

NorthWest Colorado Center for Independence, Inc.
2025 Annual Board Retreat Meeting Minutes
Friday, June 27th, 2025, 9:30am – 3pm

Board Members Present: Michael Toothaker, Board President
Bruce Roemmich, Board Vice President
Don Godshaw, Board Secretary
Craig Kennedy, Board Member (Remote)
Dan Bonner, Board Treasurer
Lisa Fraser-Eck, Board Member

Staff Members Present: Ian Engle, Executive Director
Mike Bertram, Assistant Director
Jessica Bertram, Finance Manager
Hope Hunt, Transportation Coordinator
Rachelle Adrian-Dickson, Development Coordinator (Remote)
Shannon Buchanan, Lead Independent Living Coordinator

9:38am: Michael Toothaker calls the meeting to order.

9:39am: Dan Bonner moves to approve board meeting minutes from May 28th, 2025. Bruce Roemmich seconds and motion passes unanimously.

9:40am: Rachelle presents Development and Funding highlights to the Board of Directors.

- Caring for Colorado Foundation: awarded NWCCI \$50,000, we initially received notice of not being awarded during this grant cycle due to an abundance of requests and not enough funding, however Rachelle was subsequently informed they found a way to award the \$50,000.
- Next 50 Foundation: presented NWCCI with an unprecedented award of \$62,500/yr over the next 5 years for general operating expenses, Rachelle states she applied for \$50,000. Next 50 focuses on services and support for older adults and 65% of NWCCI consumers are older adults (50+). NWCCI has received significant grants from Next 50 in the past, however, last year we were not awarded. Rachelle worked with the Next 50 grant manager in partnership to achieve this amazing result.
- Rachelle informs the Board of relatively smaller philanthropic donations, local government and community foundation grants are awarded because of the work done by NWCCI staff in the communities we serve and this happens year after year.
- Rachelle acknowledges the NWCCI Board for exemplary support of NWCCI staff through the years and shares how positively our Foundation and funding partners respond upon being informed of this organizational sentiment and cultural commitment.
- Dan asks Rachelle if she has encountered concern about NWCCI accumulating and reserving significant assets. Rachelle replies, with current tenuous considerations

around state and federal government funding our funding partners appreciate financial stability and operating reserves. Dan asks if the video produced and marketed last year attracted any results, Rachelle replies she shares the promotional video, it is well-received and the primary explanation for being denied an award is not enough funds in the coffers or an obtuse inability to understand the participant-driven approach and broad scope of our organization. Ian Engle explains we run into foundations with priorities targeting certain demographics or services (Veterans, athletes, brain or spinal cord injuries, intellectual/developmental disabilities - transportation, housing, access to benefits/healthcare, etc.) We are purposive about having this conversation on the front end because we serve people with disabilities of any background.

10:00am: Hope Hunt presents Transportation highlights and ridership numbers to the Board.

- Hope reports about NWCCI a recently submitted transportation program operational expenses grant request to CDOT for 2026.
- Ian requests confirmation of Board approval for purchase of a new vehicle with the award from Rocky Mountain Health Plans. Dan asks the amount of the vehicle targeted for purchase, Hope replies it is around \$63,500. Don Godshaw asks if three separate quotes were solicited and if we can save money to use elsewhere. Dan inserts, these particular funds are restricted and forfeit if not used as designated and agreed upon. Jessica Bertram adds, we do have a budget for the new vehicle and significant repairs to our existing fleet. Hope confirms receipt of multiple quotes for used and new vehicles from various vendors. Micheal Toothaker confirms the Boards approval with a motion to purchase the vehicle and prepay insurance for the vehicle, Dan Bonner seconds, the motion passes unanimously.

10:33am: Mike Bertram introduces Shannon Buchanan, Lead Independent Living Coordinator to present the Program report to the Board of Directors.

- Grant funded Rocky Hockey is being passed to partner organizations such as Steamboat Adaptive Recreation and Sports (STARS) and the City of Steamboat Springs (Howelsen Ice Arena) to take lead with facilitating communication, program development and implementation.
- Shannon reports about peer group events, including Vets4Vets, NWCCI's longest standing and most successful peer group still going strong. Vets4Vets is designed for veterans to connect with other veterans. Don asks if STARS is involved, Mike shares information about specific connections between Vets4Vets participants and STARS. Shannon explains the Vet4Vets group is primarily from Moffat County and meets in Craig, Ian adds we can ask the group if they want a presentation from or more involvement with STARS. Michael Toothaker asks if there is an associated funding stream, Mike Bertram replies the group decided to be Veterans together building a community without government or non-profit funding strings. Lisa asks if the Veterans Representative from the CO Workforce Center in Craig attends, Mike replies the person in that position has participated in the past, however the position was recently

eliminated, Shannon clarifies there is a CO Workforce Veterans Representative in Steamboat but not in Craig.

