

**Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council**  
**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes ~ August 14, 2017**  
VTDDC Offices, Berlin, VT

**Approved September 11, 2017**

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| <b>Present:</b> Fred Breunig, Stacey Emerson, Terry Holden, Kay Stambler |
| <b>Absent:</b> Catherine Hybels  |
| <b>Support Staff:</b>  |
| <b>Guests:</b>   |
| <b>VTDDC Staff:</b> Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, Chelsea Hayward       |

**1. Welcome and Adopting Minutes**

Minutes from June 5, 2017 were deemed accepted. Minutes for July 17, 2017 will be reviewed at the September meeting.

**2. Executive Director Report**

Appropriation for FFY'2018.

Kirsten reported that flat funding for FFY'18 is likely, but the long-term survival of DD Councils remains unsure.

As previously reported, the White House budget zeroes out funding for DD Councils, removing them from the DD Network and placing them in a new entity, *Partnerships for Innovation, Inclusion, and Independence* (PIII or P3-I). PIII, which also encompasses the work of state independent living councils and advisory boards for brain injury programs, is funded at less than half the amount previously awarded to DD Councils alone.

Funding for DD Councils was restored in the House budget to the FFY '17 level, along with a strong statement *against* removing DD Councils from the DD Network. The Senate review of this section of the budget is still pending.

However, Health and Human Services Secretary Price appears to be moving quickly to line up an alternative proposal in preparation for a major revision to the DD Act. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has been asked to develop a written description on what the PIII will look like. National organizations have come together to submit written comments on why PIII is a bad idea. VTDDC provided comment (attached).

Kirsten has provided Senator Leahy's office (and VT's other Congress members) with information on the value that VTDDC brings to Vermont, including letters of recommendation by State Treasurer Pearce, GMSA, Commissioner Hutt, and

Vermont Care Partners. She will continue to work with staff from our Congressional delegation to secure a commitment to opposing changes to the DD Act that would reduce the authority and funding of DD Councils.

### VTDDC Budget

The Executive Committee developed a draft budget for FFY 2018 at their July meeting. See Draft Budget 3.0 attached.

### Financial Concerns

Kirsten and Stacey met recently with the AHS Business Office. There are two issues that the Executive Committee may wish to consider.

1. Obligating FFY'16 funds: Councils have two years to obligate funds and three years to spend funds. Otherwise funds are returned to the federal government. It is not unusual to under-spend in year 1 of a five-year cycle. VTDDC still needs to obligate approximately \$76,000 by September 30, 2017. Kirsten described two options: (1) Move FFY'17 operating expenses to FFY'16 funds. (2) Move forward in obligating funds that VTDDC know it will incur, specifically the \$15,000 SEEDS grant to Special Olympics and a renewal of GMSA's \$60,000 grant for the Self-Advocacy Project.

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| The Executive Committee authorized the Executive Director to move forward with option 2. |
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2. Initial draw-down for grantees: The AHS Business Office reported that the Secretary of Administration has issued a change in policy regarding the release of grant funds. Grantees will no longer be permitted to drawdown money to jump start projects; all invoicing by grantees must be for costs already incurred. [Note that in the case of grants already signed, the AHS Business Office will honor requests for an initial drawdown].

This raises the question of interference, since VTDDC's funds do not include any state dollars and this policy could potentially impede the work of grantees that are small non-profits with tight cash flow. Kirsten will call ITACC for guidance.

### Cultural Linguistic Competency Training

Roughly two years ago, the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) announced an initiative to help all DD Network partners think about cultural and linguistic competency and how they might serve diverse populations within their states. This includes an AIDD-funded Project of National Significance. Vermont is among nine states to be included in the second round of these technical assistance grants. Recently, Kirsten was part of Vermont's six-person

team to attend an initial training at Georgetown University's Center for Cultural and Linguistic Competency. The Community of Practice Grants are for a five-year term, during which each state will develop and implement a plan to improve cultural and linguistic competency within the developmental disabilities system(s) in their own state. The grant supports technical assistance and attendance at an annual conference but not direct funding.

