

Avita Community Partners
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

DATE: June 26, 2024	TIME: 6:08 PM
PLACE: Avita Administrative Offices and Zoom	PRESIDING: Kent Woerner, Chair

Attendance

Barbara Bosanko	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Brenda Hochmuth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Kim Stephens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Angie Brown	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Rachel Mathis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Samantha Turner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sharon Bucek	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Bruce Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Angela Whidby	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Kathy Cooper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Penny Penn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Carol Williams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Alton Fry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Joe Perkins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Kent Woerner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Bo Garrison	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Shanna Prather	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Alice Worthan	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" 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	Don Reimer	<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	Hannah Quinn	<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 6:08 PM by Kent Woerner
Determine Quorum	A quorum was present with 12 out of 18 members.
Approval of Agenda	Motion to approve the agenda made by Barbara Bosanko, seconded by Brenda Hochmuth, passed unanimously.
Approval of Minutes	Motion to approve the May 22, 2024 minutes by Barbara Bosanko, seconded by Brenda Hochmuth and it passed unanimously.
Board Chair Report	Kent had nothing to share.
CEO Report	<p>On May 29th, several Avita staff represented our organization at the Braves Game. It was 988 night at the ballpark, raising awareness to the 3 digit number to call for easy access to mental health services in a time of crisis. At the entrance to the stadium, DBHDD had a booth with literature about 988 and we handed out wristbands as Braves fans were entering the ballpark.</p> <p>On June 10th I attended the Georgia Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission Meeting at the DBHDD office in Atlanta. We reviewed accomplishments of the Commission thus far and discussed 5 new subcommittees being added to the Commission this year. They are: Aging, IMD Waiver, Homelessness, Determinants of Health, and Dental. Dr. Constantino from Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta brought the group up to date on the expanded mental health services they are providing at the Zalik Center and Dr. Julie Oliver from DBHDD discussed the ongoing challenges with wait times for competency to stand trial hearings/restoration. In the state hospital system, the current wait time for a male bed is 339 days and 144 days for a female bed. There are currently 700 individuals awaiting a forensic bed.</p> <p>Avita started the Rabun County Jail-In Reach program this month. Our Rabun County outpatient counselor, Jean Hutchinson, will be serving 3 days in our outpatient clinic and 2 days in the Rabun County Jail as the Jail In-Reach Counselor! We are also hiring the Forensic Peer Mentor for this program. Lisa Dale will begin working in this program in August. Funding for this project is being provided via a grant obtained by HealthHIE Georgia.</p> <p>Hall Co Jail In-Reach Program is “Making a Significant Difference” in many lives of inmates being released back to their communities. We are ensuring that they leave the jail with resources to ensure their best chance for success. We created over 200 resource kits that included flip flops, gift cards for essentials, and backpacks.</p>

