

**Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council
Quarterly Meeting Minutes ~ March 23, 2017**

Pavilion Building, Montpelier

Approved June 22, 2017

Present:	Fred Breunig, Betsy Choquette, Stacey Emerson, Mike Gruteke, Terry Holden, Catherine Hybels, Dion LaShay, Ed Paquin, Marcy Ryan, Susan Ryan, Cinn Smith, John Spinney, Kay Stambler, Jennifer Stratton, Adrian Vaut
Absent:	Julie Arel, Carol Hassler MD, Clare McFadden, Lisa Rudiakov, Miriam Stoll
Support Staff:	N/A
Guests:	Karen Topper, Tayler Terry, Deborah Lisi Baker, Kate Ash from Senator Leahy's office, Kevin Veller from Congressman Peter Welch's office, Marcy Ryan's driver
VTDDC Staff:	Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, Chelsea Hayward

1. Welcome:

Fred began the meeting and introduced the new members. Adrian read "What helps at meetings." Meeting roles were assigned (Keeper of the Rudder, Keeper of the List, Time Keeper, and Jargon Buster).

Karen Topper and Taylor Terry introduced themselves. They were present at the meeting to observe and make suggestions about how VTDDC can make its meeting more accessible and fully inclusive. The new "traffic lights" were explained as an aid to help council members communicate that they need the speaker to slow down.

Motion: Ed made the motion to accept the minutes from the meetings of December 1, 2016 and January 19, 2017. Jennifer seconded.
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Motion declared accepted by the President with no changes.

2. Reports from Washington DC:

Council members introduced themselves to Senator Patrick Leahy's representative, Kate Ash and Congressman Peter Welch's representative, Kevin Veller.

Welch's office has a focus on meeting the needs of rural Vermonters (housing, education, homelessness, transportation), which complements the Council's Goal 1 supporting people with developmental disabilities in rural low-income areas.

What does the Senator and Congressmen want us to know?

- The House of Representatives will be voting on the Affordable Care Act "repeal and replacement" later in the day. The bill removes key protections and coverage for substance abuse treatment, mental health, maternity care, and children. It will benefit those with higher incomes.

- The Congressional Budget office predicts that 24 million people will lose coverage under the House health care bill. Vermont will go from 3% uninsured to about 10% insured.
- President Trump's proposed national budget will take money from programs that help poor Vermonters, including low-income heating assistance, food stamps or SNAP, and community service block grants.
- USDA rural development may see a 26% cut. This will negatively impact two housing programs for low-income Vermonters.
- Vermont uses its dollars and Medicaid flexibility in a very smart way. Because Vermont expanded Medicaid prior to the House health care bill, it will receive more per capita if Medicaid is restructured as a block grant. However, over time, block grants in other programs – for example, housing -- have meant shifting costs from the federal government to the State budget.
- The federal government, which funds VTDDC, does not have an approved budget beyond April 28, 2017. Congress is likely to pass another continuing resolution to support funding through September 30, 2017.
- The advocacy of the Disability Rights Movement is critical at this difficult time.

3. Financial Report: Kirsten provided a short Power Point (attached) and discussed the following:

- The reason we review the budget at each meeting is to make sure that (1) The Council keeps to the budget that the members have voted to put in place each year; and (2) There is money to do the next set of things that we want to do to achieve our Five-Year Plan Goals.
- This year (FFY'17) the Council can spend up to \$563,515.
- Council spends about half its money on staff salary, general operating, and projects like the upcoming Employment Summit that are undertaken by staff. We are running a little over in some of these costs but this is offset by the fact that we are underspending in other areas.
- So far this year, the Council has committed to \$117,000 in program expenses including grants, conference sponsorships, and support for the Leadership Series.
- The Council could spend up to \$118,000 more in program expenses this year.
- There are some reasons to be cautious about spending: (1) Congress has not authorized the second half of this year's allocation; and (2) VTDDC is in Year 1 of a Five-Year Cycle when there is still a lot of planning and developing Requests for Proposals as we figure out how to achieve our Five Year Plan Goals and Objectives.

4. Program Committee Report:

SEEDS Round 2

Cathy described the three (3) SEEDS applications received in response to the Council's second request for proposals. While the Program Committee thought that these projects focused on important areas of need, each proposal was returned with an invitation to revise the application in response to specific questions and feedback.

Those applications were:

- Special Olympics Athletes, Unified Fitness: Proposal to pair mentors and Special Olympic Athletes together to engage in fitness activities and healthy eating.
- Vermont Statewide Independent Living: Proposal to increase the number of schools using *Include!*, a disability awareness curriculum developed by the State Independent Living Council (SILC).
- Champlain Valley Services, We Can Work It Out: Proposal to teach individuals with disabilities valuable "work place readiness" skills.

Coordinator for Cross-Disability Movement in Vermont Proposal –

Kay spoke about the application from the Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights (VCDR). The organization requested \$25,000 over 6 months. Deborah Lisi-Baker joined the Council to answer questions.

