

West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council
July 27, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting, Charleston, WV
Minutes

Members present: Kenneth Accord, Doug Auten, Brandy Beery, Steve Brady, Cynthia Brockman, Janie Cole, Lesley Cottrell, Delmar Davis, Julie Dial, Tonya Eve, Lynsay Frye, Susan Given, Richard Hammons, Tracy Hartnett, Kim Hawkins, Randy Hill, Susan Loudermilk, Jacqueline Proctor, Charlotte Roth, Pam Roush, Jessica Sykes, Sheila Zickefoose

Members absent: Rhonda Blosser, Janice Bostic, Marc Ellison, Susan Beck, James Gallaher, JaQue Galloway, Sherill Hoffman, Anna Smith, Ashley Stewart

Guests: Emily Hopta

Staff present: Steve Wiseman, Linda Higgs, and Christy Black

Call to Order, welcome: Brandy called the meeting to order and welcomed Council members. Brandy went over the packets.

Introductions and Announcements: Brandy welcomed everyone and asked for introductions.

Cynthia Brockman read the mission statement.

Announcements: Steve Wiseman announced that Mary Jane Waldron Director of the Division of Rehabilitation Services; Dawn Embry King, Program Specialist, Department of Education Office of Special Education; and Linda Watts Commissioner of the Bureau for Children and Families retired this month.

HB 2290 passed this last legislative session with help from the Council. It established WV as an “Employment First state.” The legislation established an Employment First Taskforce and required a plan and policy be established. The Council is one of about twenty members.

The premise behind employment first is that people with moderate and severe levels of disability can get regular jobs in regular workplaces making regular wages given adequate supports and opportunities. Competitive, integrated employment is the first desired outcome for working-aged people with developmental and other disabilities. One of the keys to employment first is to hold high expectations.

Approval of April 27, 2021 Minutes: Brandy asked for any corrections to the Minutes. Hearing none, **Lynsay moved** and **Jessica seconded** the motion to approve the Minutes. There was no discussion. **Motion carried.**

New Business

State Plan Approval: Steve Wiseman reported that we advertised the State Plan for 45 days following the Council's approval of the Draft Plan at the last Council meeting. We did not receive any comments. The new Plan will take effect on October 1st. The previous Plan was good, but the Council has not been able to do all the objectives. The Council had voted to study and develop recommendations for increased hours of respite care in the I/DD Waiver program, and to develop or participate in a State Task Force to address the increasing inability of I/DD Waiver providers and families to find, hire, and keep adequate direct support personnel. The respite issue was raised in many of the surveys the Council sent around the state. Family members, adults with developmental disabilities, service providers, and advocates have expressed concerns that WV is having a workforce crisis. Problems are being experienced in the recruitment, retention, and hiring of good staff for people with I/DD. The Council staff have been meeting on how to best address the shortages with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Bureau Commissioners of DHHR as well as staff of DRWV and service providers. The DD Council and DRWV provided numerous recommendations in this regard. Steve shared copies of the plan, training curriculum, and certification standards from a state-wide direct support workforce project the Council developed in 2004 with a contractor and a group of stakeholders. These recommendations can serve as some starting points as we proceed with the new Five-Year State Plan. **Charlotte moved** and **Tracy seconded** the motion to approve the State Plan draft. **Motion carried.**

Grant Renewals: Jessica reported on behalf of the workgroup. The workgroup members were Rhonda Blosser, Steve Brady, JaQue Galloway, Sherill Hoffman, Pam Roush, Jessica Sykes, and Sheila Zickefoose.

People First of WV is a grant the Council has funded for many years. The Arc of the Mid-Ohio Valley has managed the project for 13 years and has helped groups get started in many areas of the State. People First is a self-advocacy movement that includes people with I/DD who lead their own groups and advocate on their own behalf. The DD Act requires Councils to support a self-advocacy organization. **Jessica moved** to approve the People First of WV grant in the amount of **\$84,480** with the stipulation that if they can pay the self-advocate coordinator more, the amount be increased by the amount necessary to do so. **Delmar seconded** the motion. **Motion carried.**