Agenda Items	Key Discussion Points/Outcomes/Decisions/Action Items
	<p>Avita and the Veterans Administration have partnered together to focus on Suicide Prevention (not just for Veterans). We are providing educational training materials to staff and resources to individuals we serve in both English and Spanish.</p> <p>The Board of the Georgia Association of Community Service Boards (GACSB), the Trade Association for the Community Service Boards (CSBs) met for a full day planning session on Friday, June 14th to determine a path going forward following notification of termination of the management contract with Strategic Healthcare Partners (SHP). SHP has provided the management of the GACSB for the past 16 years. The Board decided to hire its own Executive Director and Administrative Assistant to manage the GACSB. A small task force will develop job descriptions for these positions and begin advertising. Another task force will be formed to review the current GACSB bylaws and recommend changes/updates. SHP has offered to extend its agreement with GACSB during this process.</p> <p>At a meeting of the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners held on June 11th, the Board voted 3-2 to utilize the remaining \$29.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds toward a water/sewage project instead of constructing a whole health center as previously planned. The projected cost of the water backflow from Lake Lanier is required by the Department of Natural Resources and the projected cost to the county is close to \$200 million. These funds will help defray a small portion of the total cost. Prior to this meeting, County Manager, David McKee was directed to convene a stakeholder’s group for the purpose of recommending alternatives to the full whole health center to the Commissioners. Avita Board Member Joe Perkins from the Forsyth County Sheriff’s Department and I serve on this stakeholder’s group. Alternate recommendations will be presented to the Commissioners on June 25th.</p> <p>The Georgia Collaborative Administrative Service Organization conducted an audit of Avita’s behavioral health services the week of June 10th. A large group of auditors, with some onsite and others working remotely did a thorough review of the quality of services provide by Avita, the qualifications and training of our staff, and documentation of our billed services. At the conclusion of the audit, 2 comprehensive reports were provided to us, one covering the Behavioral Health Crisis Center and the second for all other behavioral health services. Our overall scores improved from our last review on both reports. The BHCC results increased by 2% rising from 80% in December 2023 to 82% during the June review. Although significant progress has been made since the opening of the BHCC, we must continue striving to achieve an “A” score of 90% or above. Our overall Behavioral Health score also rose 2%, from 90% in December 2023 to 92% during this latest review and exceeding the FY 23 statewide average by 6% overall, 16% in billing validation, 5 % in focused outcome areas, and 5% in assessment and planning.</p> <p>In preparation for a revised focus on community integration, Avita’s Community Access Groups have stepped up their community activities. The individuals from our Blairsville IDD groups enjoyed themselves at the annual Fishing Rodeo. They brought their tackle boxes, rods and reels, lunches, and competitive spirits. While at the fishing rodeo, the individuals were each provided a volunteer from the community to assist them in casting, reeling, baiting, and unhooking fish once they were caught. Some of the individuals decided to throw the fish back into the water, while some took their fish home for dinner. The Gainesville Community Access Group took a visit to the Railroad Museum last month.</p> <p>Highlighting a success story, MM has been with Avita since January 2024. She came to Avita from a homeless shelter and all she had was a few items to her name and a check from SSI that could not be cashed because she did not have a state-issued identification card. Over the past 5 months, she obtained her Birth Certificate, Social Security Card and her ID! Having these documents provides her with many options moving forward, paving a path to achieve her hopes and dreams.</p>

