

Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council  
**Quarterly Meeting Minutes ~ March 29, 2018**

**Pavilion Building, Montpelier**

Approved June 28, 2018

**Present:** Kaiya Andrews, Julie Arel, Fred Breunig, Gina Carrera, Betsy Choquette, Melanie Feddersen, Mike Gruteke, Carol Hassler, Terry Holden, Dion LaShay, Hannah Neff, Ed Paquin, Lisa Rudiakov, John Spinney, Kay Stambler, Miriam Stoll, Jennifer Stratton,

**Absent:** Catherine Hybels, Steve Kieselstein, Jesse Suter, Adrian Vaut

**Support Staff:** n/a

**Guests:** Rich Ossasis, Governor Phil Scott, AHS Secretary Al Gobeille, Stefanie Monte, Treasurer Beth Pearce and staff, Representatives Marianna Gamache, Bill Lippert, and Carl Rosenquist

**VTDDC Staff:** Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, Chelsea Hayward

## **1. Welcome:**

Fred began the meeting and welcomed the two new members, Hannah Neff and Melanie Feddersen. Lisa read “What helps at meetings” and Fred assigned jobs:

- Carol Hassler - Keeper of the List
- Mike Gruteke - Rudder
- Hannah Neff - Jargon Buster
- Dion Lashay - Time Keeper

As per the previous meetings training, Fred reminded members of what “Open Meeting Law” means and that “reply all” by email is not in compliance with regulations; you may only reply to the original sender.

Council members introduced themselves to the new members.

**Motion:** Kay made the motion to accept the minutes of December 4, 2017. Lisa seconded. There was no discussion. **Motion accepted 11-0-0.**

## **2. Presidents Report:**

Fred thanked Council Members for his time in tenure. He appointed three Council Members to the Executive Committee – Miriam Stoll, Kaiya Andrews, and Julie Arel. The Council’s Vice President, Stacey Emerson, has resigned from the Council and an election will take place at the next Quarterly Meeting. Fred Breunig and Cathy Hybels have completed their terms and will no longer be serving on the Council.

### **3. Election of New Council President:**

Council Members reviewed Miriam Stoll's biography.

Fred described Miriam as a "a very thoughtful person" and would build upon improvements that the Council has made recently. Kay agreed. Kirsten said that Miriam actively testifies in the Senate and works with Council staff on promoting VTDDC's message.

**Motion:** Kay made the motion to support Miriam Stoll as the President for two years. Mike seconded. **Motion accepted: 11-0-0.**

### **4. Policy Committee Report: Susan Aranoff**

Susan summarized the new developments to proposals and bills during the 2018/2019 legislative session, and the issues that the Council has been following:

- Governor's Budget – The Governor's budget proposed to cut \$4 million dollars from existing developmental services (which would result in a 2% reduction in direct supports), but the money has been restored by the House.

There were also cuts to the Attendant Care Program and to a loan repayment program for doctors serving primary care in rural Vermont.

During the 2017/2018 legislative session the Senate passed a bill to give Designated and Specialized Service Agency staff a pay increase. AHS has since rolled out Phase 1 of that plan. So far, however, the legislature has not included funding for Phase 2. Council members voiced concerns about oversight within the agencies, cuts to services, and education costs:

Recent VTDDC testimony includes:

- Dion submitted written testimony to the House Budget Committee.
- Kaiya testified in a public hearing about health care.
- Special Education Bills – There are two bills that VTDDC is following: (1) private schools that accept public funding must enroll and support students with disabilities; and (2) there is discussion about funding schools with a cost-saving, census-based model *instead* of the current, reimbursement-based model. The Senate is taking testimony.

### **5. Executive Directors Report:**

Kirsten thanked everyone for keeping the Council going while she was away.

- VTDDC's Budget – Kirsten announced that Congress has passed the FFY'18 budget that includes increased funding for Developmental Disability Councils. She

anticipates that VTDDC will receive approximately \$20,000 as a permanent increase to its base allocation.

