



Members Present: Shawn Allen, Shannon Blosser, Steve Brady, Rachel Brown, Lesley Cottrell, Carissa Davis, Christen Dougherty, Jackie Erb, Darla Ervin, Rose Fair, Lynsay Fry, JaQue Galloway, Susan Given, Tracy Harnett, Sheri Mills, Lydia Milnes, Cara Price, Charlotte Roth, Tonya Rutkowski, Anna Smith, Jessica Sykes, Mel Woodcock

Members Absent: Stephen Barr, Cynthia Beane, Vanessa Combs, Richard Hammons, Kim Hawkins, Amber Moore, Jacqueline Proctor, Samantha Ribeiro Matos, Paulette Southerly, Marsha Spiker

Staff present: Katie Arbaugh and Tina Wiseman

INTRODUCTION

Jessica Sykes, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed Council Members. Jessica asked for Member introductions. Jessica asked Tina to review the agenda and meeting materials with Council Members. Jessica asked Charlotte Roth to read the Council's Mission Statement. Jessica asked Tina to introduce the icebreaker called "Table Questions."

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of January 28, 2025, Meeting Minutes: Jessica asked members to take a few minutes to review the past meeting minutes. **Lynsay moved**, and **Rose seconded** the motion to approve the January 28, 2025, meeting minutes. There was no discussion. **Motion carried. No nays or abstentions.**

NEW BUSINESS

Grant Funding and Designated Stipends for FFY 2026: Jessica asked Tina to review the grant funding and designated stipends for FFY 2026. Tina went over the current status of DD Council funding at the federal level.

- On April 16, 2025, the news media published a leaked federal Office of Management and Budget pre-decisional budget for Health and Human Services.
- This leaked budget proposes to eliminate funding for approximately 131 federal programs, including the state Developmental Disabilities Councils.

- Tina reminded Members that the WVDDC is non-partisan. Functioning as a non-partisan office and Council is what helps us be successful.
- We cannot lobby, but we can educate and advocate.
- This leaked budget is not final; it is a pre-planning budget. It is also important to remember that the first budget Congress considers is rarely the final budget that passes.
- We need to lead discussions with facts, not emotions.
- Importantly, we need to continue our good work. Our goal is to complete all funding obligations for FFY 2025 with no cuts or reductions.
- We are still awaiting the rest of our FFY 2025 funding from ACL, in the amount of \$405,954.
- The Council has \$620,555.00 in federal EY 24 and EY 25 funding that could be used starting October 1, 2025. If we can use this funding, we will be able to fund one more year of activities. The Council would need to re-prioritize activities.

Members had questions and much discussion about this issue. Lesley Cottrell and Susan Given also provided insight into what they are working on individually and collectively as DD Act partners.

Next steps are to:

- Work with State and National Partners
- Continue to show our successful work to be good stewards of federal funding in an effective and efficient way.
- Stay positive
- Stay informed
- When talking with policymakers and lawmakers, always remain calm and respectful. Tell your story and how these cuts will impact you and your family.

Tracy moved, and **Sheri seconded** the motion for Council staff to call an emergency virtual meeting of the Council with two weeks' notice to discuss future budget issues when Council staff receive more concrete information about FFY 2026 funding. **Motion carried.** **No nays or abstentions.** Council staff will continue to update Members on actions at the federal level.

Nominating Committee

Carissa Davis reviewed the Nominating Committee meeting minutes. She informed the Council that there are three Members who applied to serve a second term. The Committee recommends the Council approve the following members for a second term: Tracy Hartnett, Charlotte Roth, and Anna Smith.

The Nominating Committee reviewed six applications for membership. The Council needs to recruit members from the central and southern parts of the state. All applications were in the northern part of the state or Kanawha County where there are already 1-3 Members.

The Nominating Committee decided to have staff solicit Member applications from areas that are not currently represented on the Council.

Carissa moved to approve the three Members for a second term and for Council staff to solicit again for Members in unrepresented areas of the state. **Darla seconded** the motion. **Motion carried. No nays and three abstentions.** Tracy Hartnett, Charlotte Roth and Anna Smith abstained from voting on their membership applications.

Per the bylaws, JaQue Galloway and Richard Hammons will remain as active Council Members until nominations are accepted for their expiring terms.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Jessica asked Tina to review the final legislative report with Members. The Council actively followed 43 bills during the 2025 legislative session. The legislature introduced 2,460 bills and passed less than 10% of these bills. See the handout for more information.

MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Tracy Hartnett was interviewed by the Huffington Post for the article titled, *Proposed GOP Medicaid Cuts Could Hit These Red States Hardest*. This article is included in the meeting packets

Katie recognized **Members who participated in Disability Advocacy Day at the Legislature**. She recognized the following for their contributions: Shannon, Carissa,

Christen, Lynsay, Tracy, Samantha, Charlotte, Anna, Paulette, Disability Rights of WV, LiveAbility, Olmstead Office, WVU CED, People First of WV, and Expectations Matter.

NEW AND UPCOMING

Steve Brady gave Members an update on the APSE WV Chapter that is under development in West Virginia.

Lesley Cottrell gave Members an update on the upcoming Disability Conference.

Tina and Katie gave Members an update on upcoming Council-sponsored events:

- Derby Dreams and Cowboy Scenes by the Special Needs Collaborative for WVDDC State Plan Input, Princeton, WV on May 17th.
- Coming Home: Before & After Deinstitutionalization in West Virginia – Statewide Premiere – June 5th at the WV Culture Center
- 2025 Statewide Secondary Transition Conference – June 17 & 18th in Charleston, WV
- Medical Safeguarding by the SRV Implementation Project – Virtual – June 24 & 25th

QUARTERLY STAFF REPORT

Jessica asked Tina and Katie to provide the quarterly staff report to Members. A copy of the handout is in the meeting packet.

STATE PLAN UPDATE & ACTIVITY

Council members engaged in a State Plan preparation by reviewing and analyzing the data submitted through the Council's State Plan survey.

CLOSING AND ADJOURNMENT

Announcements: Lynsay Frye was recently voted for the office of Secretary on the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council.

Public Comment(s): None.

Council Members' Questions, Comments and Concerns: None.

Adjournment: Jessica asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Shannon moved**, and **Cara seconded** the motion to adjourn the meeting. Meeting **adjourned**.