**Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

**Board Meeting Logistics and Engagement Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes**

***July 2, 2021***

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**: Alexus Smith, Chandra Robinson, Alexandra Dixon, Ed Turner, Rachel Loria

**VBPD STAFF PRESENT**: Teri Morgan, Clare Huerta, Nia Harrison, Jason Withers, Henry Street

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Teri Morgan, Executive Director, called the meeting to order at 12:01 PM and welcomed the Board members.

**SELECTION OF AD HOC COMMITTEE CHAIR PERSON:** Ms. Morgan stated that the first order of business was for the committee to select a Chair person. Ms. Alexandra Dixon recommended Ms. Alexus Smith. Ms. Smith agreed to serve as Chair. Committee members unanimously agreed.

**MEETING OVERVIEW:** Ms. Morgan reviewed the purpose of the meeting: to review and discuss Board member feedback regarding Board packets, Board meeting agendas, and Board member engagement and to develop recommendations to bring to the full Board. Ms. Morgan also identified topics for discussion at a later time including Board member feedback that requires additional staff discussion, committee structure, and continuing education topics.

**REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF BOARD PACKET:** The ad hoc committee reviewed Board member survey and email feedback regarding the Board packet. There was consensus from Board member surveys and committee members that Board members like getting the Board packet in advance of the meeting. Board member feedback regarding the structure and content of the Board packet was mixed, some Board members feel that the packets are too large, contain a lot of information, and can be a challenge to read and review, in advance of meetings. Other Board members have no issues with the Board packet, feel that Board members can read what is important to them and have the rest of the information for reference, and that more comprehensive information is better.

Ad hoc committee members discussed the organization of the Board packet. Highlights of proposed recommendations include:

* Focus on the organization of information, rather than the level of information.
* Organize information so that it follows the order of the committee meetings and the Board meeting. Ad hoc committee members agreed that modifying the order of Board packet materials would be helpful with navigation.
* Include additional place markers e.g., bold or color. Ad hoc committee members shared their experience trying to navigate the Board packet and feel additional place markers or bookmarks could be helpful.
* Include a Board packet summary page. Board staff agreed to do a mock summary page, based on the last Board packet, to present to the Board in September when they hear the ad hoc committee’s recommendations so they can make an informed choice. Ad hoc committee members agreed with staff developing a mockup for review.

**REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF BOARD MEETING AGENDA:** The ad hoc committee reviewed Board member survey and email feedback regarding the Board meeting agenda and meeting structure. Ad hoc committee members discussed pros and cons of changing the full Board meeting and committee meeting agenda order and times. Following discussion, ad hoc committee members agreed not to make recommendations regarding changes to the current flow of the committee meetings and full Board meeting times, commenting that it could be confusing and could impact attendance.

**REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF BOARD MEMBER ENGAGEMENT:** The ad hoc committee reviewed Board member survey and email feedback regarding Board member engagement during the Board meeting. The feedback indicated a clear interest to create more opportunities for discussion, sharing success stories, sharing the impact of Board projects, and networking.

Ms. Dixon asked if lunchtime could be used for networking, and Mr. Turner agreed it was a good idea. It was noted that Board members are typically less attentive to presentations during lunchtime, so it would be good to use lunchtime in a more focused way. For example, Board members could be asked to brainstorm RFP topics, brainstorm questions that are designed to help Board members learn about each other, or could also address a “hot topic,” per another Board member suggestion. Ad hoc committee members agreed to recommend to the Board incorporating structured opportunities for brainstorming, discussing issues impacting the disability community and networking during lunch versus having a presentation.

Ad hoc committee members discussed a suggestion from a Board member to have assigned seats, possibly by color or number. This strategy could encourage Board members to sit and engage with different people. Ms. Dixon said she wouldn’t like assigned seats and that she already varies who she sits with. Ms. Robinson was also opposed to the idea, saying that Board members should just be more mindful. Mr. Turner said that he already tries to sit with other people. Grants Manager, Mr. Jason Withers, said it was important for Committee Chairs to be able to sit with Board staff, so that support can be given, as needed. Ad hoc committee members agreed not to move this recommendation forward.