- Kirsten reviewed the annual budget cycle and reminded the Council that they will be asked to adopt a FFY'19 budget at their June Quarterly meeting.
- Revised SEEDS Grant for the *New England Youth Theater* – Typically SEEDS grant applications are reviewed by the Program Committee, but due to the tight timeline, a revised proposal went straight to Kirsten. The Youth Theater is in Brattleboro, Vermont. Susan noted the value in funding several projects in the same area, at the same time, to have a cumulative impact on the community.

**Motion:** Kay made the motion to accept the revised SEEDS application. Lisa seconded. **Motion accepted: 15-0-1.**

**6. Program Committee:** President Fred Breunig announced that he has appointed a standing Program Committee which is composed of: Steve Kieselstein, Kay Stambler, Terry Holden, and Mike Gruteke.

### **7. Report from the Field – Disability Awareness Day:**

Stefanie Monte, from the Vermont Center for Independent Living, represented the Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights. She presented to the Council about the attendance, workshops, and demonstrations offered throughout Disability Awareness Day (see attached Power Point).

Disability Awareness Day received a grant of \$10,000 from VTDDC. They organized over 300 self-advocates, family members, and allies, to visit the State House and connect with legislators. Other organizations that sponsored Disability Awareness Day alongside VTDDC were CDCI, SILC, and UVM to equal a total of \$11,500 in financial support.

### **8. Lunch with legislators:**

Council members were joined by legislators during lunch: Rep. Marianna Gamache (Franklin-4), Rep. Will J. Lippert (Chittenden-4-2), and Rep. Carl Rosenquist (Franklin-1).

### **9. Visit by Governor Phil Scott:**

Governor Phil Scott thanked the Council for the invitation. Self-Advocates Mike Gruteke and Kaiya Andrews, and parent Kay Stambler told their personal stories and voiced their concerns.

**“I don’t receive services, and I’m a parent with a disability. This means my children can’t thrive.” – Kaiya Andrews**

**“It is very scary for a parent to know they can’t die in Vermont.”  
– Kay Stambler**

John Spinney, representative for the Agency of Education, also spoke. He talked about how often students with disabilities stay in school longer because they will lose services once they graduate; there isn’t enough support in employment, so the unintended outcome is that there are fewer people who participate in the work force.

The Governor, and his staff, asked, (1) “How do we handle the growth in need and spending?” and (2) “How do we make sure everyone gets the services they’re entitled to?”

Treasurer Beth Pearce thanked Governor Phil Scott for the ABLE legislation.

#### **10. Visit by Treasurer Beth Pearce:**

Treasurer Beth Pearce talked about Vermont ABLE and the ABLE Committee. The ABLE Committee is composed of treasurers from various states, and they work with the White House. Beth invited Council members to share their ideas that could be shared with the ABLE Committee. There are a few things going on for the future of Vermont ABLE:

- They are working on bumping the qualifying age from 26 to 46.
- Discussion about the Medicaid “claw-back”.
- There will be more advertising about VT ABLE.

**“It’s time for people to recognize that we’re all one community --  
No one should be living in poverty.” – Treasurer Beth Pearce**

#### **11. Report from the Field – Leadership Series:**

Max Barrows and Karen Topper of the Green Mountain Self-Advocates presented on behalf of the whole Leadership Training Series team. Council Members who were Leadership Series graduates also spoke.

They discussed two primary themes: (1) Ways the Leadership Series strengthens the disability rights movement; and (2) Ways the Leadership Series impacts us on a personal level.

**12. Updates from a Representative of State Government:**

Melanie Feddersen from the Department of Aging and Independent Living, represented the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services. She spoke about the budget and the possible future of (1) Developmental Services, and (2) How Vermont businesses – including designated agencies and families that self-manage supports -- will pay employees for sick leave starting 2019.

**13. Public Comment:**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chelsea Hayward