

Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council
Draft Quarterly Meeting Minutes ~ June 30, 2022
via Microsoft Teams

Present: Kaiya Andrews, Julie Arel, Amanda Bianchi, Kate Daly, Anastasia Douglas, Melanie Feddersen, David Frye, Mike Gruteke, Hillary Hill, Michelle John, Steve Kieselstein, Adam Poulin, Candice Price, Courtney Quinlan, John Spinney, Jesse Suter, Havah Walther, Crista Yagjian.

Absent: Gina Carrera, Jonathan Gardner, Ted Looby, Lindsey Owen, Beth Sightler, Betsy Choquette, Hannah Neff.

Support Staff: Addison Gibbs.

Guests: There were no guests.

VTDDC Staff: Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, Chelsea Hayward

1. Welcome:

The Meeting began at 10:03 am. Mike welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending DDC's first hybrid meeting. Six council members chose to attend in person and 12 participated virtually.

- **Introduction to New Members and Ice Breaker**

Everyone introduced themselves and participated in the icebreaker. Mike asked, "What is/would be your Superpower?"

Council members said things like, "Getting outside. Traveling/teleportation. Healing. Flying. Solving the workforce crises. Being a wizard. Helping troubled kids. Reading minds"

- **Guidelines for Hybrid Meetings**

Kirsten reminded the group that we would all need to be patient as we work out this new meeting format.

- **Assign roles**

- Timekeepers were Amanda and Crista
- Keeper-of-the-Lists were Kate and Julie
- Processors were Candice and Susan
- Wellness people were Havah and Kaiya
- Jargon Busters were Courtney and Michelle
- Equalizer was Anastasia

- **Adopt Meeting Minutes from March 24, 2022**

Motion: Kaiya made the motion to accept the meeting minutes from March 24, 2022. Amanda seconded.

Motion passed: Mike declared the minutes passed.

2. Tributes with Mike Gruteke:

Mike talked about two champions of the disability community.

- **Remembering Deb Lisi-Baker**

Vermont's DD community lost advocate Deborah Lisi-Baker. She was a single mom who worked her way to become Executive Director to the Vermont Center for Independent Living. She was fierce, gentle, and has been arrested several times standing up for a cause she believed in. She will be missed dearly. Mike shared a heartfelt message from Deb while Kirsten shared pictures digitally.

- **Retirement of Treasurer Beth Pearce**

Treasurer Beth Pearce announced her retirement due to health concerns. Thanks to Beth, Vermont has one of the strongest ABLE account programs in the nation. The group signed a thank you card to Treasurer Pearce.

3. Policy Committee Report:

Susan gave the floor to Havah Walther.

- **Success Stories this Session**

- **H.720, now Act 183.** This law requires that the State stand up three new housing models for people with disabilities. Our Council had a lot to do with the law's passing and props to everyone who testified. The State will look to the Federal Government and other states for ideas. The bill includes funding for a staff person in the Department of Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) to oversee housing initiatives and connect DAIL to other government departments directly working on housing.
- **The Eugenics apology.** A formal apology was issued last session. This session, advocates sought to put action behind these words. At first the bill

did not include people with disabilities in the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Several people testified to make sure people with disabilities were added to the Commission.

Crista “jargon busted” the words “eugenics” and “reconciliation.”

- She explained that eugenics was the belief of “making better people” by taking away the ability to have children from people that they did not believe were “better.”
- “Reconciliation” means bringing groups together in full agreement. Here we are using “reconciliation” to mean “repairing an ugly part of history.”

- **Lessons Learned this Session**

Not having staff is something that affects us all. The governor originally wanted to give the workforce a 3% wage increase for workers who are providing direct-support services. Thanks to broad advocacy this was raised to 8%. The lesson learned was that it takes many coalitions coming together to advocate for change. The wage increase begins at the start of the State’s new Fiscal Year (July 1, 2022). Providers are hoping that this will lower the vacancy rate at agencies. The vacancy rate is the number of positions that are not filled by a staff member.

- **Taping our Thank You Message to law makers**

Susan welcomed self-advocates and family members to think about a thank you message to pass on to their legislators. Chelsea shared last year’s edited video as an example. Members volunteered to participate in the video project.

**“This is about you guys to make something
fun and meaningful.” – Susan Aranoff**

4. Draft Budget for FFY 2023:

Kirsten shared a slideshow of the proposed budget, as well as paper copies for members who attended in person (see Attachment B). She talked about level-funding, income, grants, staffing, operational costs, etc.

