

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Teleconference
Thursday August 6, 2020**

Call to Order: Brittney Hogan called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Russ Cusack, Brittney Hogan, Shannon Cook, Nancy Lundon, Royce Schultze, Mark Bourdon, LaRae Gustafson, Drew Hanson, Gillian Plenty Chief

Members Absent: Bill Willis, Matthew White, Benjamin Johnson, Brenda Boehler

Others Present: Aimee Volk, Scott Burlingame, Angie Bosch, Carrie Miller, Brian Davenport, Randy Sorensen

Approval of August Agenda: Gillian Plenty Chief made a motion to approve the August SILC agenda as presented, Shannon Cook seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Approval of May Minutes: Drew Hanson made a motion to approve the May minutes as presented, Nancy Lundon seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Correspondence – Brittney Hogan:

We submitted the SPIL and receipt was confirmed. The 704 was also approved for the last year.

Treasurer's Report – Aimee Volk:

Went over treasurer's report. Due to COVID-19 there has been no travel and meetings have been conducted via computer/telephone which have incurred no expense.

Mark Bourdon made a motion to approve the treasurer's report, Gillian Plenty Chief seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous decision.

Review of Consumer Survey – Scott Burlingame:

Independence Inc. conducted a survey to see how COVID affected their clientele. They attempted to contact every person served since October 2018. Out of 505 people 94 completed the survey. They found that since the pandemic four people became employed, eleven are now unemployed, five had a reduction in pay, and four applied for unemployment. The survey showed many individuals have taken precautions to protect

themselves from COVID-19 (hand hygiene-90%, social distancing-89%, wearing a mask-73%, etc.). They also found that 67% of individuals were using technology to stay connected. For technological barriers 16% said they had a lack of access to devices. Of the respondents 36% said that COVID-19 has negatively impacted their mental health. 73% said that the pandemic has limited their ability to participate in activities. The respondents stated their needs as being budgeting, cooking/nutrition, home management, mental health activities, resume writing, self-advocacy, self-employment, and 32.6% wanted a virtual peer mentoring opportunity.

Schedule 2021 SILC Meetings – Brittney Hogan:

Discussed dates for 2021 SILC Meetings. It was decided to stick with the first Thursday and Friday of February, May, August, and November.

- February 4-5, 2021 in Bismarck if allowable
- May 6-7, 2021 in Grand Forks if allowable
- August 5-6, 2021 in Fargo if allowable
- November 4-5, 2021 in Minot if allowable

Due to the current pandemic we discussed trying to make sure that all members are safe so if meetings are allowable in person, we will accommodate with a Teams meeting as an adjunct.

Royce Schultze made a motion to approve the 2021 SILC meeting dates as presented above. Drew Hanson seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

APRIL Conference Update – Scott Burlingame:

They do an annual conference that is traditionally held in October. This year due to the pandemic they decided it would be held virtually on October 12-16, 2021. The cost is still being determined. The theme is *2020 and Beyond*. There will be youth, peer to peer, etc. conferences each day.

Russ Cusack made a motion to approve a budget of \$5,000 for members to attend the October APRIL Virtual Conference. Royce Schultze seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Committee Breakouts

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.

Cultural Competence – Aimee Volk:

Watched Disability Culture Rap Part 1 and 2 for our yearly cultural sensitivity review.

Review Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Policy – Aimee Volk:

Went over the Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Policy. Reminded all members to please send me a copy of their signed policy as this is to be done yearly.

Committee Reports:

Internal Affairs –Brittney Hogan: See the GRID.

Discussion was held on excess funding and what can we do with extra SILC funds and dispersing funds to the CILs for the part B funds.

Mark Bourdon made a motion to have the governance committee to analyze the funding to direct the excess funding to the CILs. Drew Hanson seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

External Affairs – Drew Hanson: See the GRID.

Governance Committee – Royce Schultze:

Discussed membership as Shannon Cook has moved. She will need to be move to a consumer/advocate position. We need to find a member for quadrant IV and a consumer/advocate position.

Royce sent out the SILC Self-Assessment and the SILC Training Needs Assessment. Please get those sent in as soon as possible.

State Rehabilitation Council – Russ Cusack: Met on July 22, 2020 and Dickinson and Fargo Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) offices are on track to meet performance goals. VR is still seeing consumers mostly by phone. There is only 50% of staff allowed in the offices at this time. The referrals are down but this is consistent across the nation. VR Annual Training Conference will be held virtually.

Olmstead Report – Scott Burlingame: Met on July 15, 2020. They are working on a internet portal to file a complaint.

