

Draft Minutes
ADVOCACY, OUTREACH, AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 4, 2021
12:15 PM – 1:45 PM
Waterbury State Office Building, Ash and Zoom

Meeting called by:

Asher Edelson called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m.

Members Present:

- Asher Edelson
- Bill Meirs
- Cara Sachs
- Cari Kelley
- Courtney Blasius
- Diane Dalmasse (ex-officio, non-voting)
- Emily Marie Ahtúnan
- Laura Siegel
- Martha Frank
- Sarah Launderville
- Sherrie Brunelle

Members Absent:

- Ana Kolbach
- Calla Papademas
- Helena Kehne

SRC Liaison:

None

SRC Coordinator:

- Kate Larose

Speakers or Presenters:

- Lynne Cleveland Vitzthum

Guests:

- Matthew Corjay

Interpreters

- Jen Rainey
- Nora Kennedy

1) Introductions (Asher Edelson)

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 (Asher Edelson)

Discussion:

Asher asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. Sherrie moved to accept the agenda and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 10-0-0

Conclusions:

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

3) Open for Public Comment (Asher Edelson)

Discussion:

None

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

4) Approval of Minutes (Asher Edelson)

Discussion:

Asher asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the [Minutes from September 3, 2021](#). Cari moved to accept the minutes and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 10-0-0

Conclusions:

September 3, 2021 minutes were approved

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Upload approved minutes to the SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 11/9/2021

5) Legislative Updates (Group)

Discussion:

- A. [Federal Legislation](#)
- B. [State Legislation \(End of Session Summary\)](#)

Asher walked through the state and legislative updates detailed above.

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- n/a

6) Discussion: Advocacy Goals (Group)

Discussion:

Asher asked people to reference the AOE Committee retreat notes shared in the advance of the meeting listed below:

AOE Committee Notes from October 7, 2021 Annual SRC Retreat

What would you like the priorities of your committee to be in the year ahead?

- *New branding work, important for the committee to help advertise and promote with consumers, and handing materials out*
- *VFN is having an in person conference next year in Chittenden County and would like to promote and attend that gathering.*
- *We miss seeing people in person and it would be good to see people in person again. Would like to consider a hybrid model for meetings.*
- *Would like to address the red-tape of being a consumer of VR (for example in order to get a PASS plan one needs to prove all over again that they're too disabled to work), of Social Security, state programs, and other benefits. Navigating it all is a full-time job and people would get further if the systems were simplified and less overwhelming. AOE could join with other groups to attempt to collaborate on an advocacy plan to demand bureaucratic reform.*
- *To assist with the above, AOE could invite Betsy Choquette and James Smith to come to a meeting and provide a historic perspective/context and help us prioritize which aspects to work on first and we could work with our Congressional delegation. VR's benefits counselors are also a resource that could help.*
- *We want to ensure that VR stays within DAIL.*
- *AOE wants to focus on opportunities for advocacy and outreach efforts in communities and around the state and re-align with the mission statement: How can we be more active and engaged? We want to help*

more and not exactly sure how to do this. We want to focus on a structural piece of this, create plans and execute plans.

- We would like a closer relationship with VCDR and move things on that platform that are important to this committee.*
- Create an update of our Legislative priorities for the year*
- Continue to host a card room event at the state legislature*
- Support the roll out and promotion of "Our Time is Now".*

What are the goals and action steps to get there, and what should our roles be?

- Connect more with VCDR and tie into their work.*
- Focus on a vision of a changed world- we need a vision of what that world will be and work backwards to meet that. Our group can have immense power to benefit VR consumers and removing barriers.*
- Use the rebranded material to educate the general public about VR issues and to advocate to the legislature.*
- We want to follow how elected officials are voting on pieces of legislation.*
- Getting the word out that VR even exists and making connections in schools as many families are not familiar with VR.*
- Ensuring that we have at least one person at all VCDR meetings.*
- Cari and Courtney are interested in connecting to VCDR moving forward.*

Asher mentioned that last year the AOE drafted both a [statement of support for H.266](#) as well as a list of [legislative priorities](#) that were adopted by the SRC. Members mentioned that it would be useful to do something similar for the year ahead.

Sherrie said the P&P Committee spoke at length about transportation and wondered if there are overlapping areas that the AOE Committee wanted to partner on.

Cari shared that the committee talked about increasing the spending guidelines and providing for flexibility in areas such as purchase, repair, drivers education, and CRASH. Paratransit, fixed bus routes, and micro transit were also discussed.

Asher invited revisions to current statement of H.266 support by the end of next week. Sarah suggested that we include any VR data in the letter about the cost of services.

Conclusions:

See above.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Email Kate with revisions to H.266 statement of support, **All AOE Members**, 11/12/2021
- Email to obtain data about cost of hearing aid services, **Kate Larose**, 11/12/2021
- Draft updated statement of support for H.266, **Asher Edelson and Kate Larose**, 11/17/2021

7) Presentation: Money Follows the Person (Lynne Cleveland Vitzthum)**Discussion:**

Lynne provided an overview of the [Money Follows the Person](#) demonstration grant, which is currently slated to end September 2025.

Diane added that paying for environmental assessments is much bigger than just environmental—it includes assistive technology assessments across the board and VR has unsuccessfully attempted to work through this with Medicaid over the years to get a billing code to cover assessment. Lynne added that it doesn't make sense that Medicaid will pay for the assistive technology (AT) itself, but not the cost of the assessment for which AT is needed.

Sherrie asked what the vision is for attendant services. In South Burlington there is a program that might be considered a model in terms of shared housing. Lynne shared that it's an ongoing discussion within DAIL and that, at the moment, several families have come forward to request different living situations.

Emily asked if it would be possible to learn more about how people with chronic illnesses who have Social Security income too high to qualify for Medicaid (and thus don't qualify for many services and supports) might be better served in the future. Lynne said that though this project doesn't focus on that population specifically, they will continue to look at

Diane shared that VR could provide a more thorough presentation on the VR side of this grant once they hire the new project manager.

Sherrie asked if Sarah could provide a presentation on the model in Japan.

Conclusions:

See above.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Include the two items above in the minutes for future AOE meeting agendas, **Kate Larose**, 11/9/2021

8) Calendar of Upcoming Events (Group)

A. Spirit of the ADA Awards

Diane reported that the Governor's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities has selected 13 businesses for the awards and she will pass along the date when it becomes available.

B. My Eyes Are My Ears; My Hands Are My Voice

Laura shared [this upcoming event](#) taking place on November 10th in the chat box.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Email Spirit of the ADA Awards event information to Kate to share with AOE committee members, **Diane Dalmasse**, 11/30/2021

9) Other Business (Chair)

A. Agenda Setting: January 6, 2022

It was decided that the following items would be included on the next agenda:

- Vote: Chair Election
- Presentation: Japan Model

Future agenda items to include presentations on Our Time is Now and a VR overview from the incoming VR project manager for Money Follows the Person.

Conclusions:

See above

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- n/a

10) Adjournment (Asher Edelson)

Discussion:

Asher moved to adjourn. All approved. Vote unanimous 9-0-0

Conclusions:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:41 p.m.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 11/9/2021
- Draft minutes emailed to Committee members, **Kate Larose**, 11/9/2021
- Minutes approved, **Committee**, 1/6/2022
- Approved minutes uploaded to website, **Kate Larose**, 1/11/2022