

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
Teleconference  
Thursday May 7, 2020**

**Call to Order:** Brittney Hogan called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. A quorum was present.

**Roll Call:**

**Members Present:** Brittney Hogan, LaRae Gustafson, Russ Cusack, Mark Bourdon, Bill Willis, Drew Hanson, Gillian Plenty Chief, Jared Ferguson, Nancy Lundon, Sarah Bachmeier, Benjamin Johnson, Royce Schultze

**Members Absent:** Brenda Boehler, Shannon Cook, Matthew White

**Others Present:** Aimee Volk, Scott Burlingame, Randy Sorensen, Robyn Throlson, Angie Bosch, Nancy Nikolas-Maier, Annette Weigel

**Approval of February Minutes:** Drew Hanson made a motion to approve the February minutes as presented, Gillian Plenty Chief seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

**Approval of May Agenda:** LaRae Gustafson made a motion to approve the May SILC agenda as presented, Mark Bourdon seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

**Correspondence – Brittney Hogan:**

In April, the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) received supplemental funding provided by the COVID-19 Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) which was signed into law on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act provided \$85 million in supplemental funds to CILs to respond directly to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was also guidance provided on reporting requirements for the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).

**Treasurer's Report – Bill Willis:**

Went over treasurer's report.

**Mark Bourdon made a motion to approve the treasurer's report, Drew Hanson seconded by. Motion approved by unanimous decision.**

**Bylaws Update – Aimee Volk:**

Explained proposed changes to add “or designees” to signing the SPIL as discussed at the February meeting. The Bylaws were sent out 15 days prior to the SILC meeting in accordance with the Bylaw guidelines.

**Mark Bourdon made a motion to approve the changes to the Bylaws (adding “or designees”) and Drew Hanson seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.**

Other comments were provided after the Bylaws were sent out. Discussion was held if these comments should be brought forth to the subcommittees to determine how to proceed with proposed changes.

### **HCBS During the COVID-19 Pandemic – Nancy Nikolas-Maier and Annette Weigel**

Aging services serves older individuals and those with physical disabilities. They also have the ombudsman program. With the COVID-19 pandemic they wanted to balance safety for case managers and consumers. They have done a lot with technology to reach out to their consumers. They issued guidance on how to safely see clients in the community. They put guidelines in place for back up planning to ensure that their consumers were receiving the services they needed. They wanted to make sure the most needed/essential services were still being offered including shopping. They modified the qualified service provider (QSP) requirements to make it easier for family to provide care for the consumer and the paperwork would not be a barrier. They assisted in the acquirement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for QSPs. They were able to expand where services can be provided or out of state because of a COVID related situation.

The Older Americans Program has over 200 sites for meals statewide. Because of COVID the sites could not offer meals in house, so nutrition providers offered drive through, grab and go, and home delivered options. They have seen an increase in these services due to increased demand. They talked about the Aging & Disability Resource Link (ADRL) grant and the services offered. They recommended to get more information to go to the CMS website and look at the FAQs.

### **SPIL Discussion – Roundtable**

Went through the sections of the SPIL and held discussion on the SPIL. Went over updates that were recently provided via a webinar hosted by ILRU pertaining to requirements of the SPIL.

**A motion was made by Mark Bourdon to formally adopt the SPIL as modified, post the SPIL on state and the four centers for independent livings website on**

May 20<sup>th</sup> for two weeks and have public comment on the phone on June 3, 2020. Russ Cusack seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision by the board.

### **Committee Breakouts**

#### **Committee Reports:**

**Internal Affairs –Brittney Hogan:** See the GRID.

**External Affairs – Drew Hanson:** See the GRID.

**State Rehabilitation Council – Russ Cusack:** The SRC meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19.

**Olmstead Report – Scott Burlingame:** N/A

**Traumatic Brain Injury Council – Shannon Cook:** N/A

**Behavioral health Planning Council – Sarah Bachmeier:** N/A

**Monthly Region 8 Conference Call – Brittney Hogan:** N/A

#### **Quarterly Director’s Reports:**

- **Options – Randy Sorensen:** See attached report.
- **Dakota – Royce Schultze:** See attached report.
- **Independence – Scott Burlingame:** See attached report.
- **Freedom – Angie Bosch:** See attached report.
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The next SILC meeting will be held August 6-7, 2020 in Fargo, ND.

**Gillian Plenty Chief made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Drew Hanson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.**

## **Scott Burlingame, Independence, Inc.**

### **Office Update**

Our office is currently closed to the public, however, we are finding ways to provide all of our core services over the phone and virtually. This has been a challenge, however, at this point we have transitioned well. In order to prevent exposure, only two staff at a time work in our office. All of our public events have been cancelled indefinitely.

