Dispute Resolution Center Board of Directors Meeting

July 27, 2026

I. Welcome Sameer Shah

- In Attendance: Erin Robinson, Sameer Shah, Judge Thomas, Scott Howard, Judge Herrera, Ann Rau, Amie Rodnick, Jenna Stude, Dr.Schooler, Renita Saunders, Judge Clark-Meachum, Bettye Benten.

II. Minutes Sameer Shah

- Motion to approve from Sameer Shah. Second by Amie Rodnick. Motion passed without objection.

III. Executive Director Report - See Appendix 1 Erin Robinson

- ADR Notable – Transitioning case management software. Training will be conducted for the staff over the next two weeks. There has been some difficulty transporting the old cases to the new system and the IT from the old system's company is not being helpful.

- Growth – CM and Trainings – 29% increase in mediation services over the same quarter last year. Training sign-ups have increased significantly as well. The October training already has 18 of it's 36 spots filled. A second training may be added as this is a revenue generator. 12 people is where we break even on the cost of training.

- Staff Updates – Rita has transitioned to be the case management assistant and it's going well. This plays into her strengths and she's helping to onboard the new office manager, Ronny Riojas. Ronny will be at 25hrs a week for a while, as she has young child at home.

- Possible fee increases – we don't need to increase fees across the board. There was a suggestion for a flat fee for 2hours of services ($100) and then $25/hr beyond that. Erin will meet with the district court judges about how the usage may increase or decrease or be affected otherwise by fee changes. Harris and Montgomery County use a similar fee scale as we do, but most counties have a DRC that is run by the county, so they are county employees. Judge Thomas suggested $150 for 4 hours, and then $25/hr after that because it was mentioned that a 2-hour mediation is difficult and rare. Additionally, once the case is mediated, it's hard to collect extra fees afterwards for going over on time. There was a brief discussion of using the fees to help fund a new volunteer coordinator position. The ADR fund comes from 7.8% of each filing fee for civil cases. The money is used to make the DRC whole, and any extra goes into a reserve fund.

IV. Finance

- Financial Update – Katie was unavailable so Erin covered it. Please See Appendix 2.

V. Nomination Committee – See Appendix 3 Belinda Herrera

- New BOD Officers – The bylaws max our board at 21 members. We do need to fill the Precinct 4 representative but the new Commissioner (George Morales) just recently took office. We also may need to fill Robert Keefe's position since he passed away. What we need to do is decide if we're ok going down to 14 members for a while or we need to consider them all. We should be recruiting new members in time for the September meeting. No matter what WE NEED A TREASURER as Katie is stepping down.

- Amie Rodnick questioned how the board was assembled and why there are commissioner appointees vs all at-large and judicial members. She mentioned that other organizations have a by-laws committee to review them for adjustments every few years as the organization changes or grows.
- Brief discussion of how Sameer got his appointment and that he has not had any contact from them since. Same for Renita and she agreed with Amie as to the lack of pressure or obligations coming from the commissioners' offices.
- General discussion continued of how and why we have members of the board, and how they are curated and do we need to add more or less.

- No one currently wants to be the treasurer. This will likely have to be an outside recruit.

VI. Upcoming Events Sameer Shah

- September 28, 2027 – next meeting will be a noon Zoom
- December 2027 Holiday luncheon, date/time TBD
- January 2027 – Live meeting, usually the 3rd Monday of the month but will depend on MLK Day.

VII. Adjourn

Appendix 1

Executive Director's Report

Board Meeting – July 27, 2026

Overview

During the third quarter, we have moved past the disruption of relocating the office and have settled into our new space at the courthouse. Our focus has shifted toward improving our internal systems, supporting staff, and making sure we're ready for the next phase of growth.

Much of the work this quarter isn't visible from the outside, but it will have a significant impact on how we operate going forward. We're replacing outdated software, improving our HR systems, refining staff responsibilities, and continuing to strengthen relationships with our partners throughout Travis County.

Operations

One of our biggest projects this quarter has been selecting and implementing ADR Notable as the DRC's new case management system. Replacing DTAS has been a long time coming, and while implementation requires a significant amount of time, it will greatly improve how we manage cases, communicate with volunteers, and collect data.

We also transitioned to Nextep as our new HR platform. In addition to reducing costs, it provides better support and benefits for staff.

Internally, we've continued adjusting staff responsibilities so we can better support the growing demands on our Case Management team. For example, Rita Rancken has moved from Office Manager to the Case Management Assistant and we have hired a new Office Manager, Ronny Riojas. These changes have already begun improving workflow and clarify staff responsibilities.

Community Partnerships

Our Open House and Travis County appreciation breakfast gave us the opportunity to welcome people into our new office and thank many of the individuals who helped make the move possible.

We've also begun conversations with Upbring about ways the DRC might support the families they serve, and we've continued working closely with the Law Library to strengthen our partnership and identify new opportunities to collaborate. The entire staff is working with LL staff to improve our process when working on family law cases, ensuring that our agreements meet the judges' expectations.

Marketing and Outreach

We continue looking for simple, cost-effective ways to remind the community that the DRC is here and available to help. For example, we have been mailing relocation postcards to referral partners and community organizations, and our social media consultant continues to expand our online presence. Engagement on LinkedIn continues to grow, and we're gradually rebuilding our Facebook presence.

Case Management

Demand for our services continues to increase. During the third quarter, case volume increased by 29% compared to the same period last year. In researching the source of this growth, we have found that the bulk of the referrals have come from internet searches and attorneys with Chat GPT playing a key role in directing people to the DRC. Additionally, a new judge, Judge Jeffers, now runs the JP5 court and we have seen an 8.2% increase in referrals from them.