Traumatic Brain Injury Council – Shannon Cook: N/A

Committee on Aging – Royce Schultze: Met on June 5, 2020. There are numerous issues with senior centers being closed. There has been issues with foot care, obtaining personal protective equipment (PPE), social isolation, etc.

Public Comment:

The next SILC meeting will be held November 6, 2020 **virtually**.

Jared Ferguson made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Gillian Plenty Chief seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Options ND SILC Report August 2020

COVID 19 Groups:

- Started Coffee and Chat sessions in June twice a week over Go-To-Meeting with individuals with disabilities to support resource needs and isolation during COVID 19.
- While doing “welfare checks” on consumers by telephone this spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the repeated concerns raised was “social isolation”. Consumers were frightened, upset and feeling very isolated. Over and over again, they asked for someone “just to talk to” about the pandemic: to talk about how they felt; to talk about how things changed so quickly; to talk about the loneliness and their fears for going outside, etc.
So Options started a peer support group that interacts by telephone called “The Party Line”. People call their peer support person at a schedule that works for both and talk about how things are going. So many things are in short supply during this pandemic but what is NOT in short supply is people willing to reach out and help each other during this frightening period of time. “Helping other people, helps oneself.”

Trainings:

- Provided a presentation on “What is Options” to the Hope Church Community Food Pantry in Grand Forks over Zoom.
- Participated in the ND Governor Education Summit online. There was discussion on how things were done during the spring time when schools closed down and how they have been working on things for this upcoming school year.

Community/Emergency Groups:

- Participated in the monthly meetings for the Upper Red River Valley COAD. We started meeting again due to the change of weather and to prepare for any disasters that come up during the summer. We talked about COVID-19 and what we will be able to do.
- Participated in the review of the Grand Forks Airport Emergency Plan per the request of the Airport Operations supervisor.
- Participated in the North Dakota State VOAD monthly meetings to talk about Emergency Preparedness with agencies throughout the state.
- Attended CANA meetings monthly to talk about homelessness and COVID-19. How each agency is doing during this time and how they are able to continue helping people who are experiencing homelessness.

- Participate in the Rocky Mountain ADA Center Ambassador Program including writing blog on ADA issues.
- Plan and develop 30th Year Anniversary ADA training in collaboration with the ND Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Participate in live Facebook event hosted by the High Plains Fair Housing Center to discuss disability related issues and the Fair Housing Act.
- Review and share articles related to the Independent Living movement and people with disabilities on Options Facebook page.

Home Modifications/Evaluations:

- Marcia from Harvey office and Corey assisted with a home evaluation and to obtain funding through Thrivent for an individual to get a 30' ramp built so she is better able to access the front door of her home. The project also included making necessary adjustments to the steps from the house to the garage.
- Coordinate delivery of Options loaner 30-foot, aluminum ramp to person in Langdon, ND.
- Assisted 5 individuals with home or apartment accessibility design needs such as ramps or bathroom updates.
- Participate in local Municipal Planning Organization steering committee to discuss accessibility issues related to Public Rights of Way and accessible transportation issues.
- Complete accessibility evaluation for elementary school in Lakota and high school gymnasium to improve accessibility.
- Complete accessibility evaluation for city of Carrington to improve accessibility.
- Provide technical assistance to Fordville Senior Center to improve accessibility of building.
- Provide technical assistance to Devils Lake building inspector on accessible bathroom remodeling requirements.
- Provide technical assistance to a local UND Fraternity for an accessible ramp to accommodate a new member.
- Advocate for accessible route on DeMers sidewalk in front of Bonzer's restaurant in Grand Forks. The existing sidewalk dining tables were blocking the accessible route. The city requested the restaurant move the tables to the area nearest the traffic as that area is not part of the accessible route due to excessive cross slopes.
- Provide input for city engineers for updates on a construction project for improvements between DeMers Avenue and University on North 3rd Street in Grand Forks. Main recommendations were for updating sidewalks to remove excessive cross-slopes and provide proper curb ramps.

Community Advocacy during COVID 19:

The COVID-19 pandemic changed a lot of things and changed them quickly. One of the first things that seemed to be affected was the oversight provided by agencies to help guide institutions and protect the consumers. Many times, the face to face visits by Ombudsmen and even families were severely limited or did not happen at all.

An agency that provides services to persons with intellectual disabilities in Devils Lake appeared to react very proactively with procedures and policies to deal with the virus initially, but when ND started to “reopen”, the agency started to roll back on their “COVID policies” and acted like all was normal. People with developmental disabilities were back to work sites, out in social gatherings and back to eating in restaurants without wearing masks or practicing social distancing.

