

Minnesota Rural Health Association
Board of Director's Meeting
May 16, 2008
Minutes

Present: Barbara Muesing, President; Jenny Beech, Maddy Forsberg, Jack Geller, Duane Nelson, Liz Quam, Mark Schoenbaum, Tim Stratton, Tiffany Yen

Excused: David Bogert, Ray Christensen, Robin Weis, Nancy Franke Wilson.

1. **Call to Order:** Barbara Muesing, President, called the meeting to order at 12:03PM.

2. **ROA Grant:** Jack Geller discussed the five ideas generated by the grant brainstorming group including: (1) Educating public policy leaders (especially metro to enhance understanding of the importance of rural communities) (2) Medical Home Project (MRHA working with rural clinics or satellite groups to develop a model and pilot projects) (3) Vital Aging Network (VAN) Partnership (Working with VAN to launch the use of the Vital Communities Toolkit to build community vitality). (4) MRHA/AHEC Partnership (work together to address rural healthcare workforce shortages and other rural health concerns) Community Assessment (develop and implement a broad rural health assessment instrument to evaluate healthcare infrastructure to identify the needs of consumers [especially the aging]).

The Board discussed interest in submitting a Bremer grant and considered the “fit” of the foundation’s interest in organizational effectiveness and civic engagement which is congruent with some of the brainstorming ideas focused around community assessment and teaching residents to advocate for themselves and for partnering with existing services. Geller suggested that assisting communities to see a vision and teaching them to advocate with Legislators requires additional MRHA staff or contracting with others to make the work possible.

That led to the question of the future direction for MRHA. Nelson commented that the Summit last August was a significant event that put MRHA on the radar screen of many. The issue continues to be one of how does MRHA engage more members, connect with communities, and engage different constituencies. Beech asked “are we going to be in a coordinating or supporting role”. Stratton suggested that issue # 4, partnership with AHEC’s, should be considered. The AHEC’s have numerous statewide connections, potentiating MRHA membership. Forsberg suggested MRHA get connected to volunteers to assist with a community assessment and cited a model working in southern MN advancing wellness. Yen suggested that MRHA partner with the Rural Resource Center, who’s designed a community assessment instrument and scorecard, developed with NW Initiative funds and assist with its implement state wide. Geller asked “do we want to take small steps or large leaps?” President Muesing asked the

Board to think about the ideas and concepts debated here and ready their thoughts for the annual meeting June 24th.

3. **Legislative Update:** Geller reported that the House and Senate passed the Health Reform bill but the Governor vetoed it. He opposed the increase numbers that would access MN Care. There will continue to be discussion to see if some of the ideas can be salvaged.
4. **Policy Forum:** Geller reported that he has organized the MRHA Policy Forum scheduled for June 23, 2008. He will have the legislative panel filled out by next week. He has commitments from two, a decline from one, and two initiations without responses currently.
5. **Nominating Committee Report:** President Muesing asked the committee to be prepared to nominate a new Board member to replace a recent resignation.
6. **Finance Report:** Treasurer Nelson reported the finance report submitted at the end of March is the most recent and demonstrates a positive bottom line.
7. **President's Report.** President Muesing noted that she has commenced the performance appraisal process for Executive Director Neppel. She also noted that a revision of the by-laws will be sent to the Board for action at the annual meeting. Also, announced was the appointment of an audit committee to bring a report at the annual meeting.
8. **Director's Report:** Executive Director Neppel reported that the membership efforts continue and a mass mailing to rural hospitals is planned for summer with a goal of increasing corporate memberships. She discussed the partnership with VAN and the upcoming community meetings planned throughout the state, the workshops sponsored by MRHA on Mapping Your Retirement and the Getting Ready for Medicare offered cooperatively with the NW Agency on Aging, the invitation from the AHEC's for President Muesing/MRHA Executive Director to attend the national conference at the AHEC's expense, the Reinventing Aging Conference recently attended, and preparing the final Bremer grant report.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:53PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith Neppel
Executive Director