- **Proposed Budget**

Highlights from the budget presentation were:

- The proposed budget assumes that Congress will give Councils the same amount of funds as they did last year. While an increase is likely, we cannot count on it. Congress is unlikely to pass a federal budget until after the November Election. Therefore, we must wait until the end of the calendar year to know if there is a budget increase or not.
- With two significant grants for public health work, the Council's income is the highest it has ever been at over \$800,000. However, more than 25% of this money is designated for specific special projects to improve the health of Vermonters with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- The Executive Committee recommended setting aside \$120,000 for emergencies and/or the next federal fiscal year. This is the Council's usual practice.
- Staff salary goes to both general operating and State Plan Activities. Councils cannot spend more than 30% overall in general operating.
- Funds for "keeping the lights on" are increased less than 2%. This is due to a new State fee for Personnel Services.
- The budget provides \$18,000 to operate the Council itself. This includes mileage reimbursement, stipends, travel to the annual conference, and training for members.
- The only program that that staff seeks to fund through the budget (as opposed to through Program Committee recommendation) is Leadership. This is because staff must secure locations for Leadership's three weekends as soon as possible. Both the Center for Disability and Community Inclusion

and Disability Rights Vermont promised to provide some financial support for the Leadership Series.

- The budget suggests \$90,000 to the Program Committee for other projects and grants (This is lower than previous years).

There was a five-minute break before the vote. There was no additional discussion related to the budget.

- **Adopt Budget**

Motion: Crista made the motion to adopt the FFY'23 budget as presented by Executive Director Kirsten Murphy. Havah seconded.

Motion passed: 15-0-0.

5. Lunch:

Lunch went from 11:45pm to 1:00pm.

6. Executive Director's Report:

Kirsten went over the highlights that took place since the last meeting.

- **The Medicaid Program**

There was a lot going on with the federal Medicaid office. Medicaid shares the cost of Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). When a direct support provider assists someone, 50% of the cost is paid for by Vermont and 50% is paid by the federal Medicaid Office.

Vermont recently signed a new agreement with the federal Medicaid Office. This agreement is called "the Global Commitment waiver." In the waiver Vermont promised that it would not spend more than a certain amount through the Medicaid program. In exchange the Medicaid Office gives Vermont more flexibility in how they use their Medicaid money. One promising change is that this new waiver allows Vermont to spend Medicaid in certain ways for housing. This is because housing is so closely aligned with better health.

The new waiver also mentioned the need for Vermont to correct its case management services so that they are free from conflicts of interest. This is something the Council advocated for since it became a rule in 2014.

In other news, the federal Medicaid Office directed that Vermont would have 3 years (not 5 as originally proposed) to fix its case management services.

Finally, Medicaid signaled that it would be enforcing its Home and Community Based settings rule, which goes into effect March 17, 2023. All States were to have filed a Transition Plan with Medicaid, explaining how they would implement the new rule. Some aspects of the setting rule will be challenging for Vermont. For example, people who receive HCBS in home provider settings are entitled to: The same protections from eviction as a lease; a lock on their bedroom door; the right to have visitors at any time; the right to food when they want it; and privacy.

Vermont is one of six states selected for a visit by representatives of the federal Medicaid Office. This is rare and signals concern by the Medicaid authority that Vermont has not fully embraced the HCBS settings rule. They are also going to look at Heartbeet Life Sharing in Hardwick, VT to see if residents there have full access to the wider community.

- **Lots of Training Planned!**

Our program committee gave several grants for training projects. The trainings are Essentials for Living, SDM Strong, Employment for All, Leadership Summer Summit, and COPAA scholarships. (See Attachment C for details).

- **The Vermonter Poll**

The Council partnered with CDCI to add three questions to the Center for Rural Studies annual poll. CDCI is still analyzing the results. People are comfortable with inclusive education. They also agreed that people with disabilities contribute to the workplace equally to people without disabilities. Sixty-five percent (65%) of Vermonters surveyed disagreed with the statement “People with disabilities have the same quality of life as people without disabilities.”

- **Evaluation completed, Thank you!**

Kirsten thanked Council Members for finishing her review/evaluation.

7. What makes a house into a home?

Council members worked together to summarize all the important things that make a house feel like a real home. The theme that was repeated most often was “having choice.” (See Attachment D)

8. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

9. Summarize Meeting:

With 15 minutes left on the clock, folks talked about what they thought of the hybrid meeting.

What worked well:

- “Hearing has been good. I can hear who’s online and those in the meeting room.”
- “The only way I could have joined today!”
- “Saved gas and commute time.”
- “Good for people who can’t find childcare or support staff.”
- “Screen sharing privileges to everyone.”

What could have been better:

- “Improved video.”
- “GO BIG.”
- “Breakout rooms during lunch.”
- “See more people in person, please. It’s only quarterly.”

Candice was the processor. She said the meeting was good, but it was a little difficult seeing all of the hands raised. Things would have been easier if we were all in person.

Courtney gave a “shout out” to Mike for running his first meeting as Council Chair.

10. Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chelsea Hayward

Att.

Attachment A – Roll-call Vote

Attachment B – Budget presentation

Attachment C – Flier with trainings

Attachment D – Picture of the House/Home collaboration

Vote I was to adopt the budget as presented.