Agenda Items	Key Discussion Points/Outcomes/Decisions/Action Items
	<p>The Autism Services program celebrated Cinco de Mayo last month. Our clients learned about Mexican culture and history related to Cinco de Mayo.</p> <p>Avita provided a sponsorship for the Dawson County Family Connection Celebrity Waiter Event. Held on June 7th this event brings local Dawson County “celebrities” as servers to the public for a good cause which are the families of Dawson County. A card was displayed on all tables at Longhorn showing Avita as one of the sponsors. In addition, there was a Facebook posting that thanked Avita for their sponsorship.</p> <p>Last month, Jeremy Merritt and Danielle Rietta attended the Walk for Recovery at the Cumming City Center. This event focused on remembering those that have been lost to the opioid and drug epidemic, but also to offer hope for recovery.</p> <p>Durkhanai Hague is a Case Manager in our Deaf Services program. Recently, Durkhanai received the distinguished honor of being selected to present at the National ADARA Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia, May 29 through June 1. The topic she presented on is a very complex and sensitive issue: <i>Cultural Humility</i>. She explained that cultural competence aims for effective interaction between two diverse groups, whereas cultural humility seeks equity and mutual respect. Both components are imperative for professionals who serve our world that is so culturally diverse. Hundreds of proposals for presentations are offered every year for this important national convention, but only a few of the best are selected to present. Durkhanai Hague is someone our AVITA family can be very proud of.</p> <p>Avita was a sponsor of the Children’s Center for Hope and Healing’s Annual Conference. It was held on June 21st at Grace Episcopal Church in Gainesville. The training topics for this year were Ethics and Play Therapy. System of Care Funds from DBHDD are used to cover the sponsorship.</p> <p>We were notified by the City of Toccoa that they planned to double our rent from \$3,000 per month to \$6,000 per month effective July 1st. I reached out to the Mayor of Toccoa, Gail Fry, requesting reconsideration, indicating that this would be a hardship. The City Council agreed to only increase the rent to \$4500 for FY25, then re-evaluate for the following fiscal year. Our staff contacted the County Manager for Stephens County, Christian Hamilton to inquire about the use of the former DFCS office which has been vacant since 2020. After visits by several of our staff, I submitted a proposal to the County Manager as follows: Avita will have access to the building effective July 1, 2024, for renovation purposes and will pay for the required renovations. We plan to begin providing services out of this location in January of 2025. Once occupying the building, we will set aside \$1,000 per month as a maintenance fee for minor repairs. This would require us to remain in the building owned by the City of Toccoa for 6 more months.</p> <p>Last month our cash box was stolen from the Cumming office. The theft happened after regular business hours and there was no evidence of forced entry into the building. The cabinet which housed the cash lock box was pried open and the cash box was removed. There was approximately \$100 in the box. Cumming Police were notified, and an investigation is underway.</p> <p>And the winner is..... AVITA! The Franklin County Citizen Leader’s People’s Choice Award for the Best Place to Work in Franklin County was received by the Avita IDD center in Lavonia. The award was received by Morgan Bollick, Diane Lee, and Tammy Herron. Congrats to our IDD staff in Lavonia!</p> <p>The Georgia Harm Reduction organization delivered a free Vending Machine to Avita’s Behavioral Health Crisis Center and it is now fully operational. The goal of Georgia Harm Reduction is to meet people where they are, keeping them safe until they are ready to begin a life of recovery.</p>

Agenda Items	Key Discussion Points/Outcomes/Decisions/Action Items
	<p>In our June new hire orientation, we had 31 new employees join the Avita Family. Fourteen of the new hires will be working at the BHCC. This is the largest orientation group we've had in years.</p> <p>Our Co-Responder Program with the Forsyth Sheriff's Department has a new team member. We'd like to welcome officer Tony Thaxton as Ashley Fippen's law enforcement partner. Officer Thaxton was formerly assigned to work in the Forsyth County Jail.</p> <p>Parents whose children participate at the Rabun Clubhouse were treated to a very important training. Five parents completed Mental Health First Aid last month!</p> <p>There were Memorial Day cookouts held across Avita last month. Several of our IDD Programs gathered for a cookout. Our Residential Programs also celebrated with a cookout. The ITR staff ensured that their clients didn't miss out and had a cookout too!</p> <p>At the organizational Meeting of the Opioid Settlement Regional Advisory Council (RAC). Our members were notified that there will be \$4,835,205 available for distribution during the first round in Region 1. The RAC has 70 proposals to review and score, then recommend for consideration by the Georgia Opioid Settlement Advisory Council (GOSAC). Avita's proposal is to renovate the old CSU in the back of our Administrative Office and transform it into a men's residential treatment facility. The proposal also includes start-up for an Intensive Outpatient Treatment program out of our Gainesville outpatient office.</p> <p>We'd like to recognize Gary from Total Body Fitness in Hartwell. Gary donated a large grow box to the IDD group. They planted beautiful flowers in their first grow box. Thanks for your donation Gary!</p> <p>Avita will close its offices at noon on July 23rd for a company-wide celebration. July marks 30 years of Avita providing behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability services to northeast Georgia. We look forward to gathering the Avita family at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park Venue in Gainesville for an afternoon of celebration.</p> <p>Over the last month, Durkhanai Haque, Yesenia Hernandez Medrano, Jenny Heuer, and Jodi Page were recognized for going above and beyond.</p>
Financial Update	<p>Greg Ball reviewed the following in his report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May saw a \$141,000 surplus. • Current year revenues are \$2.8 million above prior year revenues which is a 9.1% increase over last year. • Current year expenses are \$2.8 million (or 9.5%) above prior year expenses. • Current surplus fiscal year to date is \$696,000. • Our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) continued to exceed the targets established by DBHDD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cash on Hand is 88 days—well above the 30-day minimum ○ Current Ratio – 11:1 ○ Days of Covered Expenses – 83 days—well above the minimum of 60 days ○ Long Term Debt Ratio – .14:1 – well below the maximum of 2.5:1
Election of Officers to begin FY25, or July 1 st , 2024	<p>Opened the nominations for the slate and the only nominations were the ones reported by the Nomination Committee. Barbara Bosanko, seconded by Kathy Cooper, motioned to close the slate naming Penny Penn for Board Chairman, Carol Williams for Vice-chairman, and Rachel Mathis as Parliamentarian. Passed unanimously. Then Barbara Bosanko, seconded by Kathy Cooper, moved to approve the slate. Passed unanimously.</p>
Bylaw changes	<p>Motion to pass the revisions shared by the Governance Committee by Angela Whidby, seconded by Penny Penn, and passed unanimously. Those revisions were updating the terms of office by what county and increasing the time for the auditors to get the audit done.</p>