That growth is encouraging, but it also highlights the importance of providing additional administrative support to our Case Management staff. Moving Rita into the Case Management Assistant role has already made a noticeable difference, but we will not be able to continue accommodating this level of growth without adding an additional staff member. I recommend that we separate David's responsibilities into two positions. He is currently the Director of Case Management, Director of Volunteers and also mediates Spanish-speaking cases. I believe that our best option is to hire a separate Director of Volunteers.

Training

Our training program has moved from stabilization to growth. The June 40-Hour Basic Mediation Training sold out well before the registration deadline—the first time that's happened since before COVID. We've also introduced discounted registration for Travis County employees as another way to strengthen our partnership with the County and increase awareness of mediation services. Those employees will receive a $100 discount.

Over the coming months, we will focus on preparing staff and volunteer mediators for the rollout of ADR Notable.

Financial Update

The organization remains financially healthy. At the same time, it's been two years since our last fee increase, and I believe it's time to revisit our fee structure. After researching fee models used by other DRCs, I recommend moving to a flat fee that covers the first two hours of mediation, with an additional hourly charge for any time beyond that.

Budget documents have been submitted to Travis County for annual review, and Guillermo has been updating our internal projections to reflect staffing, technology, and operational changes. While we've made several significant investments this year, they are expected to improve efficiency and reduce costs over time.

Looking Ahead

The next several months will be focused on completing implementation of ADR Notable, continuing to strengthen relationships with our community partners, supporting staff through these transitions, and maintaining the level of service that our community expects.

These changes are exciting. We've spent the last two years laying a strong foundation. Now we're beginning to see the benefits of that work, and I believe we're well positioned for continued growth. The systems we're putting in place now will make the DRC stronger, more efficient, and better equipped to serve the community for years to come.

Fiscal Year	PREVIOUS PENDING	CASES OPENED	CASES MEDIATED	% MEDIATED	CASES SETTLED	AVE % SETTLED	PND
2026		**253**	**91**	**12.9%**	**55**	**60.0%**	
2025		**196**	**66**	**13.2%**	**42**	**62.5%**	

Appendix 2

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07/23/26
Accrual Basis

Dispute Resolution Center
Statement of Financial Position
As of June 30, 2026

	Jun 30, 26
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1000 · Cash - Operating	214,882.20
1100 · Cash - Money Market	176,499.81
1125 · Cash - CD	184,016.93
1135 · Business Savings - APlus	61,958.44
1150 · Petty Cash	125.00
Total Checking/Savings	637,482.38
Accounts Receivable	
40 hour training June 2026	8,360.00
july training	-8,350.00
ocotber training 2026	-5,700.00
Total Accounts Receivable	-5,690.00
Other Current Assets	
1200 · Travis Cty. ADR Receivable	44,898.68
1400 · Prepaid Expenses	8,797.08
Total Other Current Assets	53,695.76
Total Current Assets	685,488.14
Fixed Assets	
1600 · Office Equipment	71,501.03
1625 · Website	8,000.00
1650 · Office Furniture	34,879.22
1700 · Accumulated Depreciation	-96,236.33
Total Fixed Assets	18,143.92
Other Assets	
Directors Council	-800.00
1800 · Deposit - Office Space	4,501.75
Total Other Assets	3,701.75
TOTAL ASSETS	**707,333.81**

LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2030 · Accounts Payable - Retirement	2,258.31
Total Accounts Payable	2,258.31
Other Current Liabilities	
2150 · Accrued Vacation	-15,458.94
2152 · Accrued payroll	-51,386.26
2247 · Unearned Trng Rev (6-25) 40-Hr	-3,800.00
2248 · Unearned Trng Rev (10/25) 40-Hr	3,800.00
2335 · Unearned Trng Rev (7-25) Fam	-650.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	-67,495.20
Total Current Liabilities	-65,236.89
Total Liabilities	-65,236.89

Dispute Resolution Center
Statement of Financial Position
As of June 30, 2026

	Jun 30, 26
Equity	
32000 · Net Assets - Unrestricted	488,403.17
32100 · Net Assets - Board Designated	300,000.00
Net Income	-15,832.47
Total Equity	772,570.70
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	**707,333.81**

Appendix 3

DRC Board of Directors - September 2025 – September 2026

Name	Term	Type of member	Term Expiration*
Sameer Shah, President	2nd	Officer / P3 (Commissioner Howard) Appointee	2027
Open - President-Elect	1st	Officer	
Judge George Thomas - Secretary	1st	Officer	2027
Katie Tousignant, Treasurer	1st	Officer	2027
Belinda Herrera, Nominating Committee	2nd	Officer	2026
Scott Howard – Volunteer Mediator Representative	1st	Officer	2028
Nadia Bettac	1st	At large	2026
Deven Desai	1st	At large	2026
Renita Saunders	1st	P1 (Commissioner Travillion) Appointee	2026
Bettye Benten	2nd	At large	2026
Heather Moreau	1st	At large	2027
Jennifer Luna	1st	At large	2028
Anna Rau	1st	At large	2028
Jena Stude	1st	At large	2028
Magdalena de la Teja	1st	At large	2028
Vacant	1st	P4 representative (Commissioner Morales)	
Judge Amy Clark Meachum	1st	Judicial District Court Representative	2028
Dr. Larry Schooler	1st	P2 (Commissioner Shea) representative	2028
Amie Rodnick	1st	Commissioners Court Representative (Judge Brown)	2028

*Per the Bylaws, terms expire on date of the Annual Meeting, which historically has been in September. Also, directors may only serve two consecutive terms (total of 6 years) and need to sit out at least one year before being considered for board membership again.