Ad hoc committee members discussed Board member feedback concerning redundancy in the Board packet and Board meeting agenda and the recommendation to discontinue state agency report outs during the Board meeting, especially if nothing has changed since the written update was provided. This could save time on the agenda for mini-presentations on, for example, successes (e.g., grant presentations) and best practices in other states, as suggested in Board member feedback. Mr. Turner commented that the opportunity for Board members to ask questions regarding agency updates is important. Ad hoc committee members agreed to recommend to the Board that 1) agency representatives not report out their updates during the Board meeting, 2) include time on the agenda for Board members to ask questions regarding the written agency updates, and 3) provide a high level bullet point summary of agency updates via a PowerPoint slide to ensure the update information is accessible to all Board members and to prompt questions. Ad hoc committee members agreed that this would reduce the amount of time on the agenda for agency updates while still providing an opportunity for questions.

Ad hoc committee members discussed how the additional time on the agenda could be used. Ms. Smith said that she would like to hear from self-advocates who participate in a grant. Mr. Turner agreed, saying that would be very valuable. Mr. Withers, said he thinks it is still valuable to hear from the grantee as well, and asked if committee members were recommending hearing from the self-advocate in addition to the grantee rather than in place of the grantee? Ms. Smith agreed with Mr. Withers, saying the self-advocate would be in addition to the grantee and commented that it would be great if Board members had an opportunity to network with the self-advocates. Ms. Loria said she likes the idea of hearing from self-advocates.

Ms. Nia Harrison, Director of Planning, Research and Evaluation, asked if Board members prefer hearing a short presentation during the meeting to reserve more time for discussion, if information is already provided in the Board packet, or if they prefer a more full presentation in case they didn’t have time to read the packet? There was quick consensus that a short presentation is preferable.

Board staff asked about the Board member suggestion to ask members why they joined the Board, at least once a year during introductions. Ms. Smith and Ms. Dixon liked the idea.

Board staff noted one Board member suggestion to start the meetings after 2 p.m., but said that it would be difficult to conduct the needed Board business. After brief discussion, ad hoc committee members agreed that this would not be possible.

**REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF BOARD MEMBER ENGATEMENT BETWEEN BOARD MEETINGS:**

The ad hoc committee reviewed Board member survey and email feedback regarding Board member engagement between Board meetings. Members discussed a suggestion for *Momentum Mondays,* a set day and time for a 30 minute discussion on Board happenings, major events, and other initiatives. Ms. Morgan noted potential challenges with meeting in person, unless it was done virtually as a fireside chat without Board member discussion. Ms. Dixon said this may be a better fit for email. Ms. Smith agreed, suggesting that a mini newsletter or e-digest might be good. Ms. Morgan said that staff can more consistently share opportunities for Board member input, and other opportunities for training and engagement, via the e-digest, and leave it up to Board members to decide their interest and availability. Ms. Dixon asked that the e-digest identify whether the opportunity is something that can be shared with and/or promoted to people outside the Board e.g., learning opportunity. There was consensus among ad hoc committee members that Board staff develop and share with the Board a monthly e-digest.

Ad hoc committee members discussed providing an opportunity to review the Board packet with Board members, if needed. This may assist some Board members with participation during Board meetings. A committee member commented that it would be helpful to provide the opportunity to review the Board packet.

The committee discussed the recommendation to provide an online forum to share resources and opportunities. It was also noted that the Board tried to do this in the past, via Sharepoint, but it was rarely used. There was consensus that Facebook would be an appropriate avenue for the online forum and that creating an alternate avenue was not the best use of Board resources.

**WRAP UP AND FINAL REMARKS:** Ad hoc committee recommendations will be shared with the full Board for review and discussion during the September 15, 2021 Board meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 2:04 pm.