The Council meeting was called to order at 3:08pm by Co-chairperson J.J. Tomash at the Richard T. Castro Building, 1200 Federal Blvd, Denver, Colorado.

**Introductions & Minutes Review**

The meeting opened with a brief welcome, followed by introductions from the Council members and Denver Human Services (DHS) staff. The Council reviewed minutes from the previous meeting held on 07-11-19. Lauren Weinstock requested a correction to last minutes under the Mental Health subcommittee report out, before subject matter where it says “shared through pilot 5 orgs and 2nd year to players who work cooperatively.” Instead, it should read that the subcommittee is looking at a model that starts with a few and then scaffolding out the 2nd year. Crystal Porter agreed to make changes for the Council to review at the following meeting.

Kendall Rames also noted a change on the RFI document from earlier in the year, requesting that DHS update the language from “adequate mental health services” to “clinically and developmentally appropriate services.” Crystal Porter plans to review the document to determine whether adjustments can be made and note the language for future documents.

**Information Sharing and DHS Updates**

DHS provided updates to the Council on upcoming dates and meetings:

- DHS in front of Audit Committee on August 15th at 9am-11am at the City & County Bldg. That report will be made available publicly the same day as the Committee meeting.
- Next meeting is at Savio House, 320 Lowell Street on August 22nd.
• DHS is waiting for final responses on the doodle poll and plans to go ahead with the most popular dates and times for scheduling meetings at the end of October and November.

• DHS held space at DHS East location at 3815 Steele St. location for the Housing subcommittee public meeting, as requested. The meeting will be on September 24th from 4:30-7:00pm. DHS will have more information out to group by end of next week so it can be pushed out to the community. Part of the preparation for the Housing subcommittee meeting will be an open call for subject matter experts.

• DHS plans to meet with the Housing subcommittee to begin planning the meeting. At this time DHS does not foresee paying an appearance fee for subject matter experts.

• The Inclusion RFP went out on July 22nd. DHS is compiling questions that have come in to be published in the next week. Jeff Stawicki is the contact for the RFP, which closes on August 12 and will undergo a week of technical review with Jeff. DHS has fielded a selection committee that will score the proposals based on the criteria in the RFP- that meeting will be held later in August.

Sub Committee Report Out

Housing: Tim Lomas, Lauren Weinstock, Kendall Rames

Tim Lomas reported the Housing subcommittee members scheduled an introductory meeting with Congresswoman Robin Kniech and Congressman Paul Kashmann on August 26, where they hope to share their goals and learn about available resources. DHS staff have been invited to attend.

Kendall Rames called the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) who oversees the Department of Housing in Colorado and asked if there were any specific set asides for people with IDD housing vouchers and after they checked there are not any. The majority of vouchers known are for people experiencing homelessness. She is interested in checking into having vouchers set aside for folks diagnosed with IDD with the proper supports in line because those dollars come down through HUD.

Crystal Porter met with the Digital Inclusion Manager for the Denver Housing Authority, who works with people in a lot of ways. The meeting was mostly about what Colorado can do around digital equity across populations, and that would include supporting people with IDD. She was interested in how this could tie into technical support for SMART homes. Lauren Weinstock mentioned a service for people with mental health issues where there can be 24-hour computer monitoring, kind of like the Life Alert button. Amy Packer saw a link in a DHS employee bulletin to a talk given by a DHA manager about the revitalization of the housing around the DHS building. DHS will send the link to the Council for review.

Lauren Weinstock met with folks from the Douglas County CCB and will be sending notes out to the subcommittee for further discussion. She also plans to attend the State Outreach Housing meeting to get up to date on what’s happening with various funding streams for affordable housing. She wants to make sure when we are saying affordable that we are also saying accessible.
**Transition Services: Ann Pierce, Betty Lehman, Kate Williams**

Kate Williams stated there were no specifics to report out except they would like to see transition age periods expanded because transitions in the I/DD population frequently do not happen at predefined ages. Normally it’s implied for opening school age, and from elementary to middle school, and then at the end of high school. People in the I/DD population do not always move at the physical age, or development of others. So, in this group we would like to see that transition funding, transition periods, and transition definitions are broadened.

