

**Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council**  
**Draft Quarterly Meeting Minutes ~ March 25, 2021**  
**via Zoom**  
Adopted June 24, 2021

<p><b>Present:</b> Kaiya Andrews, Amanda Bianchi, Gina Carrera, Anastasia Douglas, Melanie Feddersen, David Frye, Mike Gruteke, Terry Holden, Steve Kieselstein, Dion LaShay, Hannah Neff, Candice Price, Courtney Quinlan, Jesse Suter, Havah Walther, Crista Yagjian.</p> <p><b>Absent:</b> Betsy Choquette, Carol Hassler, Hillary Hill, Ed Paquin, John Spinney, Julie Arel.</p> <p><b>Support Staff:</b> n/a</p> <p><b>Guests:</b> Corey Atanda with FEI systems, Beth Sightler with Champlain Community Services.</p> <p><b>VTDDC Staff:</b> Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, Chelsea Hayward.</p>
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**1. Welcome:**

The Meeting was called to order at 10:02 am. The ice breaker was, “What do you look forward to with the warm weather?” Members said they’re excited to go to flea markets, walk more, grill, enjoy good health, and garden.

- Review Group Agreement for Zoom Meeting – Rules included: 1) Mute unless you’re talking, 2) One person talks at a time, and 3) Raising your virtual hand or real hand” to speak.
- Assign Roles –
  - Jargon Buster was Kaiya
  - Timekeeper was Dion
  - Keeper of the Rudder was Mike
  - Processors were Havah, and Amanda
- Adopt Meeting Minutes from December – There were no corrections and the minutes for December 3, 2021 were adopted by the Council on a voice vote.

**2. Empowering People, Goal 1 and Objectives (Team 2):**

- Presentation – The main priorities in this goal area were continuing the Leadership Series and supporting self-advocacy, which is a requirement under the DD Act. The Team proposed objectives supporting leadership

development, self-advocacy, alternatives to full guardianship, peer-to-peer support, and building connections among family caregivers who support an adult with a developmental disability.

- Questions from Council members – Mike asked members of Team 2 to explain what they meant by “alternatives to full guardianship.” Gina said that often people assumed that parents will seek guardianship once their son or daughter turns 18. But what if young person wants more choice and more independence? Guardianship is not an “all or nothing” arrangement, said Gina. There are lots of ways to ensure that someone has the right support to address issues in their life. In Vermont, there are alternatives, but the information is hard to find. This objective would support the Council educating not only parents and self-advocates, but school counselors, agencies, and even attorneys about the range of choices available in building the right decision-making supports.

Council members discussed what it means to be independent, what it meant to be a guardian, and planning in a way that an individual may live the life they want.

### **3. Service Gaps, Goal 2 and 3 and Objectives (Team 1):**

- Presentation – Havah explain that her team wanted to do two things: First, help an underserved group of Vermonters with disabilities; and second, address gaps in services. This is why the team decided to split their priorities into two goals. In the area of services gaps, the team is recommending objectives that would promote ADA Accessibility, the creation of alternative housing models, and better public transportation.

In the area of supporting an underserved group, Steve said, “We tried to think of this in a different way. What groups in Vermont are hurting and despite numerous attempts, they still have needs that are not being met?” The objectives in this area focus on customized employment and continuing education for Vermonters with “high support needs.”

#### 4. Systems Change, Goal 3 and Objectives (Team 3):

- Presentation – Team 3 spent a lot of time talking about prevention and the need to be proactive in supporting people with developmental disabilities. They are recommending objectives that would raise awareness, support ongoing policy work, revise the Developmental Disabilities System of Care, and support the direct care workforce.
- Questions from Council members – The group talked about the importance of helping people to stay well so that they do not need to use crisis services.

#### 5. Vote to adopt the Draft Goals and Objectives:

Members enjoyed the planning process. They felt that small groups worked well so that everyone could be seen within the next Five-Year State-Plan.

**Motion:** Kaiya made the motion to adopt the Goals and Objectives that were presented by the DD Council’s three planning teams as the final draft for public comment for the 45-day period from April 1, 2021 through May 15, 2021. Dion seconded.

**Motion passed: 14-1-0.** Roll call attached.

Note: The Draft State Plan Objectives are attached.

#### 6. Policy Committee Report:

- Health Disparities: What are they? Why do we care? – There is strong data from 2018 demonstrating that Vermonters with I/DD face significant health disparities. This is also true for many other groups, including people who are low income, identify as LGBTQ, BIPOC Vermonters, and people who live in public housing.