One night, a family member visited their sister in an ISLA apartment setting with hugs and kisses directly. A week and half later, that half later, that family member tested positive for COVID. The Director seemed to be confused concerning what follow-up was needed. Apparently, in their policies and procedures in how to keep the consumers safe from exposure, very little attention had been paid on what to do when an actual exposure happened. The staff that had been working the night of the exposure took it upon themselves to contact the Altru Hot-Line and were tested that same day. When other staff asked if the consumer was going to be tested, the Director responded that he was “thinking about it”. The consumer who had been exposed continued with her regular routine and ultimately was not tested.

Options RCIL called Protection and Advocacy to discuss and ultimately ask if the agency’s reaction was bad practice or if it was neglect. Protection and Advocacy did contact the agency and discussed the situation with them. After this discussion, the agency started rolling back their “reopening” and reinstated procedures that were aimed at keeping the consumers safe during the COVID and what to do when exposure was known to have happened.

The agency has reinstated many safety precautions and put in place NEW precautions, that has led to increased protection for the consumers they serve and their staff. This all happened because of a conversation between Options and Protection and Advocacy that asked the hard questions and wanted safety precautions in place for all people with disabilities and general public.

Relocations: Five relocations, three of which are MFP

Diversions: Six diversions

Dakota CIL Director's Report – August 2020

- Staff collaborated with Miss Sparkles in a live Facebook story time on Disability Etiquette at Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library. Talked what a disability is and what really makes us all alike. Miss Sparkles read two books based on disabilities one on Autism "All My Stripes: A Story for Children with Autism" and one about a person in a wheelchair who uses a service dog, "My Buddy."
- Facebook Live and teleconference on how to get your ballot for voting and explaining measures on ballots.
- YESS and staff gave a presentation at Power of 100 and 1 Million Cups. Talked about the YESS group and DCIL.
- Special ED teacher from Wilton would like to bring students from grades 8-12 to YESS 1/month or by Zoom.
- Staff attended Bis/Man transit meetings. Hired a new director and setup a task force to look at fixed route system.
- Empowerment group has been meeting on getting sidewalks on Expressway.
- MFP Transitions
- Collaborating with DHS on non-NF transitions.
- Webinar on NF transitions during COVID-19, numerous webinars on CARES funding from ILRU
- Better Health, Better Choice looking at different delivery models for workshops- virtual or telephone.
- Council on Aging. Issues members shared were senior centers being closed and no foot care and a lot of PPE is on back order, social isolation issues more of a concern than the virus especially in the small towns, transit is only running to medical appointments and groceries are only being delivered once a week, and getting seniors connected to people and services.
Aging services- Case management has become a lot of phone calls because most people are not wanting case workers into their home. Homemaker services have been extended to include things such as shopping for clients. Made it simpler to become a provider by waiving some of the enrollment requirements and if you are a family member you do not need to meet the competencies right now to help the consumer utilize family providers and are asked not to open up the congregate meal sites through July 31. Congregate meals will continue to be provided via alternative means such as grab and go's, curbside, frozen, home delivered meals, etc.
- Staff attended quarterly Dickinson/Region 8 Human Trafficking meeting. Reports of 21 confirmed human trafficking cases were reported for February and March 15 were youth or adults with disabilities. Of the 21 confirmed cases, 15 of the youth/adults had some type of disability.
- Dickinson staff presented at St. Vincent DePaul, St. Alexis and Domestic Violence Rape Crisis Center on our services and AT.

- ZOOM or FB live activities-Tips filling out job applications, resume and soft skills, quarantined cooking, and inspiration during isolation art class.

ADA Conference

Held a virtual 30th Anniversary of ADA Celebration Conference. Our theme, Parent/Child roles raising and growing up in a home with a child with different abilities. Speakers were Robert Anthony and his mother, Laureen. Bruce Klootwyk and his dad, Bruce Klootwyk Sr. and Tyler McNamer and his dad, Jody McNamer. Blind Joe was the entertainer 377 registered and 250 were on.

https://zoom.us/rec/share/x8JeC7_c3TxJeoXK9GzfcYA4Bo-6aaa823QW_qEFnh71ckwWEgdNGIE7b6we5IDP

Password 1h5V@dqv

CARES

- Offices are open and seeing consumers by appointment only
- Consumers activities are held out of office for social distancing.
- Have 10 chrome books and have loaned out 4
- Emergency bags-first aid kits, sanitizer, tp, paper towels
- Essential food boxes.

