

## ***Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services***

*Board Meeting Summary*

*ZOOM or Teleconference*

*Thursday, Sept. 17, 2020*

### **Call to Order:**

Mr. Eddie Williams, Board Chair, called the regularly scheduled open public meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

### **Prayer:**

Dr. Graham Sisson, Jr., Executive Director of the Alabama Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD), opened the board meeting with prayer.

### **Verification of Quorum:**

Board members present: Mr. Eddie Williams, Board Chair; Mrs. Penny Foster, Board Vice-Chair; Mr. Jimmie Varnado, and Mr. Charles Wilkinson. A quorum was declared.

### **Verification of the Open Meetings Act Notice:**

For the health and safety of the public (including the effectiveness of COVID-19 mitigation strategies), and in accordance with Section III (Open Meetings Act) in the First Supplemental State of Emergency: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Proclamation signed by Gov. Kay Ivey, Governor of the State of Alabama, on March 18, 2020, the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services regularly scheduled board meeting was conducted virtually (live) via ZOOM or teleconference and was open to the public. Interpreter services were provided via ZOOM by Mrs. Jodie Jernigan and Ms. Eliza Cantu.

Mrs. Karen Freeman verified that the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services meeting for Sept. 17, 2020, was initially posted on the Alabama Secretary of State's website on Jan. 14, 2020 with the final revision for the public on Aug. 13, 2020. The following link was provided for registration purposes with a deadline of Sept. 10, 2020: <http://rehab.alabama.gov/meet-our-board>

At the conclusion of the board meeting, a summary of the meeting was posted on the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' public website on Sept. 17, 2020 before the close of business. The summary recounted the deliberations conducted during the meeting and the actions taken with specificity to allow the public to understand what happened.

### **Approval of Agenda:**

Mr. Williams asked for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Jimmie Varnado and seconded by Mrs. Penny Foster. The agenda was approved unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes for June 11, 2020 Meeting:**

The minutes from the June 11, 2020, meeting were mailed prior to the board meeting. Mr. Williams stated that if there were no corrections, the minutes would stand approved as presented. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

### **Retirement Recognition:**

*Mrs. Betsy Prince, Rehabilitation Division Director, Alabama's Early Intervention System*

On behalf of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services, Mr. Williams, Board Chair, expressed appreciation to Mrs. Betsy Prince in recognition of Mrs. Prince's retirement after 25 years of service to the State of Alabama effective Oct. 1, 2020. Mr. Williams thanked Mrs. Prince for her loyal and dedicated service to the citizens of the state. On behalf of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Executive Leadership Team, Commissioner Burdeshaw expressed her appreciation to Mrs. Prince for a lifetime of dedicated service to children and families in the disability community and passionate leadership.

*Mrs. Pam Faison, Assistant Chief Financial Officer, Finance & Purchasing*

On behalf of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services, Mr. Williams, Board Chair, expressed appreciation to Mrs. Pam Faison in recognition of Mrs. Faison's retirement after more than 30 years of service to the State of Alabama effective Oct. 31, 2020. On behalf of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Executive Leadership Team, Commissioner Burdeshaw expressed her appreciation to Mrs. Faison for a lifetime of dedicated service. Mrs. Faison's knowledge and counsel have provided a firm foundation for ADRS' strong fiscal standards and principles. Pam knows her stuff and is gracious with that knowledge.

### **New Business:**

*Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Operations & Personnel Staffing Plan FY 2020 – 2021*

Mrs. Shay Cannon, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the ADRS Operations Plan for FY 2020 – 2021, Executive Budget Office (EBO) Form 8. Ms. Cannon expressed her appreciation to Mrs. Pam Faison, Assistant Chief Financial Officer for her assistance in preparing the ADRS Operations Plan. Mrs. Faison is such an invaluable member of the team and will be missed.

Ms. Tracy Francisco, Human Resource Development Director, reviewed the ADRS Personnel Staffing Plan for FY 2020 – 2021, Executive Budget Office (EBO) Form 9.

Mr. Williams moved to approve and adopt the ADRS FY 2020-2021 Operations Plan (EBO Form 8) at the spending level of \$206,141,907 and the ADRS Staffing Plan (EBO Form 9) at the staffing level of 859.50 full-time equivalent positions, and that the board give authority to the Commissioner and Chief Financial Officer to revise the Operations Plan within these spending and staffing levels. The motion to approve the ADRS Operations & Personnel Staff Plan FY 2020 -2021 was seconded by Mr. Jimmie Varnado, and the motion carried.

Mrs. Cannon reported that the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Accounting Program is currently in the process of trying to utilize some of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds for COVID-19 related expenditures such as the IT Infrastructure Upgrade Project which is approximately \$400,000.

### **Board Member Questions and Division Updates:**

The Executive Leadership Team members were provided an opportunity to answer any questions and give updates to their written reports.

### **Commissioner's Comments:**

#### *Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Budget Update for 2021*

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported, despite the pandemic, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) was able to maintain level-funding in our programs and gain a small amount of additional dollars in Alabama's Early Intervention System. Due to the concerns about Early Intervention funding and services, the Early Intervention State Office staff and the accounting staff have worked closely to develop tighter budget numbers and project need over the next two fiscal years. These discussions have led to a change in how Early Intervention local program contracts are drafted and budgeted. Early Intervention referrals are down due to the national pandemic. While that fact helped to stretch funding projections, it likely means children are not getting services. Alabama's Early Intervention System will continue to monitor this situation closely and develop strategic plans for FY 2021 and beyond.

#### *COVID-19 – Impact on Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Operations*

ADRS, as has the entire world, been impacted by the pandemic. The primary goal of ADRS has been continuity of services for Alabama's adults and children with disabilities and to minimize the risk for ADRS staff and the families that are served. Out of an abundance of caution, the Anniston and Gadsden Children's Rehabilitation Service's offices are closed until Sept. 23, 2020. That district appears to be a hot spot for the virus. This was a step necessary to safeguard staff and the individuals

we serve. The telephones have been forwarded so that children and families continue to receive the necessary services. COVID-19 is a continuous on-going risk with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations being followed with the office closures.

**Announcements:**

Mr. Williams reported that the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services will be required to select a chair and vice-chair during the upcoming December meeting.

The next quarterly board meeting will be held:

- **Thursday, Dec. 3, 2020 – 10:00 a.m., Location: TBD**

Mr. Williams requested the board members review the proposed meeting dates for 2021 and if there are any scheduling conflicts, please contact Mrs. Karen Freeman.

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services proposed meetings dates for **2021:**

- **Thursday, March 4, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.,** Montgomery/State Office, Large Conf. Room
- **Thursday, June 17, 2021 – 10:00 a.m., Location: TBD**
- **Thursday, Sept. 16, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.,** Montgomery/State Office, Large Conf. Room
- **Thursday, Dec. 2, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.,** Montgomery/State Office, Large Conf. Room

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

*Karen Freeman*

Commissioner's Executive Assistant