DHS asked whether the subcommittee anticipates efforts or advocacy at other levels and with other funding or whether the subcommittee is specifically asking for mill levy funded services and definition transitions for the mill levy program. Kate Williams responded the subcommittee intends to see it start with the mill levy and be able to have results to advocate elsewhere.

**Mental Health: Kendall Rames, J.J. Tomash, Lauren Weinstock**

Last time, Kendall Rames spoke about co-start pilot final report and strongly encouraged the Council to read the story she sent out. Since, she had a lengthy conversation with one of the pilot sites in the START pilot. There were two pilots- Grand Junction and Fort Collins. Foothills Gateway in Fort Collins continued the project with support from their board. Additionally, Ms. Rames found a document on the RMHS Momentum Program, which at a glance, appeared to be similar to the START program except the folks who use it are focused on personal experience with IDD or mental health. Both are wrap around models.

Ms. Rames had a call with the START program coordinator in Fort Collins. The START program is a program for dual diagnosis for mental health and IDD where trained staff coordinate with clients, consumers, the family, hospitals, police, the crisis centers, etc. to make sure that a person with IDD is not being shuffled around the system or overlooked. The START coordinator goes to meetings with psychiatrists and doctors and studies up on medications so she can bring up questions and concerns that support the whole person- for example, what contributes to an issue or whether a medication could be causing a problem. The program is focused on frequent flyers- participants do not have to be persons in services with Foothills Gateway, and they are evaluated for eligibility. It is unknown whether there is a residency requirement, though the program is localized to Larimer county. Ms. Rames reports the START program focuses on strengths and the developmental level of the individual and try to communicate the developmental level to others working with that person as it’s not just behaviors that they are choosing to engage in; that behaviors are often driven by mental health and developmental level. The START program creates in-depth crisis plans for the families and provides on-call support.

Additionally, Ms. Rames shared the START coordinator provides training for the crisis teams and some of the hospitals, resulting in a reduction of calls to her because they are learning how to incorporate folks into the milieu. They know crises are inevitable, but they focus on strengths, meaning, and joy. She used the word flourish and like the story in the co-start final report usage has gone significantly down. One client in this program has not gone to the hospital since November of 2018, and prior to
that she was going to crisis centers and hospitals all of the time. Ms. Rames was unable to get budget numbers at the time. There was a website for the program. Certification takes about a year to be a coordinator and then a professional must continue additional training to maintain their certification. Ms. Rames is not sure how the START program compares to the RMHS Momentum program which started July 1, 2018.

Upon request, Jennifer Beck shared information about the RMHS Transition Specialist and Momentum programs, both of which are funded with contracts through the Office of Behavioral Health. They provide services to people located throughout the state. The Momentum program was designed for people most likely to have been in mental health institutes for a long time who face a lot of barriers to get out and into the community. RMHS has a care manager, similar to a case manager, who pulls together resources, works with the individuals to see what their plan is, where they want to go and what they want to do. The care manager pulls together resources in the community to help create stability. Ms. Beck will forward a story to the Council posted recently on the RMHS website that explains how this program gives people a choice where before they didn’t have one, a choice where before in some instances they were dropped off in a community and were expected to survive.

The Transition Specialist is the newest program, started in April, and is run by the same department at RMHS in the Community Transitions Department and they work with on a more short-term basis with people who largely have substance abuse issues. Ms. Beck can connect Council members with staff that work on these programs to learn more. Lauren Weinstock asked whether people in the programs have an intellectual and developmental disability. Ms. Beck responded that they may, RMHS hopes to break down silos with this program to help people understand that people may have dual diagnosis and to help them get the resources and connections to programs that they need.

DHS is excited about the investigative work the subcommittees are doing and is happy to help.

**Discussion [Appeals board Recommendation]**

DHS shared the feedback from the surveys with the Council members in preparation for the discussion. DHS is wants to learn more about what the Council is hearing or seeing in the community and what services are not quite getting to people in the community, and how an enhancement of current processes could help get those things to the people who need them. Amy Packer with DHS led the discussion. She has completed initial research to explore similar models, including the Board of Adjustment for Zoning (BOAZ), insurance appeals, and the ombudsman office for child protection. Amy Packer asked the Council the following questions: What are they hearing? What’s being denied? Are there big holes? What is the mill levy is missing?