- Shannon reports about Wendy Taylor, our newest Independent Living Coordinator, is learning the process and how to work with consumers.
 - Shannon shares that one of Wendy's focuses is housing navigation service for nursing home transition. Ian adds, the US Dept. of Justice sought and engaged us in extensive communication and the Housing Navigator contract is one of the results following a federal lawsuit and settlement with the state.
 - Shannon shares that Wendy recently presented to the Yampa Valley Community Foundation to assist a consumer with getting a trailer for his off-road wheelchair.
 - Shannon shares about Wendy attending a training on hearing loop systems for people with hearing impairments, Mike Bertram adds detail about how hearing loop systems function by connecting directly with hearing aids to squelch background noise.
- Shannon shares about care collaboration meetings for partner organizations to build relationships and strengthen information/referral systems.
 - Shannon reports an increase in individuals working with us to explore options for moving out of facilities and into the community, including residents at Casey's Pond, Sandrock (Craig) and, for the first time, the Wallbridge facility in Meeker. Shannon follows people transitioning closely for at least a year after moving into the community. Michael Toothaker asks about options for someone trying to move out of Sandrock skilled nursing facility in Craig, Shannon replies Sandrock transitions are augmented because we have an in with Sunset Meadows housing complex, also in Craig. Don asks about partnering with ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) to support efforts working with individuals exploring options for moving out of congregate skilled nursing facilities. Shannon replies, we have reached out to ACLU and others including Disability Law Colorado, CO Cross-Disability Coalition, US Dept. of Justice Office of Civil Rights and private attorney firms who provide decent support and affirmation, however legal enforcement of the applicable rules is hard to find.
 - Shannon reports she and Joy McCoy are currently the NWCCI Lead Independent Living Coordinators facilitating internal peer review program file audits, explaining each IL Coordinator gets 5 files from fellow IL Coordinators and are told to pick them apart prior to state program audits. Dan asks how long we have been doing this, Shannon replies that this has been going on for about a year and our files are in solid shape. Lisa asks how often, Shannon replies we started out quarterly and now every six months.
- Shannon reviews Routt County program particulars with the Board, highlighting retained partnerships with local organizations. Mike Bertram acknowledges James Higgins for establishing innovative connections in Routt County, citing the Steamboat Rugby Club as an example of working with consumers to coordinate with his support.
 - Shannon notes Routt County accomplishments of significance over the past year including increased provision of NWCCI transportation, community awareness of

- NWCCI youth leadership and transition activity, engagement with housing advocacy, sustained benefits application assistance, involvement with recreational opportunities and more.
- Ian notes collaboration with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, school district/educational partners, faith-based organizations, Yampa Valley Autism Program, True North and others.
 - Shannon informs the Board about coordinating with James at Casey's Pond and Ian's effort to start peer group there.
 - Shannon reviews Grand County activities with the Board.
 - Joy McCoy leads representation in Grand County.
 - Shannon acknowledges Joy's exemplary work with youth particularly amidst her work with anyone who has a disability.
 - Shannon reviews Leo Santos' activity out of Summit County with statewide transportation (Bustang), Cafe Food Rescue. Summit High School career day and Youth Leadership (including at the statewide independent living conference).
 - Shannon reviews Evan Shockley's efforts in Summit and Grand Counties. Evan serves as Colorado Governor appointed Statewide Independent Living Council Chair, Cliffview Assisted Living, West Grand High School and working with Joy to enhance Grand County Information and Referral efficiency through facilitated coordination with community partners.

11:39am: Break for lunch

12:21pm: Jessica Bertram reviews financial and administrative functions with the Board.

- Dan Bonner facilitates the NWCCI Finance Committee report with the Board.
 - Profit & Loss (Statement of Financial Position) is reviewed.
 - Bruce suggests ethically carrying retained funds is solid and prudent practice, the Board agrees.
 - Dan confirms the updated procedure of sending financials to allow more time for looking over reports, the Board agrees.
 - Dan requests an update on debt negotiations with the state, Ian shows the Board the most recent email correspondence and Jessica clarifies current standing and NWCCI solid tracking of documentation related to the matter.
- Dan Bonner moves to pass the financials as presented with **Total Assets of \$639,045.77 and Net income of negative \$1,110.22**, Bruce Roemmich seconds, motion passes unanimously
- The Board reviews the proposed NWCCI Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget.
 - Bruce expresses interest in marketing and advertising and press release activity in lieu of fundraising events to effectively garner donations and capture public relations opportunities, including within the context of Board recruitment, and the

Board agrees. Don points out budgeted expenses for marketing and mentions exploring AI for assistance with press releases. Dan echoes support for a Board recruitment press release. Lisa suggests a human-interest story from the perspective of NWCCI Board members. Jessica offers moving the Board member recruitment tab front and center on the website and the Board agrees.

