

Draft Minutes
ADVOCACY, OUTREACH, AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 5, 2020
12:15 PM – 1:45 PM
via Zoom

Meeting called by:

Sam Liss, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m.

Members Present:

- Ana Kolbach
- Bill Meirs
- Courtney Blasius
- Diane Dalmasse (ex-officio, non-voting)
- Sam Liss
- Martha Frank
- Cari Kelley
- Helena Kehne
- Asher Edelson
- Cara Sachs

Members Absent:

- Brian Smith
- Sarah Lauderville
- Olivia Smith-Hammond
- Sherrie Brunelle

SRC Liaison:

None

SRC Coordinator:

- Kate Larose

Interpreters:

None

Speakers or Presenters:

None

Guests:

- Emily Marie Ahtúnan

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. Courtney moved to accept the agenda and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 9-0-0

Conclusions:

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

3) Open for Public Comment (Sam Liss)

Discussion:

None

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

4) Approval of Minutes for September 3, 2020 (Sam Liss)

Discussion:

Sam asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the [September 3, 2020](#) minutes. There were none. Cari moved to accept the minutes and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 9-0-0

Conclusions:

September 3, 2020 minutes were approved

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Upload approved minutes to the SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 11/10/2020

5) Legislative Updates (Group)

Discussion:

Sam walked through the [legislative updates](#) document sent out in advance and provided some additional information (below)

Federal Legislation

Ticket to Work

Diane shared that both she and James are opposed to these proposed changes, and she will forward what was written up and submitted with the committee. In the last fiscal year Vermont VR drew down \$2.4 in ticket revenue (may be number one in the nation per capita for ticket holders served) and they feel that this would be negatively impacted by the proposed changes.

COVID-19 Legislative Response

Sam added that both Pelosi and McConnell are expecting to have a stimulus bill in the lame duck session. Liability shields are one of the main points of contention between the House and Senate bills.

Medicaid Buy Ins

For people who lost their employment due to COVID, there will be no adverse rulings at least until January, but it is expected to extend further than that. Sam said that according to Betsy Choquette, Vermont has implemented certain procedures to ensure that people who have temporarily lost their employment will not lose their Medicaid Buy-In eligibility.

Employment Disincentives

Asher asked what CDB and DAC stand for and if there are state level actions/protections that can be taken, or if it is only federal. Sam said that CDB is "Childhood Disability Beneficiary" and DAC stands for "Disabled Adult Child". Diane said this is a question for Department of Vermont Health Access.

State Legislation

Special Education Pandemic Implications

Martha shared that they have been working closely with AOE to ensure that adequate transition services are provided, noting that it is local control in each school. She also noted that the pandemic does not change the requirements for safe, free and appropriate education.

The YAC will be having a planning meeting this afternoon, and they recently hosted a core interagency event with five young people as panelists (including one YAC member), and they did a great job. They are always actively recruiting for YAC and will be talking about a youth summit as the year goes on. Sam added that SILC has funds to assist with priority gaps. In the past housing for transition aged youth has been named as a priority. This includes not only monetary resources, but also finding the housing itself: housing that is

accessible, affordable, integrated. Martha added that it's important to define what is meant by transition aged youth and housing. For example does it mean just accessibility or does this also include skillsets and resources for independent living. Diane said that their Jobs programs are anecdotally seeing a rise in homelessness which is likely attributable to the pandemic (many youth were previously couch surfing but many of those couches are no longer available).

2021 State Budget

Though there are not currently any significant cuts to human services for 2021, budget revisions are a possibility when the Legislature convenes for the new biennium. Diane said that the outlook for 2022 could also be okay if there is a stimulus package that includes aid to states but if this does not come to fruition the consequences will be dire.

Hearing Aid Insurance Mandate

Diane shared that if the SRC asks VR for information they are required to provide that. Though the Department of Vermont Health Access needs to do additional research to provide a better understanding of the fiscal impacts of such a mandate, it sounds like there is a possibility for the administration to be supportive. Floyd Nease and Bill Botzow were both key supporters, and Barb Prine at Legal Aid's Disability Law Project has been working on this issue for years. VR sets aside \$80k-\$100k a year for hearing aids so if this passes VR could utilize these resources to meet additional needs of Vermonters.

Vacant VR Positions

Diane shared her thanks with the AOE Committee for their advocacy. VR received blanket permission to fill VR counselor positions so that as vacancies occur VR now has permission to recruit and fill these positions (which was previously denied). Both Dick Sears and the Human Resources Commissioner advocated to help make this happen.

Conclusions:

See above

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Share VR Ticket to Work response with AOE Committee, **Diane Dalmasse**, 11/20/2020
- Connect with DVHA about research on Hearing Aid Insurance Mandate, **Sam Liss**, 12/3/2020

6) Calendar of Upcoming Events (Group)

A. Working w/ Disability Project: Initial Report Release

(Previously referred to as Getting the Record Straight.) Diane reminded the committee of the context of this project: they have been working on this for two years with a number of partners and Public Assets Institute, and it is modeled off of Change the Story. They are working on branding effort with

The Place which includes stories, history, and a policy timeline. The aim is to do a series of three reports—approximately one a year—with a target audience including the general public, employers, policy makers, people with disabilities, and there will also be a general focus on disability rights. There will be a soft release in the coming weeks which will consist of putting the report on partner websites, and there might be a press release in early January.

Sam shared the news of Travis Roy's passing. He was a speaker at past statewide events including the transportation summit, and Governor Scott shared remarks about Travis during a [recent press briefing](#). Sam asked if there might be a way to link this to the roll out, or if we might want to ask if Ted Kennedy, Jr. or others might be interested in providing support in this effort.

B. Dual Enrollment

Diane highlighted that the full SRC meeting in December will include a panel on dual enrollment, which was an issue the AOE committee identified a year ago. VR is partnering with College Steps which provides PSE support. They currently have a program called Project Compass which is for young people who do not have developmental disabilities but who have other disabilities requiring a higher level of support to be successful in their first year in the Vermont state college system. In January they will be launching a pilot project with CCV in central VT. If it goes well the intention is to expand this pilot to all 12 CCV sites around the state.

Conclusions:

See above

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

n/a

7) Other Business (Chair)

A. Card Room 2021 Update

Sam reminded the committee of the annual event at the statehouse card room that the SRC has hosted in past years. Due to COVID, it was cancelled in 2020. Kate shared that the room had been reserved for 2021 but that she received an email from the office of the Sergeant-At-Arms that they would not be holding events in the state house in 2021. The committee decided to enter the lottery to get a card room date for 2022.

Diane wondered what a virtual Card Room event might look like. The committee supported this idea. Asher said that a Facebook event would be worth considering and asked about committee member roles in regard to SRC advocacy. Sam stated that we have every right to advocate, and that members should not hesitate to reach out to legislators one-on-one.

Conclusions:

See above

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Apply for the 2022 Card Room lottery, **Kate Larose**, 1/4/2021

8) Adjournment (Sam Liss)

Discussion:

Cari moved to adjourn. All approved. Vote unanimous 8-0-0

Conclusions:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50pm

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 11/10/2020
- Draft minutes emailed to Committee members, **Kate Larose**, 11/10/2020
- Minutes approved, **Committee**, 1/07/2021
- Approved minutes uploaded to website, **Kate Larose**, 1/12/2021