### **Virtual Independent Living Programming and Community Education Report** **Virtual Disability Awareness Lesson**

**Description:** Independence, Inc. was scheduled to kick-off disability awareness programming in local elementary schools the week of March 16-20th. However, amid growing coronavirus (COVID-19) concerns and statewide school closures, the agency was unable to facilitate in the classrooms. Therefore, the organization hosted a virtual disability awareness lesson via Facebook on Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 2:00 P.M. to help young students understand individuals with disabilities. The lesson involved reading the recently released children's book, *All the Way to Top* by Annette Bay Pimental and answering disability-related questions in the comments to assist children in navigating the subject. The curriculum was designed to help foster disability inclusion at an early age.

**News Story:** <https://www.kxnet.com/news/local-news/independence-inc-to-give-virtual-disability-awareness-lessons-on-facebook-after-covid-19-school-closures/>

### **Youth Hangs**

**Description:** Independence, Inc. launched a weekly youth program designed to help transition age students reconnect in a fun and safe virtual environment.

**News Story:** <https://www.kxnet.com/news/local-news/independence-inc-hosts-virtual-youth-hangouts/>

### **IL Skills Class: Quarantine Cooking on a Budget**

**Description:** Independence, Inc. partnered with the NDSU Extension- Family Nutrition program to help people with disabilities experiencing financial hardship, learn how to create healthy, affordable meals and share local resources to help feed low-income households.

**News Story:** <https://www.kfyrtv.com/content/news/Virtual-lessons-on-quarantine-cooking-on-a-budget-569895271.html>

**Virtual Peer Support Hour Description:** Hosted Virtual Peer Support Hour to help adults with disabilities connect socially, share self-care tips and exchange ideas to help stay healthy throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

**2020 Virtual Census Day Rally Description:** Independence, Inc. hosted a Virtual Census Day Rally on April 1, 2020 to encourage participation and disability representation in the Census.

### **Other Broadcast News Coverage**

**Link:** <https://www.kxnet.com/news/local-news/local-non-profit-stays-dedicated-to-community-members-throughout-covid-19-pandemic/>

The organization continues to monitor the pandemic and share information to assist people with disabilities in need throughout this time. The information includes topics such as early shopping hours, free and low-cost meal deliveries, grocery delivery, mental health support, domestic violence resources, vote-by-mail procedures, stimulus check information...etc.

### **Good Talk Minot**

I was able to be a host on The Good Talk Minot Podcast and talk about the harms done to the disability community by Inspiration Porn. Inspiration porn is the portrayal of people with disabilities as inspirational solely or in part on the basis of their disability. My partner on this show was Kristen Dvorak from the ARC of Bismarck and the ARC of North Dakota. This was set up after Kristen had posted this on her FB page:

I keep seeing pictures of Tim Tebow's Night to Shine. Yes, it's a great event to make everyone feel good about themselves doing something for the disability community. I heard the word precious last night on the news and I want to say that they are not precious there just like everyone who wants to have a fun night with their friends. In fact, why do we even need Night to Shine why are they not at their school's prom, or any other community event or gala. Don't feel sorry for them, hire them and not just for cleaning jobs. Make them a part of your community not just something we celebrate one time a year because it makes you feel good.

**Other Services:** Regarding more traditional services, today we had a person who transitioned from a Nursing Home. This was despite the fact that we had to get special permission to go into the nursing home, make special arrangements for furniture, and other household items to be delivered.

We also continue to work with large numbers of persons who are in recovery from addiction. We have had success with employment and housing outcomes despite most of our communities being shut down.

We have been able to return to most of our schools and provide services over zoom.

## **Royce Schultze, Dakota Center for Independent Living**

Staff are set up to work from home, phones setup to ring office extension and staff cell phones. Dickinson staff are still going in but no face to face.

Staff attended by teleconference, Zoom, or other platforms- High Plains Fair Housing this was in place of their conference, disability etiquette, a guide to housing resources, How is Teleworking going from home, working remotely, DHS webinars, CARES Act, and COVID-19.

Staff are setting up conference calls with consumers to see how they are doing and any needs they might have. The answers varied from no difficulties at all, to depression, shopping, getting to appointments, getting meds, etc. Staff were also on the call to assist in these needs

Staff made and are making calls for wellness checks to see how consumers are coping, how they are feeling, if they have internet, Facebook, do you take medicine and have a way to get it, see who has internet access, concerns about your job, and practice social distancing.

Staff are sending out information to consumers on proper hand washing, social distancing, food banks, transit, churches and food kitchens giving free to go meals, ways to stay safe and word search puzzles.

Staff have been using Facebook, Zoom and SKYPE meetings with potential consumers, teaching classes,

YESS held 2 ZOOM Communication events. They talked about verbal, non-verbal, and written communication and how written communication is difficult to show your personality.

Staff is working on policies for Telework, Going Back to Work, Purchase of PPE and Life-Sustaining Food for Consumers, Health and Safety, and Emergency Paid Leave.

### **CARES Act**

Our ADA event will be going virtual.

Meeting with provider on new website

Quotes on laptops for staff.

