley asked about Mark Dones, and Matt responded he is too busy with other projects. Brian would like to get something done end of October/beginning of November.

Theory of Change

Rebecca, Jackie and Jamie present on the Theory of Change. This is a continuation of the discussion from the July Board meeting. The first half will be this month, and the next half will be next month. Rebecca reviews the purpose of a Question Zero and the Theory of Change.

Question Zero: Ending homelessness through a Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (JEDI) lens

Theory of Change: If MDHI leads and brings resources to scale for a racially equitable continuum of homeless services, then homelessness, if it occurs, will be rare, brief, and a one-time occurrence for people in Metro Denver.

Rebecca notes that at the top of the Logic Model, we call out how "all work is done through a JEDI lens." She then reviewed the first activity, "Community Convenings." Jackie reviewed the second activity, "Grant Administration, Monitoring, and Distribution of Funds."

Karissa wanted to know if there were any discussions to hire someone specifically with a JEDI background and training to ensure that the activities MDHI is participating in are in fact equitable. Matt said to wait for his Equity Presentation.

Matt's Equity Plan

Matt said this plan came out of the Equity Recommendations from the E&A Recommendations and the Board's Equity Ends Policy. This plan is in pencil and designed to elicit discussion from the Board. The plan is intended to be carried out over 1-2 years.

(See Matt's MDHI Equity Action Plan)

Karissa said for the LEAB, it would be good to do a Listening Session for programs currently funded by MDHI. Matt and Elissa agree it's a great idea. Shelley feels the title Director of Equity and Inclusion could be improved, wants to make sure we aren't just checking a box. Matt is open to suggestions, but wants to make sure to leave the "Director" part. Regarding the NOFA, Karissa wants to know if lack of progress over time would result in a loss of points. Matt said no specific decision has been made, but feels that a lack of progress would lead to a reallocation of funds in our reallocation policy. Karissa asked if this DEI would be a trainer themselves. She is concerned training will take them away from more strategic work. Matt is looking at these being MDHI Trainings, but the specifics depends on who we get for the position. He feels it will be a combination of hiring trainers or a training program. At the minimum the DEI would have a budget. Karissa and Ben had questions about the Civil Liberties issues Matt mentioned. Matt responded that it came from some lawyers who said you can't use criminal justice as a proxy for race. However, he said we are still moving forward with using Criminal Justice involvement at this time.

Matt's biggest concern is the VI-SPDAT, which he believes is not helping us develop and is contributing to a racially inequitable and discriminatory prioritization process. Shelley asked for clarification. Matt feels it is too subject to the rater and can manifest social biases. He said there are a few studies he can send out and that he would like the RGC to review. Matt feels a lot of things touted as "evidenced-based" in the homelessness field does not have the same scientific rigor as other fields. As a result, we are left with substandard instruments that do not benefit our clients. He feels the VI-SPDAT was not initially intended for prioritization.

Shelley mentioned DESC in Seattle has had their own tool for a while, although it might not be for the whole CE system. It would be useful if we could look at other communities and the assessment tools they use from a racial equity standpoint. Karissa wanted to point out that it takes years to develop a tool, and that the E&A wanted to incorporate other systems for this reason. Matt feels that it isn't an either/or when it comes to incorporating data from other systems.