Dear OPRA Board:

I personally want to thank all of you for your vote yesterday to be your Board Chair. I want you to know that I take the position seriously and can only hope that I can fulfill my duties in an effective and professional manner. You can be assured that I’ll do my best.

I am also very excited about my fellow Executive Committee members and welcome Diane, Adam and Lisa. We are all very grateful to Tom for agreeing to remain on the Executive Committee as past chair.

Please join me in thanking Roy, Bob and Tom for their wonderful leadership over the years. I know I speak for everyone when I say how grateful all of us are in your commitment and dedication to OPRA.

Please be assured that we will soon schedule a conference call between the exiting Executive Committee and the new team, so to have a seamless transition.

Please note that I hope to conduct Board meetings in the following manner:

* All Board members will receive the agenda, consent agenda, minutes and financials electronically a minimum of three days prior to the date of the Board Meeting.
* Meetings will begin promptly at 10AM and end exactly at 2PM.
* I would like to encourage more discussion on “higher level” system issues that are facing all of us. We have some major issues facing us over the next year and all of our input is important. So please don’t be offended if I ask for your opinion, I really value your expertise and thoughts. We need full Board engagement as all of us are representing members. They are counting on your voice.
* I will limit Than to 5 comments throughout the entirety of the meeting. Choose wisely sir!:).

Some of you know me pretty well, but others do not. Here are my top four issues that I am very passionate about and will guide my approach to the Board. These four guiding principles must always be defined in the overall issue of workforce.

1. I believe we are now in a time and place where **cooperation between providers and county boards** are needed as much as possible. We will always have our differences, but I will encourage our mutual cooperation and unification on issues facing our system. That means we need to discuss and practice negotiation and compromise. Entering into a new administration, this is needed more than ever. If we come to the table unified on as many issues as possible, no new Director will thwart our efforts. I truly believe this. What are the major system issues we can agree on and be unified in our approach? As a Board, that’s what we need to talk about.
2. **Grow our membership**. Again, with a new administration, old alliances change. We need to be open to take advantage of this fact. I would like a serious discussion on how we can “open our tent” and welcome those providers who are not getting the service, influence and support from other groups. We need to be open to some type of short-term membership discount to entice these providers. What are we willing to accept? What are the terms? We as a Board should drive this discussion.
3. **Always start with “Our Why”.** We should always be marketing OPRA, our services, our employees. We understand the day in and day out of providing services to people with disabilities better than anyone, we are the experts in services. With that, we need to always remind ourselves WHY we do what we do. Everything should be guided by our collective “Why”, which of course are the individual with disabilities we provide services to. Nothing matters if it doesn’t have a positive impact on their life.
4. We are a collection of individual business and **OPRA must provide leadership on assisting members to be the best businesses possible**. This means that our CEO track at each conference must be packed with the latest information and speakers in business practices that is available to us. I would like the Executive Committee to help the OPRA staff with recommendations for the CEO track. My hope is that a CEO will say to themselves that they must attend the OPRA conference so to get the best, cutting edge information.

Again, I look forward to the next two years, together taking on all of the challenges we all will face. We are the leaders and the time for leadership is now! Our employees, our system and the people we support are counting on us. We have an excellent, dedicated OPRA staff and an experienced and passionate Board. It’s time to lead.

Thanks

Jamie