

Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council
Draft Quarterly Meeting Minutes ~ September 24, 2020
via Zoom

Adopted December 3, 2020

Present: Kaiya Andrews, Amanda Bianchi, Gina Carrera, Betsy Choquette, Julie Cunningham, Anastasia Douglas, David Frye, Melanie Feddersen, Mike Gruteke, Hillary Hill, Terry Holden, Francoise Kahindo, Steve Kieselstein, Dion LaShay, Hannah Neff, Ed Paquin, Candice Price, Courtney Quinlan, John Spinney, Jesse Suter, Havah Walther, Crista Yagjian, and Julie Arel (arrived later)

Absent: Carol Hassler

Support Staff: n/a

Guests: n/a

VTDDC Staff: Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, Chelsea Hayward

Members and guests were welcomed to sign in 30 minutes prior to start time to socialize, trouble-shoot, and get settled.

1. Welcome:

The meeting began at 10:10 am. Kirsten shared the agenda.

- Adopt Meeting Minutes from June –

Motion: Courtney made the motion to adopt the minutes. Steve seconded. A rollcall vote took place. **Motion approved: 16-2-0**

- Review Group Agreement for Zoom Meeting – Council members were advised to stay on mute unless it is their turn to speak.
- Assign Roles –
 - Time Keeper was Mike Gruteke
 - Jargon Buster was David Frye
 - Processor was Havah Walther
 - Keeper of the List was Courtney Quinlan
 - Keeper of the Rudder was Dion Lashay

2. Chair's Report:

- **Buddy System for Public Members** – Courtney spoke about the new “buddy system.” The pandemic has everyone isolated in their homes. She said that having a buddy can help members to prepare for meetings and other Council activities.
- **NACDD Chair Training** - Courtney and Mike attended a three-part national training for DD Council chairs, sponsored by the National Association of Council on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD). The training covered issues like defining the chair's role, including all members in meetings, and how to work with your Executive Director. Courtney shared Vermont's new “buddy system,” and several other chairs were interested in learning more.
- **Chair's January Schedule** – Courtney will not be available for part of January. Members should contact Vice Chair Mike Gruteke or staff with any concerns or questions during that time.

3. Member Check-In:

Council members have the spotlight. While Council staff recorded the ZOOM meeting, members were asked to respond to the following:

1. Something that's been really challenging during the pandemic.
2. One positive “coping strategy.”

4. Policy Committee Report:

David and Havah led the discussion.

- **Updates** – David asked members what it was like visiting staff from Vermont's three (3) congress members.
- **Platform for the 2021 Session** – The Policy Committee talked about several issues and agreed that VTDDC's upcoming platform will focus mostly on Medicaid, Special Education, and creating an independent advocate for developmental

services. Susan invited members to attend a policy committee meeting to learn about the issues before the Council adopts its platform at the December quarterly meeting (12/3/20).

- **Plan for Zoom visits with Congressional Delegation** – Susan said that everyone will be notified about the three (3) dates to virtually attend meetings with each congress member’s office. Anyone can attend, because “where you live” will not be a factor this year.

BREAK: Lunch began at Noon. Members returned at 1:00pm.

5. Revised FFY’21 Budget:

VTDDC’s budget was passed at the June Quarterly Meeting. However, it is typically revised at the September meeting, when we have more information about the Council’s funding from the federal government.

Congress has adopted a “continuing resolution (CR).” This means that the programs it funds may continue with the same budget as last year until the CR ends in early December. Hopefully, Congress will pass a budget at that time, but they could extend the CR until even later in the year, Kirsten explained.

Kirsten reviewed the small changes made to the budget since it was passed in June (attached). These are some of the details:

- ⇒ Council staff put together 1,300 “care bags” with personal protective equipment (PPE) for people with developmental disabilities and family members.
- ⇒ The Vermont Leadership Series will not take place in the same setting this year. There will be some scaled-back online learning opportunities for Leadership Graduates instead.
- ⇒ Council’s nationwide never received funding for COVID-19 related expenses.
- ⇒ People with disabilities can apply to the Vermont Center for Independent Living for financial assistance with expenses related to the pandemic.

Motion: Ed made the motion to adopt the revised budget. Mike seconded.

Motion passed: 16-0-0.

6. Program Committee Report:

Steve led the discussion. He reminded members that the Council is in the last year of its Five-Year State Plan.

The Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights (VCDR) recently gave a presentation to the Policy Committee, summarizing their accomplishments, explaining how their organization works, and describing how they have used VTDDC's FFY'20 grant of \$40,000.

Committee Recommendation – The program committee supports VCDR's work and recommends awarding them \$35,000 for FFY'21. Policy Committee members noted that VTDDC's budget is tight. They would like to set \$5,000 aside to help with pandemic-related expenses.

Members discussed the recommendation and Council priorities. Ed Paquin spoke on behalf of funding VCDR at \$40,000 because of its valuable cross-disability advocacy.

Motion: David made the motion to grant VCDR \$40,000. Gina seconded.

Council members discussed the merits of giving VCDR \$40,000 vs. \$35,000.

Motion: Gina made the motion to amend the amount from \$40,000 to \$35,000. David seconded. **Motion to amend passed: 13-0-1.**

Motion passed: 14-0-0.

7. Developing the 5-Year State Plan:

What does the DD Act say about the 5-Year State Plan? The DD Act is very specific about how the Plan is to be created. Kirsten encouraged Council members to keep in mind that:

- ⇒ Council members are the driving force behind the Plan. While staff provide research and writing, members set the priorities for the next 5 years.
- ⇒ Collaboration is key. The Plan much reflect how the Council will work with its partners to accomplish its goals and objectives.
- ⇒ Stakeholder input must be collected and considered when members decide what the Council will work on for the next 5 years. (“Stakeholders” are people who have a disability or family members of someone with a disability, as well as state leaders and organizations that work with Vermonters impacted by disability.)

How will members be involved in creating the 5-Year State Plan? Kirsten explained the process:

- ⇒ Members will work in three small Teams.
- ⇒ Each Team will be asked to write 1 goal, pick 3-5 objectives that support the goal, and outline strategies to accomplish these objectives.
- ⇒ The new 5-Year State Plan must be posted for a 40-day public comment period by about April 1, 2021. This will leave enough time to revise the plan based on public comment and file the final Plan with the federal government by the deadline on August 15, 2021.
- ⇒ Despite the pandemic, the federal government has not provided any flexibility for plan deadlines. If Council plans not approved by Administration on Community Living (ACL) by October 1, 2021, then DD Councils cannot accept money from Congress.

What are the next steps? Courtney explained that members will be assigned to one of the following groups:

Team #1 will work on a goal to help Underserved Vermonters. The DD Act says that Councils must support one group of Vermonters with I/DD & their families who face extra challenges. Examples include Vermonters with disabilities who are refugees and Vermonters with disabilities who are also incarcerated.

Team #2 will work on a goal of empowering self-advocates and family members. The DD Act requires that Councils support a self-advocacy organization, opportunities for leadership, and participation in “cross-disability and culturally diverse coalitions.”

Team #3 will focus on Systems Change. The DD Act challenges Councils to advocate for services that are person-centered, individualized, and promote the DD Act values of productivity, self-determination, independence, and full community inclusion.

TO DO: Council members were asked to contact Courtney by September 3rd to let her know which team they would most like to work with. They should also provide a 2nd choice.

8. Public Comment:

There were no guests for public comment.

9. Summarize Meeting:

There was not enough time for the meeting “Processor” to speak.

10. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chelsea Hayward