

Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council
Quarterly Meeting Minutes ~ December 2, 2021
via Zoom
Adopted March 24, 2022

Present:	Kaiya Andrews, Amanda Bianchi, Gina Carrera, Anastasia Douglas, Melanie Feddersen, David Frye, Mike Gruteke, Terry Holden, Steve Kieselstein, Dion LaShay, Ted Looby, Hannah Neff, Lindsey Owen, Adam Poulin, Candice Price, Courtney Quinlan, Beth Sightler, John Spinney, Jesse Suter, Havah Walther, Crista Yagjian,
Absent:	Julie Arel, Betsy Choquette, Hillary Hill,
Support Staff:	n/a
Guests:	Kirsten Isgro
VTDDC Staff:	Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, Chelsea Hayward

1. Welcome:

The Meeting began at 10:05 am.

- Introduce LEND Intern Kirsten Isgro – Kirsten Isgro is working with the Council as a LEND (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) intern. Kirsten is gathering research on women’s cervical, breast, and heart health. She will also host a focus group with self-advocates to ask questions about their interactions with doctors and health care professionals on these topics. The goal of Kirsten’s project is to create a health information guide in plain language that can be used by VT’s You First Program, which is a woman’s health project. Kirsten will also share her guide with contacts at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- Icebreaker and Introductions – Courtney called on members and guests to introduce themselves and list an animal they identify with and/or really like. Everyone took a few moments to say what they’d been up to, and animals ranged from lizards to mammals to birds to fish.
- Review Guidelines for Zoom meeting – Courtney read through a short list that described good meeting manners on Zoom, such as “mute when not speaking.” She also reminded everyone that self-care is important and members should take brakes as needed.
- Assign roles –
 - Jargon Busters were Steve and Mike
 - Timekeeper was Dion

- Keeper of the List was Havah
- Equalizer was Courtney
- Processor was David
- Wellness person was Crista
- Adopt Meeting Minutes from September – There was no discussion.

Motion: Crista made the motion to accept the meeting minutes from September 30, 2021. Mike seconded.

Motion passed: 17-1-0.

2. You are my Rock with Susan Aranoff:

Susan gave everyone permission to open their “mystery packets.” Inside, there were rocks shaped like birds, triangles, and totems or “talking sticks.” She asked everyone to pick up their triangles first as she talked about the history of where these rocks came from. “Like us,” she said, “each rock is unique. It has history and changes over time. Some have rough edges, and some have smooth edges.” Everyone was invited to draw on their rocks with pencils or pens during the meeting. Courtney read a poem about water by Margaret Atwood.

3. Program Committee:

Program Committee Chair Steve Kieselstein led the discussion about SEEDS grants. There were seven (7) applications in all, and the program committee recommended approving six (6) of them.

Steve noted that members may want to abstain from voting on certain grants if they happen to be involved with, or benefit from, any of the programs or organizations.

Members of the Program Committee took turns introducing the grant applications.

Organizations recommended for awards are:

- **Vermont Family Network with help from GMSA.** The applicants will educate up-to 15 families about Supported Decision Making during a

weekend-long retreat. The project directly supports Objective 1.3, and indirectly Objectives 1.1 and 1.2. The committee recommended awarding a grant of **\$10,000**.

- **ARC of Rutland.** ARC would like to build a Sensory Center in Rutland that can be used for activities and for teaching self-regulation. The project directly supports Objective 3.2. The committee recommended awarding a grant of **\$7,500**
- **Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports.** This application had two parts. The Committee would like to fund outreach and support for 100 new participants from the Mad River Valley region. The project directly supports Objective 2.1. The committee recommended awarding a grant of **\$5,000**.
- **Inclusive Arts Vermont.** This group would like the Council to support an artist-in-residence at an alternative program in the Burlington School District called “OnTop.” Committee member Courtney Quinlan talked passionately about how art has been a powerful tool in engaging her son in vocational and adult skill building. The Council talked about how important it is to develop a relationship with IAV and how future projects might bring this resource to underserved parts of the State. The project supports Goals 1 and 3. The committee recommended awarding a grant of **\$8,000**.
- **All Points.** This proposal involves training five (5) or six (6) teams of parents, guardians, and direct support professionals to create learning programs using the Essentials for Living curriculum. The training would focus on Vermonters with complex disabilities and substantial support needs. It directly supports Objective 3.1. The committee recommended awarding a grant of **\$9,785**.
- **Green Mountain Self-Advocates.** GMSA is seeking a small planning grant. They would use the funds to convene self-advocates who will write a proposal to the State (and possibly other sources) for supporting the continued education and supervision of paid, peer supports at

designated and specialized services agencies. This project supports Objective 1.4. The committee recommended awarding a grant of **\$2,500**.

