



Council Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2020

Council Members Present:

Allison Bynum*
Jody Cheek*
Roddey Coe*
Jennifer Coleman*
Sarah Cripps*
Ryan Durham*
Tatum Fowler*
Lesley Guilaran*
Alicia Hall*
Chrissy Hood*
Lisa Johnson*
Jean-Marie Lawrence*
Linda Monterroso*
Tecia Puckett Pryor*
Brigham Scallion*
Gina Summer*
Karen West*
Brent Wiles*
Anna Lea Cothron, TCAD
Alison Gauld, Dept. Special Education
Bruce Keisling, UT Center for
Developmental Disabilities (UTCDD)
Mandy Johnson, Voc. Rehab. Services
Lisa Primm, Disability Rights TN
Mark Liverman, Dept. Mental Health &
Substance Abuse
Elise McMillan, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center
Rose Naccarato, Tenn. Commission on
Children & Youth
Bettie Teasley, THDA

Staff Present:

Wanda Willis
Lynette Porter
Alicia Cone
Cathlyn Smith
Lauren Percy
Jolene Sharp
Emma Shouse-Garton
Ashley Edwards
JoEllen Fowler
Mildred Sparkman
Lauren McCabe (Intern)

Guests Present:

Alex Vohs, UT CDD

Council Members Absent:

Clancey Hopper*
Craig Lemak*
Martez Williams*
Jacqueline Johnson, Dept.
of Health
Brad Turner, DIDD

**denotes Governor appointed citizen*

9:00 a.m. Opening & Introductions

Council Chair Tecia Puckett Pryor called the meeting to order after ascertaining there was a quorum at 9:00 a.m. Tecia welcomed everyone and facilitated introductions.

Tecia then reviewed the meeting agenda.

9:15 a.m. Business Items

Approval of February 2020 Minutes

The February 28, 2020 Council meeting minutes were emailed to all the Council members prior to the May 1, 2020 Council meeting to give members an opportunity to review before the meeting. Tecia called for a motion to accept the minutes, as written, from the members present at the February meeting. **Roddey Coe moved to accept the February 28, 2020 minutes as written and Sarah Cripps seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion carried unanimously.**

Executive Director Report

Wanda Willis, Executive Director, encouraged members to read the staff report included in the email to members dated April 24, 2020. In addition to the notes in the staff report, Wanda updated Council members on the agency's work from home status. With few exceptions, the council staff are each working remotely during the work from home order given by the Governor in March 2020.

Wanda also shared insights gleaned from the COVID-19 Council member survey administered in March 2020. These insights have also been shared with the Governor's office and state agencies. Sarah Cripps suggested that in addition to sharing insights with the Department of Health, the Council staff might reach out to the Tennessee Medical Association for collaboration in sharing hospital visitor policy updates.

The Administration on Community Living (ACL), which administers developmental disability programs including Councils, has extended the timeframe that Councils have to spend their federal awards. The available dollars in the budget report can now be placed in projects and spent up until 2022.

Budget/Administrative Report

Lynette Porter, Deputy Director, gave an update on the federal award. To date, the Council has fully obligated \$1,498,192 of its FY19 award. The FY20 award currently has \$333,214 unobligated, pending a request from the Executive Committee later in the meeting.

Operationally, Lynette shared that JoEllen Fowler's job title has changed to more closely align with her expanded roles within the agency. Her new title is Office Resources Manager. In addition to this staffing update, all FY21 approved contracts are in the final stages of execution. Administrative staff have spent considerable time updating operational processes to align with the work from home order within state and federal regulations.

Audit Committee Report

Alicia Hall, Audit Committee Chair, presented a report from the audit committee. As outlined by the audit committee charter, the audit committee completes an annual review of the agency process for staff code of conduct acknowledgements. The annual staff code of conduct process is primarily facilitated by the Department of Human Resources. The committee conducted its annual review of the process in April. This was the last required audit committee task for fiscal year 2020.

9:30 a.m. Staff Reports

Public Policy

Lauren Pearcy, Director of Public Policy, shared updates on Council public policy work, highlighting priorities informed directly from Governor-appointed Council members related to COVID-19 including:

- **Assuring equal access to care** in hospitals, including having a support person present and other accommodations such as interpreters, communication assistance.
- **Limiting exposure** for individuals and their caregivers, and access to health insurance after job loss.
- **Improving communication from state agencies to citizens in plain language** about policy changes in response to COVID-19.

A full summary of these insights, collected via survey, was shared with Council members via email on April 24, 2020. It is attached also to these minutes. COVID-19 also impacted the timeline for state legislation, as the General Assembly will remain in recess until June 1, 2020. Legislators passed a “preliminary budget” in March 2020 which has some impact on disability programs. Within the state’s preliminary budget, priority legislation for the Council, the Accessible Transportation and Mobility Act of 2020, passed to become law. Two Council members, Clancey Hopper and Martez Williams, were recognized for their testimonies given in the spring to the House Infrastructure Subcommittee. The Council will continue to share key updates on legislation in the Public Policy E-news.

Communications

Jolene Sharp, Chief Public Information Officer, highlighted Council communications priorities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as continued initiatives since the start of 2020. The Council participated in Disability Awareness Month with the #DisabilityMeans campaign. This campaign included visual stories (videos and photographs) created by N&R Publications as part of the rural outreach grant project in 2019. This campaign increased the council social media engagements exponentially, which increases the audience that receives regular updates from the Council moving forward. The Council has also created and disseminated a COVID-19 communications plan to define the Council’s role in times of crisis and to focus its work in this uncharted time. The communications team continues to work on creating cohesive content and big visual impact in its publication *Breaking Ground*, with the goal of increasing engagement with readers.