Kirsten explained that the term “health disparities” indicates a group of people that has historically been treated unfairly experiences a difference in their health when compared to the general population. The term “health disparities” indicates that the health differences are thought to be caused by historical injustice. For example, in Vermont 9 out of 10 people with disabilities have a chronic health condition. For everyone else it’s more like 2 out of 10.

Guest, Corey Atanda, thanked the Council for having a difficult conversation about equality and equity.

- Revision to the DD Council Platform – The Policy Committee recommended adding support for addressing health disparities for Vermonters with disabilities to the 2021 legislative platform. H. 210 is a bill that would create an office of Health Equity within State government to address health disparities for Vermonters with disabilities, those who identify as LGBTQIA, and BIPOC Vermonters. While no new rights will be given, the bill will ask for more data collection.
  - The DD Council was the first group to raise the issue of health disparities for people with disabilities in Vermont, publishing a white paper on this topic in 2016.
  - Kirsten testified before the House Health Care Committee in support of H. 210 on [February 10, 2021](#).

**Motion:** David made the motion to add the following item to the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council’s 2021 Legislative Platform:

“Vermont must eliminate health disparities based on race, ethnicity, disability, income, and LGBTQ status. The creation of a Health Equity Office within State Government is an important first step.” Terry seconded.

**Motion passed: 16-0-0.** Roll call attached.

- Update on other Platform Issues – Susan Aranoff reported that several of VTDDC’s Legislative Platform issues are gaining traction this year:
  - Like the Health Equity Bill, S. 16 is a bill that would hold the Agency of Education accountable for updating the data in the 2015 Report, *Kicked Out*. It also strengthens how Vermont monitors the use of exclusionary discipline in Vermont schools. “Exclusionary discipline” means disciplinary actions that take kids out of their classroom or school – for example, suspension or expulsion. Exclusionary discipline has been shown to be disproportionately targeted toward students with disabilities and students of color.
  - J.H.R. 2 is Joint Resolution issuing an apology for the legislature’s role in supporting the eugenics movement in Vermont. It is expected to be adopted by the House within a week.
  - S. 120 may receive support. This bill would require an independent study of the All Payer Accountable Care Model.

## 7. Membership Committee Report:

- Update on Membership – The Membership committee recommended membership for a parent, Ted Looby, from Burlington. Gina described him as having a tranquil personality. Ted is from a mixed-race family and 2 of his 3 children have developmental disabilities; the third child has a chronic medical condition. Ted is married to Prof. Winnie Looby who is the academic coordinator for the Center for Disability and Community Inclusion (CDCI) at UVM.

**Motion:** David made the motion to recommend to the Governor that Ted Looby be appointed to the Council. Dion seconded.

**Motion passed: 16-0-0.** Roll call attached.

- Statements thanking departing members – Kirsten read a note expressing heartfelt condolences and thanks to the two members who had to step-

down from the Council because of family challenges during the pandemic. The Council warmly encouraged them to reapply in the future.

Kirsten also read a statement thanking Ed Paquin for his many years of service on the Council. Ed recently announced his retirement from Disability Rights Vermont. The Council unanimously supported this statement, which will be shared with Ed.

- Recommendations for new members – Guest, Beth Sightler, introduced herself to the Council. Kirsten has asked Beth to consider becoming the Council’s representative “from a non-profit serving people with developmental disabilities.” Beth majored in fine arts at UVM and her first career was as a boat builder. She later worked at [Champlain Community Services](#) in Colchester where she moved through the agency’s ranks to become its Executive Director. Beth talked about customized employment, livable wages for direct support staff, and racial equity.
- Election of Vice Chair – There was an anonymous vote for the Vice Chair through Survey Monkey. Courtney tallied the votes and announced that the winner of the election was Kaiya Andrews. Everyone congratulated her and thanked Mike for his service as Vice Chair for the past two years.

## **8. Public Comment:**

Guest, Corey Atanda from [Fei Systems](#), which is a health information technology and consulting firm, thanked the Council for having him. He noted the critical importance of addressing health disparities for people with developmental disabilities. He asked for a copy of the power point presentation.

## **9. Summarize Meeting:**

Kirsten talked about the “next steps” for the Five-Year State Plan. She said that the draft plan would be posted for a 45-day public comment period, ending

around May 15, 2021. The 3 Planning Teams will then consider revising the plan based on public input. The full Council will vote on whether to adopt the revised version of the Goals and Objectives at their June 24, 2021 quarterly meeting.

The processors said Council Members did a good job helping one another, staying on time, and staying organized.

