

Approved Minutes
ADVOCACY, OUTREACH, AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, September 3, 2020
12:15 PM – 1:45 PM
Zoom

Meeting called by:

Sam Liss, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m.

Members Present:

- Ana Kolbach
- Bill Meirs
- Courtney Blasius
- Diane Dalmasse (ex-officio, non-voting)
- Sam Liss
- Martha Frank
- Cari Kelley
- Sherrie Brunelle

Members Absent:

- Brian Smith
- Helena Kehne
- Sarah Launderville
- Olivia Smith-Hammond

SRC Liaison:

None

SRC Coordinator:

- Kate Larose

Interpreters:

None

Speakers or Presenters:

None

Guests:

- Emily Marie Ahtúnan
- Asher Edelson

1) Introductions (Sam Liss)

Discussion:

Those in attendance went around the table and introduced themselves.

Conclusions:

Thanks to everyone!

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

2) Approval of Agenda (Sam Liss)**Discussion:**

Sam asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. Martha requested to add the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to other business. Cari moved to accept the agenda and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 7-0-0

Conclusions:

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

3) Open for Public Comment (Sam Liss)**Discussion:**

Asher and Emily are both prospective SRC members interested in the AOE Committee. Asher shared that he is happy to be here and learn more about important issues to disability including housing, transportation, employment, COVID, and more. Emily said she echoed Asher's comments and is also excited to be here, and eager to learn and help where she can.

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

4) Approval of Minutes for May 7, 2020 (Sam Liss)**Discussion:**

Sam asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the May 7, 2020 minutes. There were none. Sherrie moved to accept the minutes and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 7-0-0

Conclusions:

May 7, 2020 minutes were approved

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Upload approved minutes to the SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 9/8/2020

5) SSA Request for Comment- Economic Mobility (Group)

Discussion: Hiring of PWD/Remote Work Potential

Sam shared that the Social Security Administration requested comment about how people with disabilities could best be served in moving up the economic ladder, especially in light of the pandemic. Specifically, they want to learn what has been successfully done in the past, and what we've implemented that leads to success. For example, Sam said that as rehiring ramps back up he's wondering what can be done as we know that people with disabilities are often first fired and last hired. Sam asked if the AOE committee wants to submit comments.

Diane shared that the Social Security Administration just shared good news: they have made the decision to waive over payments of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance if people report the income. This decision has enabled people to accrue assets and open ABLE accounts (for some people up to \$15k), and they are in better economic shape than they have ever been in their lives.

Courtney asked if there was a time limit. Diane said that the decision was to report any over payments from mid-March to this week and they will be waived and that they are recommending that this be reported in writing as opposed to telephone.

Cari asked if someone is on Social Security but has not been able to find a job, if receiving back pay of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance an option. Diane suggested that the person connect with Sarah L'Homme who is the benefits counselor in Chittenden county.

Sam asked for other thoughts about how people with disabilities can be helped. Sherrie shared the experience of consumers with PASS plans and the new requirements to go through redetermination of eligibility. Any impediments that can be removed or limited to access tools such as PASS plans should be addressed.

Diane shared that education and training is a proven pathway to obtain higher economic mobility. Helping youth to access dual enrollment and higher education is important.

Asher shared that transportation is a critical piece of the picture and needs to be addressed as it is key to healthcare access and employment.

Martha agreed and added that she hopes the pandemic has enabled more doors to open around virtual employment opportunities.

Sam added that housing, transportation, and education are social determinates of health and invited everyone to join the SILC.

Courtney shared that public transportation is really important for people with disabilities who cannot drive.

Diane asked if Sam would be willing to draft a statement for the committee or the SRC and he said he would.

Emily shared her experience being told that she is unable to work from home due to zoning. Diane will connect her with a benefits counselor in Barre.

Conclusions:

Sam will create a draft to be sent out to committee for review. Comments are due by October 15th.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Draft a letter on behalf of the AOE Committee and email for review, **Sam Liss**, 9/10/2020

6) Legislative Updates (Group)

Discussion:

Sam referred to the [legislative updates](#) sent out in advance and highlighted some of the updates. He also shared yesterday's executive order on eviction moratorium due to non-payment of rent. He mentioned that the language in the Senate side which waives liability from the ADA and other pertinent legislation (for example, nursing homes would not be liable for injury that happened during the epidemic). The language was supported by the national Chambers of Commerce and there is strong opposition from the disability community.

Courtney shared that she attempted to attend the Sen. Casey Summit but there were issues with the streaming function. Sam said that many participants were unable to access the event and he passed along the notes from the event to committee members.