- Bruce suggests moving expenses from fundraising to advertising and rounding up to \$44,000, the Board agrees. Bruce recommends planning to improve and invest in marketing, noting projected revenue in contributions and donations is low. Dan acknowledges donation revenue remains a longstanding challenge and suggests continuing to seek opportunities for improvement in this area, the Board agrees. Jessica clarifies NWCCI is on record with the state for having recently eliminated a fundraising position and something different would need to be explored and developed. Dan states his belief the right person is out there if we can find them. Bruce notes the lesson learned recruiting internally for a fundraising position. Bruce asks if we have a donor list, Jessica replies that Rachelle has the updated donor list. Ian offers to request the most recent donor list from Rachelle and share with the Board.
- Dan points out the expenditure line for Craig office maintenance and repairs.
- The Board reviews budgeted personnel expenditures. Jessica explains the 3% Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) and .50 merit raise. Bruce asks about flat rate COLA versus percentage. Dan and Jessica go over the 4 options explored by the Finance Committee and the one considered the best fit for our wage and salary structure of the organization. Dan notes we are fully staffed. Lisa asks how our pay scale compares with others. Miike replies our pay rates are competitive with Centers for Independent Living as well as others in our field and he regularly checks salary and wage survey results. Bruce states when people leave, many in our area likely go outside the field into resort, hospitality or service jobs, because they can make more money. Ian mentions our staff express they stay because of the organizational culture and intrinsic value of what we do. Don asks about retention, Mike replies that everyone except Wendy and the drivers have been with us over 5 years on the direct services side. Jessica points out how our generous benefits package is attractive and contributes to staff retention.
- Bruce Roemmich moves to pass the NWCCI FY 2025-26 budget with **Total revenue \$1,241,150.17**, Don Godshaw seconds, motion passes. Unanimously
 - Don recommends providing staff bonuses in lieu of, or addition to raises, the Board agrees. Board enters executive session to discuss.
 - Board returns from executive session with a decision
- Jessica reviews Human Resource operations with the Board.
 - Benefits are projected to be a 13 to 15% annual increase (we will start noticing in a couple of months). Jessica reports positive communication from staff about insurance and benefits. Lisa points out this is an important part of staff retention.

1:22pm: The Board reviews, updates and approves NWCCI policies.

- The Board considers changes and updates to the NWCCI Finance Procedure Manual. Jessica presents proposed changes per audit report recommendations and compliance with CO Dept. of Labor and Employment Fiscal Monitoring Unit oversight, which recently reported no findings for NWCCI.
 - Dan asks to review the section on procurement and purchasing. Don suggests updated language in this section to clarify procedure, the Board agrees and the change is noted. Dan Bonner moves to approve the NWCCI Finance Manual as amended and updated, Michael Toothaker seconds and the motion passes unanimously.
- The Board considers changes and updates to the NWCCI Employee Handbook. Jessica notes the updates related to California labor law compliance due to the residence of a key staff member there. PTO accrual for staff under part-time employment status (0 – 19 hrs/wk) added for compliance with CO law. Bruce Roemmich moves to approve updates to the NWCCI Employee Handbook, Michael Toothaker seconds and the motion passes unanimously.
- The Board reviews the NWCCI Grievance Policy. No changes were made.
- The Board updates the NWCCI By-laws. Officer position descriptions are reviewed and the section on term limits are reviewed. Dan suggests a change to clarify 3*year terms with annual elections. And the Board agrees. Lisa Fraser-Eck motions to accept the By-Laws as amended, Michael Toothaker seconds and motion passes unanimously.

1:51pm: The Board considers strategic planning, the inaugural NWCCI 5-year strategic plan came to completion last year. The Board considers engaging an expert to facilitate mapping the plan forward. Craig asks how we did on the last plan, Ian replies, a fine job of taking action with a working document to track progress and achieve identified goals with documented evidence like Board recruitment materials that can be carried over into the next iteration in the interest of succession and sustainability. Dan suggests Ian pursue this endeavor and communicate progress, the Board agrees.

2:00pm: The Board updates the Board Member Roster, Mike presents Michael Toothaker and Bruce Roemmich with home-crafted parting gifts of appreciation for their service. Dan Bonner moves to approve the following slate of NWCCI Board Officer's for the next term of service - 1) Don Godshaw, President; 2) Craig Kennedy, Vice President; 3) Dan Bonner, Treasurer; 4) Lisa Fraser-Eck, Secretary. Don Godshaw seconds and the motion passes unanimously.

2:20pm: The Board schedules the next meeting for July 23rd, 2025, from 1:30 to 3:00pm.

2:22pm: Don Godshaw motions to adjourn meeting. Dan Bonner seconds, the motion passes.

2:23pm: The Board enters executive session and reviews the Executive Director Performance Evaluation.