Council Members talked about the importance of reaching all parts of the State through our work. Kirsten encouraged members to share information about the open SEEDS RFP local organizations who may be interested in applying. Information about SEEDS is posted on VTDDC's website and on the State Business Registry and Bid System.

MOTION: Steve made the motion for VTDDC to award the six (6) SEEDS grants as presented by the Program Committee. Havah seconded.

Motion passed: 17-1-0.

Note: Steve abstained from the All Points grant and Courtney abstained from VT Ski and Adaptive.

Steve reported that there is also a larger grant proposal from the **Green Mountain Self-Advocates**. The VTDDC is required by the DD Act to support a statewide self-advocacy organization and the training of self-advocates by their peers. In recent years, VTDDC has fulfilled this obligation by supporting a range of activities through the Self-Advocacy Project at GMSA. GMSA has proposed to continue this work, with some modifications.

The Council benefits substantially from this work as it covers several parts of the State Plan. Specifically, the grant would support Objective 1.1, 1.2, and 4.1. The committee recommended awarding a grant of **\$60,000**. This is the same level of support offered last year.

MOTION: Steve made the motion that VTDDC award Green Mountain Self-Advocates a grant in the amount of \$60,000 for the scope of work presented by the Program Committee. Crista seconded.

Motion passed: 16-0-1.

Please find attached the Program Committee's Report, which includes a full explanation of the proposed grants and organizations.

Steve also gave three (3) last updates. Not all the SEEDS money has been expended, and Kirsten has recently freed up a few thousand dollars in monies not spent by previous contractors. The Program Committee has done the following with these funds:

1. The SEEDS Request for Proposal has been put back out for additional applications. The deadline is January 31, 2022, and the amount available is \$7500.
2. The Committee received an application from an organization in MD that proposed providing training in customized employment. The Program Committee did not recommend funding this proposal. They have asked staff to put out a separate request for bid seeking a firm that could focus on training parents and self-advocates about customized employment and entrepreneurship.
3. The Committee has also asked staff to put out a request for bid seeking a contractor to assist the Supported Decision-Making Project with messaging and outreach. This was identified as a high priority when SEEDS grants were first posted, but no applications were submitted. Kirsten has suggested the Council may find it easier to contract with a vendor for this work, rather than offering a grant.

Finally, Kirsten noted that the Council is still waiting to hear what its allocation will be for FFY'22. Congress is likely to adopt another "continuing resolution" tomorrow, which is an action that will keep the federal government open. Unfortunately, under a resolution, all programs must continue to operate as if they have no increase over last year's funding. At this time, the VTDDC has spent or put out for bid all available funds. We anticipate more money when the continuing resolution ends, probably next February. This is frustrating, Kirsten said, because we have other promising projects in the works that she would like to bring to the Council for some funding.

– There was a 30-minute break for lunch –

4. Chair's Report:

Courtney announced that the VTDDC Chair and Vice-Chair elections will take place at the March Quarterly meeting. She asked Council members to think about how they want to serve the Council and ask themselves if they'd be a good fit for a leadership role. She also asked members to think about whether they would like to nominate some else on the Council who could be a good Chair or Vice-Chair. Anyone interested in standing for one of these positions should be directly in touch with Courtney.

This spring, there will also be three (3) individual/family member vacancies. Courtney will convene a Membership Committee. The Committee will recruit new members, review applications, interview candidates, and make recommendations to fill the open slots at the March Quarterly meeting.