Name	Vote 1		
	Yes	A.	No
Kaiya Andrews	1		
Amanda Bianchi	1		
Gina Carrera			
Betsy Choquette			
Kate Daly	1		
Anastasia Douglas	1		
Melanie Feddersen	1		
David Frye			
Mike Gruteke	1		
Hillary Hill	1		
Michelle John	1		
Steve Kieselstein	1		
Ted Looby			
Hannah Neff			
Lindsay Owen, Esq.			
Adam Poulin	1		
Candice Price	1		
Courtney Quinlan			
Beth Sightler			
John Spinney	1		
Jesse Suter	1		
Havah Walther	1		
Crista Yagjian	1		
Write in others as needed			
	15		

Those in grey did not attend the meeting or were not present to vote.

Budget Presentation -- DRAFT

June 27, 2022

Income

INCOME	Amount	Total	Notes
Federal FFY'23 Allocation	\$ 527,570.00		Flat funding
CDC funds for Public Health	\$ 80,000.00		Designated Fund
Health Equity Grant	\$ 140,628.00		Designated Fund
Remaining balance from FFY'21	<u>\$ 120,000.00</u>		
	\$ 868,198.00		
Income Adjustments		\$ 868,198.00	<i>Highest ever!</i>
CDC Funds off budget	\$ 66,500.00		\$13,500 for VTDDC
Health Equity Grant	\$ 124,584.00		\$16,044 for VTDDC
Set Aside for FFY '24	<u>\$ 120,000.00</u>		
	\$ 311,084.00		
		\$ 557,114.00	

Fixed Expenses

Balance Forward			\$ 557,114.00
Salary & Benefits	\$ 376,821.00		
Operating - Office	\$ 43,900.00		
Operating - Council	\$ 18,000.00		
		\$ <u>438,721.00</u>	
			\$ 118,393.00

Available for Projects & Grants

Balance Forward			\$ 118,392.88
Leadership w/contributions	\$ 28,000.00		\$ 90,392.88

What might change?

- Congress likely to appropriate increase but not until December 2022.
- Carry-forward of \$120,000 will be adjusted by September.

What could you change?

- Reduce set-aside for FFY'24



VERMONT DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

Advocate. Change. Join.

Hello Neighbor!

The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council (VTDDC) is sponsoring several unique opportunities for Vermont's DD community to learn, network, and sharpen their skills.

Most of these trainings are paid for by VTDDC and **free** to participants, although some may have a small sign-up fee.

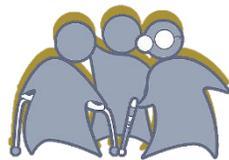
Contact vtddc@vermont.gov if any of these interest you.

LEADERSHIP SERIES

October 2022—January 2023

<https://ddc.vermont.gov/plan-and-projects/leadership-series>

Participants learn how to talk to legislators, promote positive attitudes about disability, and be inclusive. Activities build partnerships and increase each new leader's commitment to positive change.



TAKE THIS TRAINING IF...

- You are a self-advocate or family member.
- Already a Leadership Graduate? Join us for the **Summer Summit** on June 27th at 12:30 to 2:30 pm.

ESSENTIALS FOR LIVING

July 26-27, 2022

<https://essentialforliving.com/>

to check the materials.

These workshops focus on how to use the **Essentials for Living** curriculum to target and teach core skills for greater independence. Contact vtddc@vermont.gov for an application.

TAKE THIS TRAINING IF...

- You are a parent or provider supporting someone with higher needs, especially someone transitioning to adult services.



EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL!

July 14th—September 10th

<https://ddc.vermont.gov/employment>

Customized employment is an option! Attend 20 hours of online instruction on Thursday



evenings and Saturday mornings. Then finish up the training with a Saturday in-person session in Burlington.

TAKE THIS TRAINING IF...

- You're a parent or provider who supports someone with complex needs.
- You wonder how customized employment can become a part of their lifelong plan.

SDM STRONG!

July 30th—July 31st

<https://www.vermontfamilynetwork.org>

Learn about alternatives to guardianship, including supported decision-making. This weekend workshop is taught by Vermont Family Network, Green Mountain Self-Advocates, and the Disability Law Project on the campus of Castleton University.

TAKE THIS TRAINING IF...

- You're transitioning out of high school.
- You're a part of a team (family + support person) that aids someone transitioning to adulthood.



SEAT 1.0 SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVOCACY TRAINING

January – March 2023. Registration Starts November 2022

<https://www.copaa.org/page/SEAT> for a sample syllabus.

Registration is open with available scholarships. 10 sessions, 1 to 3 EDT. An introduction to special education advocacy for children/youth. Contact Kirsten.Murphy@Vermont.gov for an application.

Scholarships for SEAT 2.0 training are also available if you have taken SEAT 1.0.



TAKE THIS TRAINING IF...

- You're a parent who wants more special education advocacy skills.
- You'd like to understand critical provisions under federal law.



support to have friends

MARRIAGE - WE DID IT.

KIND STAFF

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

No violence