**10. Adjourn:**

The meeting adjourned at 2:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chelsea Hayward

Att. Roll Call Votes  
Draft State Plan Goals and Objectives

Roll Call Vote

Date: March 25, 2021

Name	Vote 1 -- Minutes			Vote 2			Vote 3		
	Yes	A.	No	Yes	A.	No	Yes	A.	No
<b>Kaiya Andrews</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Amanda Bianchi</b>				1			1		
<b>Julie Arel</b>									
<b>Gina Carrera</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Betsy Choquette</b>									
<b>Anastasia Douglas</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Melanie Feddersen</b>		1		1			1		
<b>David Frye</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Mike Gruteke</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Carol Hassler</b>									
<b>Hillary Hill</b>									
<b>Terry Holden</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Steve Kieselstein</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Dion LaShay</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Hannah Neff</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Candice Price</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Courtney Quinlan</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Jesse Suter</b>	1			1			1		
<b>John Spinney</b>									
<b>Havah Walther</b>	1			1			1		
<b>Crista Yagjian</b>	1			1			1		
Write in others as needed									

Those in grey did not attend the meeting -- 

# Goals and Objectives

Draft 2.4 (3/25/21) for public comment



## **Goal 1, Empowering People**

Vermonters with developmental disabilities and their family caregivers are empowered to make personally meaningful choices about their services, education, employment, guardianship status, healthcare, living situation, and relationships.

### **Objective 1.1, Leadership Development**

- The VTDDC will support self-advocates and family members to become leaders in the disability rights movement.

### **Objective 1.2, Support for Self-Advocacy**

- The VTDDC will support the long-term sustainability of the self-advocacy movement in Vermont.

### **Objective 1.3, Guardianship**

- In collaboration with stakeholders, the VTDDC will promote the widespread understanding of alternatives to full guardianship, including supported decision making, so that individuals with developmental disabilities can make meaningful choices about their lives.

### **Objective 1.4, Peer Support**

- The VTDDC will ensure that trained self-advocates are available to support and assist peers in creating and delivering person-centered plans.

### **Objective 1.5, Family Caregivers of Adults**

- The VTDDC will promote access to high quality information, especially regarding adult services, and help build a supportive network for family caregivers.



## **Goal 2, Gaps in Services**

The VTDDC will develop plans and advocate that the State address three gaps in critical services for people with developmental disabilities and their family members.

### **Objective 2.1, ADA Accessibility**

- In collaboration with community partners, the VTDDC will advocate that spaces used by the public for recreation, health, and wellness are fully accessible in Vermont.

### **Objective 2.2, Housing**

- In collaboration with community partners, the VTDDC will develop and promote a housing model that meets the need for adult living options that are affordable, promote independence, ensure necessary support, and assist in the development of friendships and other community connections.

### **Objective 2.3, Transportation**

- The VTDDC will work with the Agency of Transportation and other partners to develop and/or promote a transportation option for people with disabilities that is statewide, affordable, convenient, and flexible.



## **GOAL 3, Addressing the Needs of an Underserved Group**

VTDDC will advocate that individuals with complex disabilities and high support needs have equitable access to opportunities for employment, social engagement, and personal development.

### **Objective 3.1, Customized Employment**

- In collaboration with community partners, the VTDDC will develop and promote a model for customized, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with high support needs.

### **Objective 3.2, Continuing Education**

- In collaboration with community partners, the VTDDC will develop and promote a continuing education opportunity for individuals with high support needs that focuses on employment skills, greater social engagement, and increased independence.
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### **Goal 4, Systems Change**

The VTDDC will support policies and practices that promote self-determination, full community inclusion, and equitable access to high quality services and supports.

### **Objective 4.1, Raise Awareness**

- The VTDDC will conduct outreach and public awareness campaigns that change perceptions about the abilities and contributions of people with developmental disabilities.

### **Objective 4.2, Ongoing Policy Advocacy**

- The VTDDC will monitor state and federal legislation and policy, educating decision-makers as needed. Working through its Policy Committee, the VTDDC will be able to address issue that were not foreseen or that have grown to be a priority.

### **Objective 4.3, System of Care**

- The VTDDC will advocate that Vermont adequately fund Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). Vermont will have a stable and strong system to deliver HCBS that emphasizes long-term wellbeing over crisis care, and individualized, flexible supports over adherence to rigid service categories.

### **Objective 4.4, Direct Support Workforce**

- The VTDDC will advocate for the professionalization and stabilization of the direct care workforce through rate increases, value-based payments, increases to the minimum wage, and the creation of training opportunities that lead to career advancement.