- What is a virtual story bank? People who are unable to physically join a campaign can still share their stories online and be involved.
- How will you expand nationally? They'd figure out what was do-able, find a platform and build from it.
- How will the virtual story bank be made available for the public? It will be online. The real challenge is letting people know it's there and building the campaign.

There was a 10-minute break before the vote so that members would have time to check their understanding of the proposal and make up their mind about the vote.

Motion: Mike made the motion to approve VCDR's application. Marcy seconded.

Motion passed: 11-0-3.

5. Feedback from Green Mountain Self-Advocate observers:

Karen Topper said that everyone was engaged and she thanked Fred for his calm demeanor. She also liked the use of Roberts Rules of Order.

Karen and Taylor would like to see:

- More visual exchanges of information with graphic facilitation. Everything is “very oral.”
- Give a longer pause between topics to make sure everyone is comfortable.
- More opportunities for members to reset their focus and re-engage.
- Trouble-shoot the PA system so everyone can hear.
- Include in the mailing an explanation of the different organizations and programs that may be mentioned within the meeting.
- Presenters bring written talking-points.
- Less back and forth conversation in the large group setting. Do not “stack questions.” Rather, answer each question as it is asked.
- Follow-up on mailed information to confirm that Council Members understand the information.
- Create an “accommodation checklist” for every new member.

6. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

7. Council President Announcements:

Fred thanked Marcy Ryan and Cinn Smith for their service to the Council. He presented certificates of appreciation.

Vice-President – The post of Vice-President is vacant. Fred asked members to consider stepping forward to fill this post, as well as joining a sub-committee.

NACDD Annual Conference, July 12,14, 2017 – The conference will take place in Salt Lake City, Utah. Members were encouraged to attend and represent VTDDC. Any interested members should talk with Fred.

8. Executive Director’s Report:

Leadership Series –2017 was 5th year of the Leadership Training Series. Kirsten congratulated council members Dion LaShay and Cathy Hybels for graduating and asked them to share a little about their experience in the program.

Disability Awareness Day –Ed asked for ideas for getting more legislators to attend the formal program at the end of the day.

Vermont ABLE – VTDDC is taking a lead in promoting the program. Members suggested outreach at the Brattleboro Buddy Walk and Special Olympics.

2016's Federal Report – This report closed the last year of VTDDC's five-year cycle; it was filed late but has been completed. Kirsten shared a few observations:

- VTDDC's investment in Green Mountain Self-Advocates provides most of the outcomes that we count and report to our federal partners. "We get a lot of 'bang for our buck,' in this grant," she said.
- A key lesson learned this cycle is that VTDDC should not use grants to try to steer a partner organization in a direction that the grantee does not want to go. For example, funding VFN to add more information about adult services was not successful because this organization sees itself as serving families with children and transition age youth. It is important to honor the Request for Proposal (RFP) process. This means carefully describing what the Council wants to see happen and then looking for an interested partner. The focus should be on funding projects, not finding a way to channel funding to a specific organization.

Employment Summit, Supporting People with Disabilities to Reach New Heights – VTDDC is planning and co-sponsoring this conference with its DD Network Partners (UVM Center for Disability and Community Inclusion) and Disability Rights Vermont. It will be held on June 6, 2017.

Demonstration of E-Learning – This will be presented when the project is closer to finished.

9. Policy Committee Report:

News from the State House –

- Wages: Increasing wages for Direct Support Providers (DSPs) is a high priority for disability advocates and for the legislature. The system is not sustainable at current wages, which are so low that there is a 26% staff vacancy rate across the system.
- Developmental Services Rules: DAHL will host a public hearing on April 6, 2017 to discuss suggested changes in the administrative rules for the DD system. Susan promised to provide talking points to Council members.
- Vocational Rehabilitation has sustained a significant loss of federal funding. There are efforts to restore some of this money in the state budget.

10. Updates from Representatives of State Government:

John Spinney, from Agency of Education –

- “Project Search” is a work-place program that helps transition-age students learn the skills they need to thrive in the work place.
- John hoped to create an inter-agency document titled “What does graduation look like for a student with a disability?” This would help measure readiness for employment after graduation.

Betsy Choquette, from Vocational Rehabilitation –

- She directs the supported-employment team and benefits-counseling team.
- *Linking Learning to Careers* is a program that revolves around

11. Governor Phil Scott and Secretary of Human Services Al Gobeille:

Fred greeted the Governor and the Secretary of Human Services. He gave a brief description of VTDDC, and Council members introduced themselves. Governor Scott gave a summary of his background and how he was connected to people with disabilities.

Three VTDDC members talked about how people with disabilities can be a part of achieving the Governor’s goal of growing Vermont’s economy. Adrian Vaut talked about what employment means to him as a self-advocate; Terry Holden talked about planning for her son to have meaningful employment on the farm where she lives; and Cathy Hybels talked about the value her small business has gained from employing people with disabilities.

12. Meeting Debrief and Adjourn:

Council members used their traffic lights to rate the meeting.