Ideas to set up a conference room for AV-Bismarck and Dickinson

Face masks for staff and consumers. Cloth and disposable

Sanitizer and disposable gloves for office

Sanitizing office Monday-Friday when we get back to work in the office regularly.

### **Angie Bosch, Freedom – May 2020**

With re-organization that was done with two positions, we have a new IL Advocate, Travis Johnson, he is working with people from MN and ND. His position also has him working in MN with the WIOA/511 project conducting interviews with people working for sub minimum wage in workshops.

Jana, our IL Advocate and MFP staff person is on maternity leave until the end of June.

Tom, Benefit Coach in MN recently added Community Relations Coordinator to his position and is helping all our offices with outreach and helping more people hear about FRC.

Virtual home modification assessment done by Jerry, Accessibility Specialist.

He spoke with a homeowner; whose home is only a few years old and she had the architectural drawings of the home. Together, they looked at the drawings and talked about changes that could be made in different locations of the home. Jerry sent her a booklet with excellent diagrams and descriptions of ADA complaint restrooms. The information helped her visualize space needed for various features in the bathroom. Jerry also contacted a lumber yard that has people on staff that draw plans for buildings and provided contact info to her. The lumber yard also has a list of reputable contractors that can do the job for her. She contacted the lumber yard, worked with them over the phone and got the plans drawn. Now they can contact contractors, get bids, and get the job done.

Pam, IL Advocate in Lisbon, successfully helped a man get on Medical Assistance during the week of April 6<sup>th</sup>. He was without his insulin. There was one piece of paper that needed a signature for his Medical Assistance application, and the zone worker, formerly county social service staff, said that signature was needed. Pam worked with the individual and arranged for the form to be faxed from the zone office to a location in his rural community, he signed the form, it was faxed back, and everything was in place for his application. Networking, thinking outside the box and more importantly recognizing that time was of the essence truly spoke to why CILs are an essential service.

Beth, IL Advocate in Jamestown, has been very busy with covering MFP for Jana. Referrals for MFP have been coming in. She keeps in contact with those who have transitioned by phone calls and connects with those referred and nursing home contacts by phone as well.

All offices had a virtual Freedom In Action of sharing coffee together and it offered people an opportunity to socialize and experience together technology that can bring people together during this time of limited social contact. A craft activity has been held virtually and a book club is in the works.

Our staff has been available via the phone and zoom for meetings with consumers. All staff are set up to work remotely and have been since the fourth week in March. We rotate Monday through Friday with only a few staff in the Fargo office, the phone has gotten busier as the weeks go on.

## OPTIONS ND SILC REPORT

January through March 2020

- \* Held informational event celebrating Ed Robert's Day with the local Art for Veteran's Center. 18 members from the community attended the event which featured art from local artists with disabilities and a video featuring Ed Roberts explaining the Independent Living movement.
- \* Completed accessibility evaluation for 4 buildings in Finley for local organization seeking funding to renovate and make the buildings accessible.
- \* Provide technical assistance to a representative from the city of Lakota on accessible parking and door requirements.
- \* Meet with individual looking to develop accessible outdoor facility in Cavalier to review process and design issues to consider.
- \* Attended the City Area Transit/Dial A Ride transportation meeting. They are moving along with construction of the new bus facility and should be completed soon. They are making plans for buses and routes when road construction occurs in downtown and possible spring flooding. Buses will remain running during disasters.
- \* Printed and distributed "Options Choices and Rights" a newsletter with a circulation of 9500 people from throughout our service area which is designed to inform people about various disability related topic including preparations PCA users can complete if COVID-19 hits our area and how to access our services.

### Trainings:

- \* Mike and Dave presented on "What is Options" to 50 Physical Therapy students at UND. They both shared personal stories and IL philosophy.
- \* Heather provided training on "What is Options" to the ten staff at Lutheran Social Services in Grand Forks.
- \* Heather provided training at Mt Brooke on "Bullying Awareness" to fifteen in attendance. After the presentation there was discussion with members of Mt Brooke and experiences that they have gone through before.

### COVID-19:

- \* Services moved to no face-to-face contact until further notice
- \* Four staff remain in main office to keep open



- \* Nine staff working remotely in ND at their homes all set up with technology
- \* Staff developed resource network in order to provide info to individuals served within quadrant
- \* Staff connected with all people served in past ten years to fulfill needs of food, and medication delivery set-up within their communities and information on COVID.
- \* Needs of Mental health are great and lots of support and education of COVID conducted

#### Community Emergency Groups:

Committees collaborated about various disasters such as flood issues and COVID. What people are doing to prepare, agency preparedness and sharing ideas with everyone from across the state.

Scenario: A rural family who suffered a severe house fire where they lost their son needed financial help. The father while trying to rescue his son sustained severe 3rd degree burns causing him to have to be airlifted to a burn center in Mpls. While there the family ran out of support for housing so an Options staff assisted in securing funding to pay for the families quarters to stay while the father is receiving continued medical services.

Relocations: Three, two of which are MFP.

Diversions: Four