



NC ABL
National ABL Alliance Member



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STATE TREASURER OF NORTH CAROLINA
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DRAFT
MINUTES

NC ABL PROGRAM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The regular quarterly meeting of the NC ABL Program Board of Trustees was called to order at 9:30 a.m., August 14, 2019, by the Acting Chair, Chris Farr. The meeting was held in the Dogwood Conference Room of the Longleaf Building at 3200 Atlantic Avenue, Raleigh, NC, 27604. The Acting Chair indicated there would be a public comment period for organizations and individuals to address the Board later in the agenda.

Members Present

The board members present were: Ray Grace, Kody Kinsley, Ben Wright, and Melinda Plue (via teleconference); Marquita Robertson and Chris Farr (for Treasurer Dale Folwell).

Members Absent

No members were absent.

Guests Present

The guests attending were: Chris Catanese and Dawn Roach from Ascensus (via telephone).

Department of State Treasurer Staff Present

The staff members present were: Mary Buonfiglio, Tom Causey, Reid Chisholm, Chris Farr, Christy Farrelly, Patti Hall, Brian Jackson, Rekha Krishnan, Fran Lawrence, Loren de Mey, Maja Moseley.

Ethics Awareness and Identification of Conflicts or Potential Conflicts of Interest

The Acting Chair asked, pursuant to the ethics rules, about board member conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were identified by the board members, except as noted below.

Ms. Robertson stated that The Collaborative, a non-profit organization where she is employed as the Executive Director, received funding from the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities to support a training program of which the NC ABL Program is a part. Ms. Robertson noted that she will recuse herself from any current or future discussion regarding the project.

Evaluations of Statements of Economic Interest

The Acting Chair noted that the meeting materials include copies of Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) evaluations issued by the State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement for Katherine Bosken as a standby designee for board member Commissioner Raymond Grace and Tom Causey as standby designee for Treasurer Folwell. The evaluations are provided for board members' review and for recording in the meeting minutes pursuant to the requirements of the State Government Ethics Act. The Acting Chair encouraged all members to review the evaluations to inform and remind them of the identified actual or potential conflicts of interest.

The Acting Chair recognized Mr. Chisholm who offered a brief reminder regarding recusal under the State Ethics Act and the requirement that, in the case of a recusal for a financial conflict, the recusal and the reason for the recusal must be writing. The reason for a recusal can be stated in the meeting and recorded in the minutes or it can be provided on a form created by the

Department. He noted that the form covers more conflicts of interest than those arising from financial benefit.

Approval of Minutes

The Acting Chair entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2019, NC ABLE Program Board of Trustees meeting, and Ms. Plue so moved. Mr. Wright seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Communication and Outreach Update

The Acting Chair recognized Ms. Buonfiglio, who highlighted the communications accomplishments during the quarter. She summarized the outreach efforts and the completed and planned training modules, highlighted the social media efforts, and provided detailed information regarding the digital media kit, which serves as a marketing tool and helps spread the word about the Program.

Following the presentation, Ms. Buonfiglio introduced a newly hired Communications Manager for the Retirement Systems Division, Ms. Christy Farrelly, who will provide oversight and support to the Program's campaigns.

Ms. Plue noted that she conducted a presentation for library directors and part of the presentation was dedicated to the Program; Ms. Plue added that the directors are excited to share the Program's marketing materials in their libraries.

The Acting Chair added that exponential growth is crucial to Program's success.

Administrative Update

The Acting Chair recognized Mr. Souppa, who provided a summary of asset balances, withdrawals, breakdown of contributions and accounts by disability type. He noted strong investment performance in all sectors and confirmed that all funds are tracking to their respective benchmarks. He discussed types of closed accounts, noting that most have been closed due to incorrect paperwork or have not been funded. He noted that the state of Illinois passed legislation to allow guardians to open the account on behalf of the beneficiary. Ms. Buonfiglio added that a recommendation to permit a "Guardian of the Person" was presented to the sponsors of the NC ABLE legislation in 2017, but it failed to gain traction in the legislature as it would require changes to the state guardianship laws. Ms. Buonfiglio also noted that parents of adult children have the ability to open accounts on their behalf. Mr. Catanese confirmed that Ascensus can provide a more detailed breakdown of closed accounts to the board.

Next, Mr. Catanese provided the asset ranking of all programs in the Alliance, noting that NC ABLE is the fourth largest plan, behind Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Illinois. The trustees discussed Pennsylvania's success, noting the states' larger appropriations and number of field representatives. Mr. Wright asked that an additional column be added to the report to show the dollar amount of appropriations each state received; Ms. Buonfiglio replied that the staff can ask for this data at the next Alliance monthly meeting. Ms. Robertson also asked for the information on the number of program staff for each plan, noting the NC ABLE lacks employees dedicated solely to the Program.

The trustees further discussed the need for full-time, dedicated staff and expressed their dissatisfaction with Treasurer's decision to utilize the existing SRP staff rather than using the already secured appropriations for staffing purposes. Ms. Robertson emphasized that the responsibility of administering the Program cannot be conveyed to the entities closer to the community with disabilities as they lack material resources to do so.

Board of Trustees Comments

Board members thanked the staff for their efforts and emphasized the need for staffing and funding expansion for the Program.

Public comments

No public comments were offered.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Ms. Robertson moved to adjourn, which was seconded by Ms. Plue, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Chair

Secretary