

Northern Community Mediation
Board of Directors' Meeting
November 29, 2012
Giuseppe's, Charlevoix

Board members present: Lisa Hoyt, Mary Faculak, David Leusink, John Marshall, Dr. Roger Postmus, Kirk Raymond, Ted Teller, Dr. Paula Welmers, Joel Wurster

Board members absent: Toni Arthur, Michelle Cortright, Hon. Fred Mulhauser, Jim Raber, Pat Seagmen

Staff Present: Jane Millar

Ted called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Minutes:

The meeting minutes from October 4, 2012, were presented. John Marshall moved to approve, seconded by Lisa Hoyt. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report - John Marshall:

Recent financial reports were reviewed. A transfer of approximately \$5,000-\$6,000 will likely be needed from reserves in order to balance the budget at year end. Further discussion of funding and budgetary concerns will occur during the course of Jane's report. Periodic statements of NCM funds held by both area community foundations were also reviewed and discussed. Motion by Joel Wurster to accept the treasurer's report, seconded by Paula Welmers. Motion carried.

President's Report:

Ted provided the board with an update on the Executive Committee's evaluation of the Executive Director this year. Jane has provided a self-evaluation that the committee has collectively reviewed. The committee has also met with Jane to discuss this evaluation. Ted expressed appreciation on behalf of the board for Jane's leadership of NCM, especially in light of recent budgetary concerns.

Executive Director's Report, presented by Jane Millar:

1. 2013 Budget – Jane provided information and answered questions concerning the current and projected financial picture for NCM. Local funding has been decreased by Charlevoix County from \$33,000 to \$30,000 annually. This occurred for 2012, although NCM was only made aware of it late this year. This reduction is also in place for 2013. This appears to be the result of across the board cuts rather than a targeted cut applicable only to NCM. Jane has been working with and will continue to work with Charlevoix County leadership on communication and other issues regarding the county's budgetary support for

NCM. State reimbursement for access and visitation mediations has also been reduced.

Jane also provided information concerning the state funding that comes from a portion of each local court case filing fee. Two dollars of each filing fee is returned directly to the local dispute resolution program such as NCM. Another one dollar of each filing fee is pooled and a portion is then distributed to each dispute resolution center in the state according to a weighted caseload formula. NCM has a high efficiency number and a high weighted case load in relation to many other centers in the state. This provides NCM with a significant share of the pooled fees for dispute resolution centers. However, this does not affect the monies that are received based solely upon the number of local court filings. Local court filings were down again last year, which has resulted in a significant decrease of funding from the state. For 2013, NCM is projected to receive approximately \$37,000 from the pooled monies, and approximately \$5,000 from local court filings. This will result in a decrease of approximately \$6,000 in funding for 2013.

With the decreases in funding support for 2013, NCM has some difficult considerations to make for its 2013 budget. Jane presented a few different budget scenarios for consideration and discussion by the board. One budget scenario would have the budgeted expenses for 2013 remaining similar to those from 2012. Under this scenario, the budget would require a projected \$11,000 transfer from reserves to be balanced at year end. Another budget scenario considers expense reductions related to closing the Charlevoix office, reducing mileage reimbursements for mediators, and having the director waive annual reimbursement of approved educational and insurance expenses.

Jane also reported on efforts by the staff to increase the collection of fees charged for various NCM services and to look at adjusting the fees for certain services. The board is supportive of these efforts but also recommended that there be communication with the leadership of both counties about funding and service fees.

Joel indicated his desire that the Charlevoix office be maintained for at least 2013, and that consideration be given to reducing mileage reimbursements for mediators and to accepting a waiver of the director's educational and insurance reimbursement. He also expressed support for continuing efforts to update fee policies to help address budgetary concerns.

Roger offered a motion along the lines of Joel's comments, which he withdrew when concern was expressed that the board may wish to consider these issues individually rather than collectively.

After answering various questions from the board, Jane excused herself from the meeting to allow the board to continue its discussion of budgetary concerns.

The board then further considered the various issues associated with the budget proposals.

A motion was then offered by John Marshall and seconded by David Leusing to adopt the first budget proposed by Jane with the following adjustments:

- Mediators would be notified that NCM may need to reduce mileage reimbursements offered to mediators from the current IRS rate of \$ 0.55 a mile to not less than \$0.35 a mile for 2013 if the current funding concerns continue;
- A transfer of funds from NCM reserves is authorized to balance the 2012 budget at year end.

Motion carried.

With no further motions being offered at this time, Jane returned to the meeting. The board reviewed the approved motion with Jane and encouraged her to continue the process of reviewing and adjusting NCM fees where appropriate. The board also offered and expressed support for additional fundraising activity by NCM in an effort to help address current funding concerns. The board also indicated that further cuts to the budget may need to occur if funding conditions do not improve.

2. Case Reports – copies of case NCM case report statistics were distributed.
3. Collection of Fees – a fee collection report was distributed.
4. New Board Member for 2013 – Hon. Allie Greenleaf Maldonado, who is a judge for the Tribal Court of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, has agreed to serve on the board beginning in 2013. Jane is arranging an orientation session with Judge Maldonado.
5. Board Retreat – Jane will circulate proposed dates for a board retreat to be held in early 2013.
6. Staff Retreat – Jane reported on the recent staff retreat, which helped to generate many good ideas for NCM. The staff also worked on the fee collection and amount issues at the retreat.
7. New District Court Judge – Jane is familiar with and has spoken to new 90th District Court Judge James Erhart, who is supportive of the assistance that NCM provides to the courts and to the local dispute resolution community.
8. Service Club Presentations – Jane has been continuing her periodic presentations about NCM to various area service clubs.
9. Surveys of area service providers - Jane is working to conduct a survey of area court personnel and human service providers about NCM's services. This could provide valuable feedback as to the perception of NCM's services and how they can be directed and improved.
10. Grants – NCM has received a grant from the Petoskey Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation for 12 additional chairs to match some existing chairs and replace some worn chairs. The Rotary Club of Petoskey has provided a

grant to assist with the cost of a brochure detailing the school attendance mediation program that NCM is developing. The State Court Administrator's Office is providing a grant of \$5,000 to assist with the 40 hour training being offered through NCM next Spring. Each of these grants will assist with meeting NCM's budget and are greatly appreciated.

11. Holiday Party – A Holiday Party is scheduled for Tuesday, December 11, 4:30pm to 6:00pm at the NCM offices in Petoskey.
12. Acknowledgement of Char-Em Students – Students from Char-Em's Taylor School for Exceptional Learners have been helping NCM with cleaning in the Petoskey offices. Jane expressed appreciation for these students and the benefits that they are providing to NCM through their work and their presence.

Old Business: none

New Business: none

Next Meeting: Annual Meeting and Board Meeting, Thursday, January 17, 2013, in Petoskey (City Park Grill)

Meeting Adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joel Wurster, Secretary