Kirsten described how participation in this Community of Practice can help VTDDC to build its own cultural and linguistic competency. While the Council has been successful in representing diversity by region, socio-economic class, and more recently identity with the LGBTQ community, the Council has few members from non-white or ethnically diverse groups. The same is true of people participating in VTDDC's programs/grants. Kirsten will explore contracting with Vermont LEND (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, a program with expertise in addressing issue of cultural and linguistic competency), for Council training or other activities.

#### Membership and Governor Appointments

Governor Scott has acted on all outstanding appointments except the three recommendations made at VTDDC's June 22, 2017 quarterly meeting and the change in UVM/CDCI's representative. Kirsten hopes to have the four outstanding appointments made by the September quarterly meeting. She has reported these positive moves toward compliance with membership requirements to AIDD.

Fred asked about state agency representation. Kirsten reported that four out of five requirements are now filled. The remaining slot is for a representative of the Medicaid program. The Division of Vermont Healthcare Access (DVHA) has identified a member – the DVHA medical director – but he would like to attend a meeting before making a commitment. He cannot do this until the December meeting. These details have also been reported to AIDD, which understands that sometimes it is beyond a Council's scope of authority to affect council appointments.

### **3. Update on Grants and Projects**

#### Meeting with AHS attorney Bill Ahlers

All grant agreements are reviewed "as to form" by an AHS attorney. Recently, a grant was returned by the attorney with substantial edits to the scope of work, effectively changing the terms of the grant. In conversation with the attorney, the original language was restored, but there remained concerns. Kirsten and Stacey met with attorney Bill Ahlers to better understand his issues and to convey VTDDC's concerns about the scope of their authority.

Stacey characterized the meeting as “productive on both sides.”

Review of Grants: See attached template.

- Green Mountain Self-Advocates: The group agreed that GMSA will be asked to report to the full Council at the September Quarterly meeting about their grant.
- SEEDS Grants:
  1. GMAS and DLP: Work to foster alternatives to guardianship in the Northeast Kingdom are going well but require more work to build consensus than originally anticipated. This project is likely to be able to report on their work at the VTDCD December meeting.
  2. Vermont Family Network, support for a Windham County Family Support Specialist. This grant has been completed. Kirsten recommends that the Executive Committee hear from Julie Cunningham at their September meeting to round out their understanding of the acute needs in this region. More conversation is needed to determine if VTDDC can address the needs and who would be the best community partners.
- Special Olympics: This grant has only recently launched.
- Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights: Kirsten and Chelsea met with this grantee recently and have some concerns about their understanding of the focus of the grant. Kay would like to speak to members of VCDR’s Steering Committee. In addition, Kay and Terry will be invited to the monthly meetings with the VCDR Coordinator that are required under the terms of this grant. Kirsten will share all relevant materials for Executive Committee review.

#### **4. Review FFY 2018 Work Plan:**

Kirsten shared the draft FFY’18 workplan, which was filed with AIDD when VTDDC submitted its Five-Year Plan in August 2016. She asked the Committee how they would like to provide input toward identifying and prioritizing activities for next year. The group agreed to review a template with standing language, revised language, and an option for entering their own ideas about activities to support VTDDC’s objectives. Kirsten will give the committee this template well in advance of the September Executive Committee meeting on 9/11/17.

#### **5. Other Business: Planning September Quarterly Meeting**

The group agreed to a draft agenda that will include the following:

- BUDGET & FINANCE: Vote to adopt proposed FFY’18 budget.

- REPORT: From the Green Mountain Self-Advocates, followed by a vote for a renewal of their grant in the amount of \$60,000.
- PROJECTS: Short update on all grant projects by Executive Director. Kay will alert the full Council about the Executive Committee's concerns regarding the Cross-Disability Coordination Grant to VCDR.
- POLICY: Report from Policy Committee.
- TRAINING: Preferably on Vermont's Open Meeting Law. If not, there will be training on another topic.
- OTHER: Overview of VTDDC's participation in the Community of Practice Grant for Cultural and Linguistic Competency.

Kirsten asked to try providing a short video to members that previews the agenda. The group agreed to try this as another accommodation that might help members to be better prepared for VTDDC's long quarterly meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:14 pm.