The **Fair Shake Network** is an organization that has been in existence in one form or another for more than two decades. The Council helped it to become a more formal organization 24 years ago when it granted them funds to become incorporated as a non-profit organization and hire a coordinator. The Fair Shake Network has held an annual day of training on the legislative process and legislative issues that their members have voted to include in their Disability Agenda. The following day has always been a day at the Capitol to be visible and raise awareness of their issues. It typically includes a rally. The Fair Shake Network is a cross-disability advocacy organization that advocates on behalf of people with disabilities of various types, including mental health and physical disabilities as well as I/DD. Except for a short period of time when the Division of Rehabilitation Services also provided a large amount of funding, the Council has always been the major funder of the organization. The DD Act requires Councils to provide support to a cross-disability organization. **Jessica moved**, and **Cindy seconded** the motion to approve the Fair Shake Network grant in the amount of **\$28,000**. **Motion carried.**

Saint Albans on Purpose is a project the Council has funded for two years to demonstrate methods that can be used by cities, towns, or local communities to promote community building – including people with I/DD in the life of the communities by becoming involved in projects with other community members

that help to improve the community. The intent is to demonstrate how this can be accomplished and to provide products that can be used by other communities.

Jessica moved and **Lynsay seconded** the motion to approve the grant in the amount of **\$78,200** with the stipulation that Nitro fund the planned Assistant Coordinator position and the Project Coordinator can devote some time to the Nitro project but must follow through with deliverables.

Charlotte asked if Nitro has a lot to do with DD Councils. Steve explained Nitro is across the river from St Albans. Nitro liked the project and is interested in replicating it with American Rescue Plan funds. Steve mentioned that the project Coordinator stated that South Charleston and Huntington are also interested in the project. Steve stated that our objective is not to fund every town, but to produce materials so that other towns can do the project also. **Motion carried.**

The **Student Success Project** is a project the Council has funded for two years to help address the low expectations that many people have of children who have developmental disabilities. The project is based on the idea that by raising expectations from an early age, students with I/DD will be better prepared to succeed in integrated employment after graduation from high school. The current grantee, Vocational Services, Inc., is building a website that includes resources for parents (and teachers and others) from the birth of their child through their school years to adulthood. These include videos of interviews with parents and individuals with I/DD who have successfully transitioned to community integrated employment. The videos feature people who talk about their experiences and barriers they have had to overcome to get where they are now. There is also a private Facebook page where parents of children with I/DD can ask questions, get advice, and share experiences with each other. The intent is to have a variety of ways to encourage the people around young children to see that they should expect the children to succeed. It is hoped that by raising the expectations many fewer students will “transition” to a segregated day program or become stuck at home with nothing to do. The Council believes this is one way to address its Employment First objective. **Jessica moved and Charlotte seconded the motion** to fund VSI in the amount of **\$76,760**. Delmar stated that he has always had a pet peeve about people not seeing the abilities of people with disabilities. People with disabilities should be able to live up to what their capabilities are. Cindy stated

that vocational services should be started as early as elementary school. The new Employment First Taskforce is one place where this will be showcased. **Motion carried.**

Mountain State Centers for Independent Living and Community Access are two grants the Council has had for many years to support the implementation of its State Plan.

The **Mountain State Centers for Independent Living** grant supports Governor appointed Members' participation and costs associated with quarterly and other Council meetings. It supports people with I/DD and family members to attend trainings events and offsets costs to provide training and publications. **Jessica moved** and **Pam seconded** the motion to approve the grant in the amount of **\$120,000. Motion carried.**

Community Access, Inc. supports the Council's Partners in Policymaking program, as well as research, quality assurance, and training coordination. This grant also supports the Council's social media presence, the production of video and other training materials, major training events and other State Plan initiatives. **Jessica moved** and **Sheila seconded** the motion to approve the grant in the amount of **\$200,000. Motion carried.**

Steve Brady reported on behalf of the Designated Stipends workgroup. The members were: Brandy Beery, Rhonda Blosser, Steve Brady, JaQue Galloway, Sherill Hoffman, Pam Roush, and Jessica Sykes.

