

# Minnesota Rural Health Association

## Minutes of the Board May 4, 2007 Conference Call

Present: Liz Quam, Robin Weis, Jack Geller, Tim Stratton, Ray Christensen, Jennifer Beech, Mark Schoenbaum, Nancy Wilson Franke, Greg Thorson, Tiffany Yen, David Borgert, Duane Nelson, Judy Neppel

Guests: Lynette Dickson, Mary Wakefield, North Dakota Center for Rural Health

- I. **Call to Order:** Liz Quam called the meeting to order. Participants introduced themselves. Liz said the order of the agenda may be changed once the North Dakota guests signed on.
- II. **Minutes of 2/22/07 were approved.** Motion made by Tim Stratton and seconded by Jennifer Beech.
- III. **Finance Report and Annual Projections** was presented by Treasurer Duane Nelson, who moved for approval. Tim seconded.

IV. **Executive Director's Report**

Judy Neppel reported the following:

- Finance – reported attaining \$15,000 Bremer Grant follow-up
- Rural Health Conference – June 18-19, 2007 Update given on planning progress  
Annual Board Meeting – June 18, 2007 at 7PM – site to be recommended by Tiffany Yen
- Progress on MN Common Grant Application – Quam, Muesing, Neppel working on it
- MRHA website – reported that the website will be remodeled and access to modify will be available to Executive Director and President  
Date to be completed May 30, 2007
- Membership – reported excel spreadsheet data base created and up to date. Membership bills will be sent on anniversary date.
- NRHA – MRHA sent a basket to the NRHA Annual Meeting
- Cyber conferences – first five delivered successfully  
One additional is planned for June 2007 – Dr. Barbara Brandt presenter – date and topic to be determined

V. **Legislative Report**

Marnie Moore was unavailable to offer a report at the time of the call so Liz gave an update, focusing on the general lack of progress on any health and human services matters. She also reported that the interpreter bill was in trouble, despite the agreement with the health plans, because of the Governor's opposition. Discussion ensued on further action which could be taken regarding continuing to push for passage. Liz said she would check with Marnie and then communicate by email on next steps. [Later that day,

Liz notified the board that Marnie had spoken directly with the committee chairs and chief authors to note the interpreter bill was MRHA's legislative priority. Subsequently, board members were asked to contact their legislators, based on an update from the Clinic Manager's Association, which is heading up a coalition which is working on the interpreter bill.]

**VI. MRHA Grant Application**

Board members were in general agreement with the proposed 2007-08 goals for MRHA, although reordering was agreed upon. Discussion continued on the nature of the organization: is there a specific member benefit or is it general advocacy that should motivate people to join MRHA? Nancy Franke Wilson offered to create a membership interest survey to ascertain opinions from a broader audience. The board discussed that each member could try to solicit five responses. More will be communicated on this via email.

Mark Schoenbaum moved and Tim seconded approval of the goals. Liz said that a common grant application would be developed based on the goals.

**VII. June Dinner Board Meeting**

- Board Members agreed to Liz's recommendation that the past, present and future presidents serve as the nominating committee
- It was agreed that MRHA Board business could be conducted at a Monday, June 18 dinner meeting and no additional meeting time would be required. Liz also recommended that MRHA pick up the tab for the dinner, considering the expenses board members were already incurring to attend the series of events in Duluth.
- Tiffany Yen will work with Judy to find a quiet location for dinner.

**VIII. Discussion of stance on Mental Health Parity Bill**

Liz had included the NRHA language in the agenda regarding requiring insurers to treat mental health conditions "equaling" to other medical conditions and suggested that MRHA also have a formal stance on the issue. Greg Thorson raised questions regarding cost as well as differences between the U.S. House and Senate versions of the bill. Liz said she would investigate and report back to the group at the June meeting.

**IX. Discussion of Proposed Summit with North Dakota**

After general discussion, the agenda was reviewed and approved by Board to proceed with the planning process for the August 17, 2007 Summit in at University of Minnesota-Crookston, in collaboration with ND Center for Rural Health and possibly other surrounding states.

**X. Meeting was adjourned. Next meeting is Monday, June 18 at 6:30 p.m. in Duluth**

Respectively Submitted:  
Judith Neppel  
MRHA Executive Director