Leadership Development

Cathlyn Smith, Director of Leadership Development, updated Council members about the upcoming Partners in Policymaking® sessions. The Council is reviewing competencies to best align with the national Partners in Policymaking curriculum. Cat has been extensively researching the potential of online sessions and has begun working with other states who have successfully employed an online model. The ultimate goal is to create a hybrid curriculum of online and in-person sessions moving forward, to ensure that the program can successfully deliver high-quality content to Tennesseans. In addition to the curriculum, Cat has worked with the Council communications staff to create a “Chat with Cat” dialogue and information sharing opportunity with the Partners in Policymaking graduates.

Wanda provided information regarding the Council scholarship fund, highlighting that due to the cancellation of in-person conferences and leadership opportunities, the Council reallocated dollars to meet the social isolation needs of Tennesseans at home. These small, one-time grants were awarded to persons and families with disabilities across the state. Just over \$12,500 has been committed to provide assistance to 83 Tennesseans in each of the development districts.

9:50 a.m. Update on Funding Projects

Wanda updated members on several funding projects, approved by the Council in February 2020. Eight projects are on track to begin July 1, 2020:

State Plan Goal: Impacting Policy & Practice

- **Everyone Can Work:** Training in person centered practices by national experts for Vocational Rehabilitation leadership and front line staff (\$150,000)
- **National Project START:** Training for five DIDD behavioral crisis teams (\$225,000)
- **Center for Decision Making Support:** Information and referral for individuals and families on using a range of decision-making tools (The Arc TN, \$220,211)
- **Best Practices in Decision Making:** Technical assistance and training for professionals about conservatorship law and best practices in decision making (Disability Rights TN, \$150,418)

State Plan Goal: Informing & Educating Stakeholders

- **TN Disability Pathfinder:** extensive evaluation and large scale stakeholder collaboration to upgrade and modernize; Erik Carter, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center (\$100,000)
- **N+R Rural Newspaper Outreach:** Expand publication and distribution of newspaper insert to additional rural counties (\$50,000)

State Plan Goal: Developing Leaders

- **Advocacy Through the Arts:** expand current self-advocacy arts project to additional rural counties (\$100,000)
- **Council Scholarship Fund:** expanding learning opportunities to individuals with disabilities and families (\$75,000)

Council member Sarah Cripps asked how counties would be selected for publication in the N+R Rural Newspaper Outreach. Jolene Sharp, Chief Public Information Officer, clarified that the list of potential publications includes all rural county publications beyond the counties that already published the inserts in 2019. The Council will reassess which publications are available for publication this summer and fall and will act accordingly.

Tatum Fowler, representing the Executive Committee, introduced a formal proposal for Council consideration. The Executive Committee proposes funding an Evaluation of the Council's 5-Year State Plan Activities, to be completed by the UT Center for Developmental Disabilities (UT CDD). This project would include a comprehensive analysis of the Council's work over the last four years and would provide an analysis of the Council outcomes to help plan for the next Five Year Plan. Bruce Kiesling, Director of the UT CDD, left the meeting at this point. Council staff emphasized that this evaluation is key to communicating clear outcomes and activities of Tennessee to the Administration on Community Living. UT CDD has completed several external evaluation projects for the Council and is familiar with Council data. There is no conflict of interest.

The Executive Committee moved to fund this project for \$50,000, to begin September 2020. A second was not required. Bruce Keisling was not present for the discussion and thus abstained from voting. The motion carried unanimously.

10:10 a.m. State Plan Cycle Update: Public Input Survey

Alicia Cone, Director of Program Operations, reminded members of the upcoming state plan process. The Developmental Disabilities Act requires that Councils write a new plan every five years and that the plan is updated annually between those five year cycles. Federal requirements and public input to the needs assessment survey drive the goals and objectives of this five-year plan. Key dates were shared. Council members were encouraged to complete the public input survey (emailed in April 2020). Once the survey is made available to the public, Council members will be key in disseminating the survey to their development districts. The overall goal of this survey is to ensure all Tennesseans who are impacted by disability have a voice in the next Five Year State Plan.

10:25 a.m. Wrap Up

Tecia thanked the UT CDD for their help in hosting the Council meeting. Lauren Pearcy thanked Lauren McCabe, Public Policy Intern, for her work this semester. Lauren McCabe will complete her internship in May 2020 and has future plans to teach special education in Chicago. The Council is grateful to for Lauren's research related to the needs assessment survey for the upcoming Five Year State Plan.

Tecia reminded members to complete the online evaluation form this week.

10:25 a.m. Public Comment

There were no comments made by visitors or members of the public.

10:30 a.m. Adjournment


A motion for adjournment was made by Lesley Guilaran and seconded by Brigham Scallion. The motion carried and the Council meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m. The next Council meeting will take place on September 18, 2020. The meeting location will be determined based on state meeting guidelines at a later date.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

2020 Council Meetings

- Quarterly Council Meeting: Friday, September 18, 2020
- Council Retreat: Thursday & Friday, November 5 & 6, 2020


Respectfully submitted by: Ashley Edwards, Executive Assistant


Approved by: Wanda Willis, Executive Director