Diane shared that there is language that, if passed, would waive the 15% requirement that our federal award be spent on students and would allow another carryover year for funds that were not expended. She also shared that VR put in a re-allotment funding request for \$5.1 million which was awarded in its entirety, which is 50% of our total federal award so we will need to be very strategic about how we use it. VR agencies around the country recently turned

in \$300 million that could not be matched by state funds, which indicates to her that these funds will be available for some years to come for Vermont.

Diane shared that dual enrollment was one of the previous priorities of AOE and we had planned to get Jess DeCarolis on the agenda and we should revisit that. Martha shared that this is important to her as well.

Sam, Sherrie, and Diane will request to schedule Jess at a forthcoming full SRC meeting at today's steering committee meeting.

Diane shared the importance of being able to get permission to fill the vacant VR positions. Sherrie asked if there is a position the SRC can be take that would be useful, and shared the example of Bill Hudson's upcoming retirement and what a loss that will be to VR to not have someone in that position moving forward.

Conclusions:

See above

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Work with Steering Committee to get Jess DeCarolis on a forthcoming SRC committee meeting, **Sam Liss and Kate Larose**, 9/8/2020

7) Calendar of Upcoming Events (Group)

A. SILC Olmstead Meeting- Corrections Transition

Sam shared that a forthcoming invitation will be sent out.

B. Getting the Record Straight Project – Initial Report Release

Diane shared that we have been working on this for about two years with a number of partners as shared at previous meetings, and it is modeled off of Change the Story and wanting to do something similar for people with Public Assets Institute. They are hoping for a release in October.

C. Interagency Collaboration Event

This event will take place on October 13th and 27th from 9am-12pm. The event is currently in the planning stages and save the dates have gone out.

D. VFN Events

Martha [shared this link](#) to learn more about and register for the upcoming events below being organized by Vermont Family Network:

- September 18 from 1 pm – 2:30 pm – VCDR Town Hall: Back to School for K-12 Students in Vermont with Disabilities or Special Health Needs.
- September 21 from 12 noon – 1 pm – Wordless Humor and the Element of Surprise to Increase Connection with Older Kids and Tweens at Home.
- Details Coming Soon! September date TBA – Preparing Families to Provide Testimony About Changes to Special Education Rules.

- October 1 from 10 am – 11 am – Coverage to Care: Insuring Vermont Families.
- October 19 from 9 am – 10 am – Family Strategies for Mitigating the Long-Term Effects of the Pandemic
- October 29 from 12 noon – 1 pm – Disabled Children’s Home Care (VT’s Katie Beckett Medicaid) Eligibility & New Application.

Conclusions:

See above for events to attend

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Forward Martha’s email to AOE Committee Members, **Kate Larose**, 9/3/2020

8) Other Business (Chair)

A. SILC Emergency Preparedness Kit: Sam shared that DBVI and possibly VCIL will be distributing hard copies. The electronic version is included on several websites. More information and an electronic version of the toolkit can be [found here](#).

B. New SILC Website: Sam shared that the [new website](#) has launched and invited people to take a look at the different pages and resources.

C. VFN 2020 Virtual Conference Report: Martha shared that the conference sessions will be [rescheduled](#) and that the online learning series, [Persevering in the Pandemic](#), will be offered.

D. SILC Funding: Sam shared that the SILC has some funding to partner with other groups to tackle topics such as housing. Martha mentioned that housing was a strong topic that came up for the YAC for transition aged youth and suggested that Sam connect with Tara Howe.

E. Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

Martha shared that students with disabilities will now be listed as a demographic group in the YRBS through the inclusion of two new questions (including, “Have you been on a 504 or IEP now or in the past?”). This is exciting news and something they have been trying to achieve for years.

F. Executive Order: Sam asked Bill what the status is of the 2015 executive order on employing people with disabilities. Bill shared that the [Disability Employment Working Group](#) was formed as a result, and the partnership with Creative Workforce Solutions came out of that. He shared that progress has been made and they will have a liaison in HR this year specifically tasked with further growing this program.

9) Adjournment (Sam Liss)

Discussion:

Sherrie moved to adjourn. All approved. Vote unanimous 7-0-0

Conclusions:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:47pm

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 9/8/2020
- Draft minutes emailed to Committee members, **Kate Larose**, 9/8/2020
- Minutes approved, **Committee**, 11/5/2020
- Approved minutes uploaded to website, **Kate Larose**, 11/10/2020