

Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council
Draft Quarterly Meeting Minutes ~ December 5, 2024
via ZOOM

Note: There was no in person option due to snow.

<p>Zoom: Kele Bourdeau, Danielle Brier, Silas Callison, Anastasia Douglas, Kate Daly, Justin T. Bear Deth, Scarlett Duncan, Melanie Feddersen, Michelle John, Lindsey Owen, Erika Smith, Jesse Suter, Jenn Townley, Collins Twing</p> <p>Absent: Amanda Bianchi, Adam Poulin, Randy Lizotte, Betsy Choquette, Johnathan Gardner, Beth Sightler, John Spinney</p> <p>Support: David Frye</p> <p>Guests:</p> <p>VTDDC Staff: Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, Chelsea Hayward</p>
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1. Welcome:

Anastasia called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM. She welcomed everyone. There was a quorum.

○ **Ice Breaker: “What are you looking forward to in 2025?”**

Attendees took turns replying to the ice breaker. Some of the things people are looking forward to: finishing potty training for kids, vacation, less stress, weddings, the legislative session, and self-care.

○ **Assigned roles:**

- Timekeeper was Kate
- Chat Monitor and “Room Muter” was Michelle
- Processor was Erika
- Jargon Buster was Justin

○ **Adopt Meeting Minutes from October 10, 2024**

Motion: Justin made the motion to adopt the meeting minutes from October 10, 2024 as presented. Scarlett seconded. There was no discussion.

Motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

2. Policy Committee Report

Collins Twing and Justin Thunderbear Deth led the discussion. Susan explained why VTDDC has a platform each year: It helps VTDDC to tell the legislature what is most important to Vermonters with I/DD. It's up to Council Members to decide which issues are the most important for Vermont's 2025 disability community.

- **Findings from the Disability Power Hour on November 18, 2024 -**

Members of the public spoke about unfair treatment in schools, housing, Medicaid, and developmental services.

- **Presentation of Platform for the 2025 Legislative Session -**

Collins read from the Legislative Platform draft (Attachment B).

Scarlett asked where she could find rules about housing people with disabilities in Vermont. Since the rules are not all in one place in state regulations, Kirsten volunteered to help her look for them.

Council Members talked about school inclusion, discipline, reduced services, barriers with online learning, and training professionals on how to best serve students with disabilities. Silas shared his experience while participating in UVM's Think College program.

The Policy Committee answered questions about the drafted platform.

Motion: Collins made the motion to adopt the 2025 Legislative Platform as presented. Kate seconded. There was no additional discussion.

Motion passed 12-2-0.

- **Make a Date with Susan -**

Susan reminded members to sign up with her for a visit to the Statehouse. Council members have the choice of visiting with just Susan or joining a group every Tuesday. Susan will help members by making appointments for them with their elected officials.

3. Chair's Update

Anastasia talked about 2025 meeting locations. She said that meetings would continue to be hybrid, accessible, and held in different counties of Vermont.

4. Executive Director's Report

- **Timeline to Create the Five-Year State Plan -**

Creating a new Five-Year State Plan will take 18 months. Staff will begin compiling the "comprehensive needs assessment in January. Council staff will summarize the research findings at the September 2025 quarterly meeting. A weekend retreat for Council members will take place in the fall of 2025. At the retreat, members will decide what the goals and objectives of the Plan will be. The plan must be posted for public comment during the spring of 2026. The next State Plan must be filed with the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities by August 15, 2026.

- **Changes in the federal government -**

Federal funding for DD Councils is likely to remain flat during FFY'26. The National Association for Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) is urging member councils to remain calm, continue their good work, and seek to educate members of both political parties about the needs of people with I/DD. For several years VTDDC, and many other small state councils, have relied on creative ways to bring in money from other sources, including federal grants. An example is VTDDC's work on youth transition service through the Pathways to Partnership Project.

Kirsten is concerned about the rise of hate speech. She assured everyone that the Council will not tolerate hate speech of any kind toward any community.

5. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

6. Adjourn:

Erika was the Processor. She summarized the two-hour meeting by reading from her notes. She said the meeting went well. Kirsten told everyone that Rachel Siegel's

prestation on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility has been moved to March.
The meeting adjourned at 11:52 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chelsea Hayward

Attachment A – Vote Roster

Attachment B – 2025 Legislative Platform DRAFT

Name	Vote for Platform		
	Yes	A.	No
Kele Bourdeau	1		
Amanda Bianchi			
Danielle Brier		1	
Betsy Choquette			
Silas Callison	1		
Kate Daly	1		
Justin T. Bear Deth	1		
Anastasia Douglas	1		
Scarlett Duncan	1		
Melanie Feddersen		1	
Johnathan Gardner			
Michelle John	1		
Randy Lizotte			
Lindsey Owen, Esq.	1		
Adam Poulin			
Beth Sightler			
Erika Smith	1		
John Spinney			
Jesse Suter	1		
Jennifer Townley	1		
Collins Twing	1		

Those in grey did not attend the meeting, were not present to vote, or passed their vote along to another Council member to share with the Council.

October’s Quarterly Meeting Minutes were voted on informally. A roll call was not recorded.



2025

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

DRAFT

1. HOUSING FOR ALL!

- **Fund new housing** for adults with disabilities.

Why? Act 186 of 2022 provided planning grants for 3 new projects. The State has included the housing pilots in its Corrective Action Plans, but has not provided State funding for the pilots.



- **Direct the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board** to prioritize housing for people with disabilities.

Why? According to the Act 186 Housing Report, Vermont needs more than 600 units of service supported housing for adults with developmental disabilities.

- **Update rules** that slow down housing development.

Why? The current rules are over 30 years old. The rules block new housing solutions.

2. MEDICAID JUSTICE!

- **Medicaid-Funded Service Providers** need a living wage and yearly rate reviews.



Why? The services the State provides people with disabilities are funded by Medicaid. The State does not review and adjust the rates yearly. As a result, Medicaid-funded service providers, like designated and specialized services agencies, have a lot of vacant staff positions and a high rate of staff turnover.

3. INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS!

- **Ensure students with disabilities receive the services they need.**

Why? Students with disabilities have the right to receive the services they need to succeed. Vermont school systems are not providing necessary services.

- **Support students with disabilities** by reducing the use of exclusionary discipline, restraint and seclusion.



Why? Students with disabilities are removed from schools and classrooms at a higher rate than students without disabilities. Discipline that removes students from schools and classrooms is linked to higher rates of arrests and increased interactions with police. This situation is sometimes described as the school to prison pipeline.

4. HEALTHCARE FOR ALL!

- **Improve access to Health Care Services** in Vermont for people with disabilities.



Why? People with disabilities have poor health when compared to people without disabilities. For example, rates of cancer, heart disease, asthma, and diabetes are two to two and a half times higher for Vermonters with disabilities than the general population. People with disabilities also have more difficulty accessing appropriate primary care, dental care, mental health services, and health information.



For more information about our platform, contact Policy Analyst Susan Aranoff at [1 \(802\) 828-1311](tel:18028281311) / vtddc@vermont.gov

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