Governance Committee

- Has not met.
- Currently, 2 at large positions open.
- March 2021, 2nd term is up for Brittany and Royce.
- March 2021, 1st term is up for Russ and Gillian.
- Sent out training needs assessment sent out August 1
- Need to do annual survey of Council members to determine their level of involvement on the Council and any changes they would like to see.

Independence Inc. Directors Report – August 2020

COVID 19 Office Update

Our offices are open, however:

- If anybody who has been in our office is COVID positive, we will work from home for at least two weeks.
- All consumer appointments are encouraged to first be done online, by phone, or outside.
- Nobody is allowed in the office if they are not feeling well. Staff who are not feeling well are given the opportunity to work at home.
- Staff who travel to COVID hotspots may be forced to work at home upon return.
- Our offices are now cleaned twice per week, and bathrooms three times per week.
- All visitors must wash their hands upon entering and must wear a mask at all times.
- We do have staff member who got COVID 19. She was in Texas for her Father's funeral when she got it, so our staff were not at risk. However, she is using her story to express the importance of safe behavior by people who are most at risk.

Individual Services

- Nicole Beech started on 8/3 as an Independent Living Advocate. She has previously worked at DBGR for 10 years.
- We have been holding virtual youth hangs weekly, with kids who have never met each other in person. They have been doing a lot of fun online activities, while also working on learning to better self-advocate for themselves.
- On May 20 we had Brushes and Brains with 10 attendees. Participants were provided with an art kit, delivered directly to their home. Supplies include an 8"x10" canvas, acrylic paint and brushes. They painted a turtle.
- On July 30, we held Rockin' Resume Workshop. Participants discovered how to strategically format a resume and effectively communicate their skills to land an interview! The lesson will focus on the do's and don'ts of resume building, buzz words, how to convey relevant experience without having employment history

and job-specific resume tailoring. Attendees received a complimentary resume writing kit, a redeemable coupon for a 1 hour review session with Independence, Inc. staff and 10 printed copies on professional grade paper. We had 9 people sign up, but only three attended.

- On July 21, we held Turning Your Passion into a Paycheck about turning you side hustle into a main hustle. This was the first of a three part series on self-employment.

True Outcomes by the Numbers YTD

44- Consumers completed employment goals

7- Consumers achieved transportation goals

94- consumers achieved financial goals

18- consumers achieved housing goal

125- consumers achieved education goals

5- consumers achieved nursing home transition or prevention goals

Community Services

- On July 1st, we promoted Taylor Heine has been promoted to the position of Community Relations Director. In her new role, Heine will focus on cultivating positive relationships with the people we serve, local residents, community leaders, and businesses. She will lead our organization's community and public education, outreach, marketing, and organizational messaging. She will also have an extensive role in developing and analyzing all organizational programming.
- Crip Camp- On July 14th we partnered with our local VR office to host a virtual film screening of Crimp Camp. The movie focuses on the summers at Camp and the early beginnings of the Disability Rights Movement in America. We had over 35 people join in.

Rebranding

Independence, Inc. has had the statue of liberty logo since the beginning of the company, and our board had voted to replace it as part of an ongoing rebranding strategy. We will be eventually redoing our website, brochures, all signage and promote material.

Freedom Director's Report – August 2020

All offices - Freedom In Action May project was making tie die vases. June a Zoom book club started and will be wrapping up later this month, they have been reading a Brene Brown book. August 20th a Zoom Journaling class will start, presented by a local author on how to write their own stories and their families. Virtual bingo will be held next week.

In June, Jered Pigeon, Campus Diversity Officer, MSUM provided training to our staff on Diversity and Inclusion.

ADA ads ran in each local paper for all five offices. There were Radio interviews in Jamestown and Fergus Falls. The Jamestown and Fergus Falls mayors signed a Proclamation for the 30th Anniversary of the ADA.

Celebrating the ADA during the month of July on Facebook was very successful. We are moving forward with changing our presence on social media.

Freedom now has Instagram.

Our first ADRL referral transition occurred on July 20.

An MFP transition occurred on July 31.

Masks with a clear panel were made for all direct staff.

On August 4, Jerry Christianson presented on Service and Emotional Support Animals for the Virtual Landlord/Service Provider Training Sessions presented by the Money Follows the Person Housing Program held earlier this week. 174 people attended the training.

In recent weeks, three consumers benefited from Mainstream Vouchers to help them obtain rental assistance.