5. Training for Council Members *with Kirsten Murphy*:

With a new Five-Year State Plan and elections coming up, Kirsten wanted to refresh Council Member's on their roles and expectations. **She asked, "What does Leadership on the Council look like?"**

- Roles and Responsibilities of Council member – She talked about the two important roles needed to make a Council work. Members are leaders who look toward the future and decide what the Council will accomplish. They vote on grants and membership, they share their experiences, and help keep everyone ethical and honest. Staff provide program management focusing on how to make the Members' vision come true.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair have extra responsibilities. The Chair facilitates Executive Committee and Quarterly meetings, appoints standing and special committees and the chairs of these committees, convenes Quarterly and special meetings, initiates the evaluation of the Executive Director, and serves on all committees. The Vice Chair must take on the Chair's duties whenever the Chair is not available.
- Review of Committees. There are four (4) standing committees named in the by-laws. All members who are not State employees are encouraged to serve on a committee after their first year of membership.
 - Executive committee, which meets 10x per year.

- Program committee, which meets once a month for most of the year.
- Policy committee, which meets 2x per month during the Legislative session and 1x per month the rest of the year.
- Membership committee, which convenes between January and March, when the Council is seeking new members.

Please find attached the Power Point presentation about Membership and Council roles.

6. You are my Rock with Susan Aranoff:

Susan explained that all the grey rocks sent to member were, at one time, on the bottom Champlain. She has collected them during visits to the Hero Islands. Council members held up their decorated rocks.

7. Policy Committee with Co-Chairs David Frye and Havah Walther:

David suggested that the Policy Committee draft a “thank you” letter to Senator Patrick Leahy, who is retiring from Congress at the end of his term. The Council agreed. Courtney tasked the Policy Committee with writing this letter, which all the public (non-State employees) can sign.

- Presentation of the 2022 Legislative Platform –
Susan Aranoff led the discussion, with Policy Committee members presenting each of the five recommended planks for this year’s Legislative Platform:
 - ⇒ Creating and funding an Independent Advocate for Developmental Services
 - ⇒ Eugenics reconciliation
 - ⇒ New Housing models for Home and Community-based Services (HCBS)
 - ⇒ Financial support for HCBS workforce, including automatic annual rate adjustments
 - ⇒ Extend Special Education Transition Services for transition-age students impacted by the pandemic.

The Policy Committee spoke about why the items on the platform were so valuable. Beth Sightler spoke passionately about the urgent need to address the workforce crisis, which threatens the Developmental Services System and

the safety and well being of the people it serves. Council members contributed to the discussion by speaking their truth, sharing experiences, and outlining their optimism or reservations about Vermont's future.

MOTION: Beth made the motion to adopt the 2022 Legislative Platform as presented by the Policy Committee. Courtney seconded.

Motion passed: 14-2-0.

8. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

9. Summarize Meeting:

David summarized the meeting. He said it went very well. The meeting stayed on time and was informational. He looks forward seeing everyone in March. "It was a great meeting!" he said.

To support the group's wellness, Crista asked everyone to find their breath. Breathe in five times. Notice the sounds around them, take note of their heartbeat and how they feel. She told members to think about all that they had gotten done in the meeting and to reflect on their own contributions.

10. Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 2:29 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chelsea Hayward

- Att. A. Roll Call Votes
 B. Program Committee Report
 C. Proposed 2022 Legislative Platform

Name	Vote 1			Vote 2			Vote 3			Vote 4		
	Yes	A.	No	Yes	A.	No	Yes	A.	No	Yes	A.	No
Kaiya Andrews	1											
Amanda Bianchi												
Julie Arel												
Gina Carrera	1			1			1			1		
Betsy Choquette												
Anastasia Douglas		1		1			1			1		
Melanie Feddersen					1		1				1	
David Frye	1			1			1			1		
Mike Gruteke	1			1					1			
Hillary Hill												
Terry Holden	1			1			1			1		
Steve Kieselstein	1			1			1			1		
Dion LaShay	1			1			1			1		
Ted Looby	1			1			1			1		
Hannah Neff	1			1			1			1		
Lindsay Owen, Esq.				1			1			1		
Adam Poulin	1			1			1				1	
Candice Price	1			1			1			1		
Courtney Quinlan	1			1			1			1		
Beth Sightler	1			1			1			1		
John Spinney	1			1			1					
Jesse Suter	1											
Havah Walther	1			1						1		
Crista Yagjian	1			1			1			1		
Write in others as needed												

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