Conversation from Council members and DHS included:

- How do people get to where they need to go? Particularly relevant for quality of life.
- Need for a clear, strong independent appeals process.
• Independent party should be volunteers and not beholden to any agency or company, answerable to DHS. Appeals would be paid with DHS uncommitted funds.
• How do we have the person doing the appeal show they have exhausted all administrative remedies? Could they come before the board prior to filing the appeal for support?
• Incumbent upon the appellant to provide information to support the appeal.
• Should legal fees be paid? Where is the waiver of liability? Is there legal help that can be done pro se?
• Additional review of the request. Responsibility on the appellant to provide more details and information. Ultimately, who makes the final decision? It comes back to DHS every time.
• BOAZ has specific guidelines. Requirements for appeals process based on model studies, including fees, high burden of new evidence, etc.

DHS gave several examples of cases on instances where mill levy dollars may be requested and whether there are situations where requests are not necessarily appropriate for taxpayer funds. DHS asked the Council to consider what parameters might look like. Kendall Rames provided some of the denial numbers reported by Jennifer Beck at a previous meeting. Lauren Weinstock asked what if the person applying had not received enough information about the alternative sources.

DHS shared that RMHS is monitoring requests for trends, so they can better allocate funds to support families and DHS has been working closely with them to review those numbers, even for the partially funded requests. DHS and RMHS are looking at the first six months of 2019 to have a fresh look at what they are seeing, what might be partially funded and what is being denied, and whether there are specific buckets where we know why someone is not being funded. Even sometimes when someone could be denied for the FFSP program, and if someone is funded the first month and reapplies the second month, they actually drop down in the list so that others who were not funded can have a priority. If there are not enough funds in the budget, the request is denied. However, the next month they move back up the list in priority and their next request would likely be approved.

DHS wants to know where the gaps are in the current process and whether families are getting the information they need, from both a process lens and a quality assurance lens. DHS’s shared information about their responsibility to work with RMHS on internal controls to ensure families are funded when they are eligible. DHS asked the Council to consider the following: if there is an additional layer, what value would be added for the families? What happens if the family doesn’t have a lot of support, and it is very cumbersome to keep track and knock on all these doors- is there a lack of equity?

Tim Lomas shared a story about a time when his family had to hire an attorney to ensure his son got the education he deserved. His concern is for people who do not have resources and run into roadblocks, with the additional resources an appeals process could help a family in a dire need. As a steward of city tax payer dollars, DHS asked whether there would need to be an indigency standard or whether the appeals board would fund any family who asks, even if that family has significant family assets and could pay for their own attorney. Tim Lomas shared that there is not an income criterion for
RMHS mill levy services currently. He said the big picture for the appeals board is there are always going to be nuances or details that cannot be captured in a policy.

DHS asked the Council to reflect on the discussion, the potential scenarios, and the needs and return with their thoughts. Kendall Rames asked if the people serving on an appeals board are not incredible experts, then is the appeals board recreating the wheel and another door to knock on. Tim Lomas said it would be up to the person seeking help to show the background of what they have done.

Lauren Weinstock asked whether RMHS completes a satisfaction survey for their services. DHS reports that RMHS is working on engagement for client satisfaction, and additionally people have provided feedback to DHS through the needs assessment. Overall, DHS saw a high satisfaction rate from those who responded and acknowledged a desire to continue to reach as many people as possible.

**Public Comment:**

DHS received one written public comment which will be shared with the Council for review. If others want to send written comments, please send to Crystal Porter. The Council currently does not have a method to read written comments aloud, but this option is being explored for future.

No other comments made.

DHS made a final announcement to the members on a drafted marketing material in response to one of the Mill Levy recommendations from April. Feedback was positive from the Council, and DHS will move forward with the card.

J.J. Tomash motioned to adjourn the meeting, Tim Lomas seconded. Meeting adjourned at 4:54pm.

*Mill Levy Advisory Council sessions are recorded; recordings are available upon request.*