Agenda Items	Key Discussion Points/Outcomes/Decisions/Action Items
Adopt FY 25 Budget	Motion made to adopt the proposed FY25 budget by Angela Whidby, seconded by Penny Penn, and passed unanimously. Finance Committee members shared they were briefed in full during the committee meeting prior to the board meeting and approved it unanimously as the committee level as well. FY25 budget projects a \$68,000 surplus. It also shows our expenses to be \$38,963,000 and revenues to be at \$39,031,000.
4% COLA from State Budget	Motion by Barbara Bosanko, seconded by Angela Whidby that Avita include our part time staff that have been here since at least May 1 st to receive the 4% COLA, as well as the full-time employees, with a few exclusions of those already receiving their COLA increase within a previous wage increase.
End of FY24 Bonus	Motion made by Barbara Bosanko, seconded by Brenda Hochmuth, that staff bonuses for fiscal year 2024 be paid IF there is a surplus of more than \$10,000 after all revenue and expenses are finalized for the current fiscal year. Additional discussion clarified that Avita is waiting on a response from DBHDD to Avita's request to fund our June BHCC expenses. The contract has been fully drawn down due to Avita fully staffing its BHCC, as requested by DBHDD leadership. However, DBHDD did not account for this full staffing when preparing their contract amendment. Avita is waiting on DBHDD to address this shortfall. If DBHDD agrees to provide funding for June expenses, then a staff bonus will be paid out in a manner to leave a \$10,000 surplus for FY24. Employees hired after July 1 st , 2023 would receive a fixed lump sum amount. Those hired prior to July 1, 2023 would receive larger amounts, using criteria established in previous year-end bonus processes. The bonus amounts will be determined by the Executive Team once the surplus is finalized, assuming there is a surplus of at least \$10,000. Motion passed unanimously.
"At Large" Board Member Discussion	Cindy shared she meet with David White through a few contacts. David stated he wouldn't mind serving on the board and he provided a stellar resume showing his involvement in being a person in recovery. A motion was made by Barbara Bosanko, seconded by Brenda Hochmuth, for Ferman David White to serve as the new "at large" Board selection for the term of July 1 st , 2024 – June 30, 2027. Passed unanimously.
Announcements	This was the last meeting for Alton, Alice, Sharon and Shanna. Thank you for your service.
Adjourn at 7:20 pm	A motion made by Barbara Bosanko, seconded by Brenda Hochmuth, to adjourn and it was unanimous.

Penny Penn

7/24/24

Presiding Officer Signature

Date Approved

Respectfully submitted,

Hariah Hutkowski

Hariah Hutkowski, Recording Clerk