The Arc of WV requested \$10,000 for the People First Annual Conference. **Jacqueline moved** and **Tonya seconded** the motion to approve the request. **Motion carried.**

Autism Society of WV requested \$6,000 for the Autism Across the Lifespan's 5th Annual Conference. **Steve moved** and **Cindy seconded** the motion to approve the request. **Julie abstained. Motion carried.**

Fair Shake Network requested \$3,000 for the Annual Legislative Training Day and Disability Advocacy Day. **Steve moved** and **Charlotte seconded** the motion to approve request. **Motion carried.**

WV Autism Training Center requested \$5,000 for an Employment Workshop. **Steve moved** and **Tracy seconded** the motion to approve request. **Motion carried.**

WV Bureau for Behavioral Health requested \$5,000 for the Families Conference. **Charlotte moved** and **Kim seconded** the motion to approve the request. **Steve abstained. Motion carried.**

WV Statewide Independent Living Council requested \$5,000 for the WV Youth Leadership Forum. **Steve moved** and **Charlotte seconded** the motion to approve the request. **Motion carried.**

Budget Update – Steve presented his budget draft for Fiscal Year 2022 (that begins October 1, 2021). The proposal included Personnel Services (\$266,500) Current Expenses (\$84,100), Grants & Contracts (\$795,722). The total projection was \$1,146,311. These amounts represented level funding or slight increases from FY 2021 in each budget category.

The Council continues to have a substantial budget balance that will result in some allocated funds to be reverted to the federal government. This is due to the following factors:

The Council has not been able to fill two staff vacancies, the Administrative Assistant and the Program Specialist/Planner for a variety of reasons. The Division of Personnel and Governor's Office have recently approved the administrative position to be advertised, again. The Council is still waiting to get approval for the Planner position to be approved. The pandemic has caused a stop to in-person meetings and training events. This has resulted in a lack of expenses for intended travel and associated costs for both staff and Council members. Grantees have not been able to carry-out many of their plans since much of their work involves person-to-person activities. The Council has had difficulty in getting enough quality grant applications for the past couple years, and the Council has not

been able to expend funds such that it can easily move from the relatively new three-year to two-year obligation and expenditure limit that has been imposed by the federal Office of Grants Management. The Administration on Community Living has indicated it will not allow another grant extension for councils.

Tracy asked if the budget for stipends could be increased so we can use the money up. Steve explained that the Council honored all stipend applicant requests. He stated that some line items are flexible, and some are not. **Cindy moved, and Tracy seconded** the motion to approve the budget that Steve proposed. **Motion carried.**

Call for Investments Allotment – Lynsay moved and Charlotte seconded the motion of \$100,000 for a new Call for Investments to begin January 1. This Call for Investments will be based on all objectives of the new Plan. **Motion carried.**

Director's Update: Steve gave an update on what has been happening with Intermediate Care Facilities for people with IDD (ICF/IID) within the State. He explained that an ICF is a federally certified institutional residence. Steve stated that the Council has been actively involved in advocacy work with the DHHR administration, the legislature, and other parties. DHHR and the legislature are extremely concerned about the abuse and neglect that has been found in some of those facilities as well as in some IDD Waiver group homes. The DHHR has taken action against some providers, banned admissions, and required the relocation of some residents in the facilities. Some providers may be decertified by the federal government. The Council's position has been that the four-to-24 bed facilities are not appropriate places for people to live and argued against the building of new ones. The Council supports appropriate home and community-based services and settings. One activity is high level conversations with people at DHHR, providers, and advocates. There is a moratorium (the Hartley v. Matin, et.al. consent decree) on the building of more. None-the-less, the legislature passed a bill two years ago that permitted the building of six new facilities of four beds each. Four are intended to be transitional placements for adolescents who would return from out-of-state placements and two would be transitional placements for adults who need to leave Sharpe and Bateman state psychiatric hospitals. Thus far only one

adolescent has been served. Steve serves as Chairperson of the ICF/IID Transitional Services Committee.

Steve reminded members of the funds the Council received from the ACL to use to increase the COVID vaccination rate in WV. Related to this is the new State law passed by the legislature that requires the administration to get the legislature's approval prior to any COVID related spending.

We are working on the Council's federal State Plan reporting process. Submission of the new plan has been delayed until September 15th.

Brandy asked for volunteers for a PIP workgroup. She asked Christy to send out an email to the Council.

Brandy stated that the next Council meeting is **October 26th via Zoom.**

Jessica moved and **Charlotte seconded** the motion to adjourn the meeting.
Meeting adjourned.