



# STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

**January 15, 2020**

**1:00pm – 2:30 pm**

**Granite State Independent Living**

**21 Chenell Drive, Concord, NH**

**Members and Ex-Officios Attending:** Jeff Dickinson, Andrew Harmon, Shellie Lemelin, Susan Wolf-Downes, Ellie Kimball, Erin Hall, Carrie Dudley, Dorine Pelletier, Christopher Emerson, Marcia Golembeski, Daniel Frye (Designated State Entity)

**Staff:** Jennifer Beaulieu (SILC Assistant)

**Guests:** Deborah Ritcey (CEO, Granite State Independent Living), Lorrie Ripley (Client Assistance Program, Governor's Commission on Disability), and Chuck Saia (Executive Director, Governor's Commission on Disability).

**Communication Access:** Emily Timm and Jola Leary (interpreters)

The SILC meeting was called to order at 1:02 PM by Chair Jeff Dickinson. Attendance was taken via introductions.

\*Quorum was reached.

## **Approval of November 20<sup>th</sup> Minutes**

Jeff asked if anyone had any changes or edits for the minutes from the last meeting. Andrew mentioned that there is a typo in the paragraph speaking about Tobey - "position" was misspelled. The paragraph discussing Rose Prescott's retirement needs to be reworded. Susan asked for the 'Communications Assistant' list to be changed to "Communication Access".

**\*Motion to approve November 20<sup>th</sup> Minutes with suggested changes**

**Motion to Approve:** **Ellie Kimball**

**Second:** **Christopher Emerson**

**All in Favor: Yes, Dorine Pelletier abstained. Motion Carried**

## **Presentation on Granite State Independent Living**

Jeff introduced Deborah Ritcey as the new CEO of Granite State Independent Living. Deb mentioned that she has been working with people with disabilities for 31 years. In 1988 she had a son named Matthew who had physical disabilities, was in a wheelchair, had developmental

disabilities, and who made a good life for himself by graduating from community college, living with his girlfriend, and getting ready for his first job, before he died suddenly at the age of 24.

Deb gave an overview of her career history, first getting a degree in hotel restaurant management, then going into healthcare. She then got a Masters' degree in Healthcare Administration and got a job assisting elderly people transition out of nursing facilities. She explained that she changed her career because of her son and his disabilities. At 20 years old she started to work on boards of directors, since then she has served on four nonprofit boards of organizations that focus on people living with disabilities. When her son Matt was getting older, she switched her career to focus on younger people with disabilities because from her experience with him she observed that younger people with disabilities don't really have many social opportunities outside of school. She mentioned that before becoming the CEO of GSIL she had served on its Board for 2 ½ years. Deb applied for the position because she thought she could improve the lives of those GSIL serves.

Deb discussed the services GSIL offers, which fall into three categories: homecare services, disability supports, and education & employment. Their mission is accomplished through 5 core services which are the following: information and referral, advocacy, peer support, independent living skills, and transition services. GSIL has 22 programs. A lot of their programs are under their independent living agreement. GSIL serves people with any type of disability. Homecare services consists of in-home care, support for family and caregivers, in-home recovery, and nursing home to community transition. Disability supports consist of advocacy, home modifications, transportation, and the NH Spinal Cord Association. Education and Employment consist of the IMPACCT program (Inspiring the Mastery of Post-Secondary Achievement in College, Career, and Training), job placement, Ticket to Work (employment opportunities for individuals on SSI or SSDI), financial planning, disability benefits counseling, and community supports. The PCA program was the first service GSIL provided.

SILC members asked Deb questions related to PCAs, how many legally blind people GSIL serves, how much the consumer pays for PCA services, and how in-home recovery is funded. She responded with the following answers:

- GSIL is serving around 100 consumers who are blind
- PCAs get paid an hourly rate of \$10.75
- Consumers themselves don't pay for PCAs
- Medicaid and Medicare fund the in-home recovery program.

### **RSA 15-A Financial Interest Forms**

Jeff reported that the RSA 15-A Financial Interest Form needs to be completed by all SILC members and sent to the Secretary of State's Office (SOS). The forms need to be submitted by January 17<sup>th</sup>. Daniel mentioned that SOS were in the process of creating an online way to fill out and submit the forms that would work with screen-readers but there were some problems with their contractor. There are fillable forms on the SOS website and if anyone has any problems with accessibility they should contact Jessica at the SOS.

### **DSE Update from Daniel Frye**

Daniel reported first that he joined VR in July of 2019 as the administrator of SBVI. He mentioned he'll speak more about SBVI, his career history, and philosophy at the March meeting. He briefly went over his previous work as the Administrator of New Jersey's Blind Services and admitted he doesn't have a lot of experience in Independent Living but he has been studying and learning all he can so he can provide the best support to the SILC and its Part B contractors. Susan asked for his observations about differences between New Jersey's SILC and New Hampshire's SILC. Daniel responded that the New Jersey's SILC was a very strong, well-administered, aggressive organization of consumers consistent with the grassroots philosophy that governs the administration of SILCs in general. Due to the NJ SILC being administered by the general VR administration instead of the CBVI (Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired) he hasn't had much contact with the NJ SILC. Susan commented that NH has a SILC that many states look up to.

#### **➤ Submission of the 2019 Program Performance Report (704 Report)**

The 2019 Program Performance Report, formerly the 704 Report, was the next item that Daniel spoke about. He reported that the report reflects what the SILC and the Part B contractors believe they have accomplished in the past year. According to Daniel, the report was submitted to the ACL on time due to the hard work and timeliness of the Part B contractors and Jeff. He made the ACL aware that because it was his first time coordinating the creation of the report, he is willing to make amendments if required. He will report back to the SILC and the Part B contractors if the ACL has any concerns with the report. For 2020's report, he plans to start working on the creation of the report by the end of the 2020 fiscal year. He mentioned that there are some things in the report that reflect service delivery and he observed that some services appeared to be less than they were last year but not dramatically so. He would like to meet with the SILC and the Part B contractors to see why the changes have occurred.

#### **➤ Update on Conversations with ILRU and ACL**

The next items Daniel spoke about were the conversations he has had with the ILRU which is the federally supported technical assistance center that provides guidance on anything related to Independent Living, and the ACL, to educate himself about his responsibilities as the DSE representative. He reported that he has had extensive conversations with the lead of the program who spoke about the regulations that govern the program and who offered her assistance with review of our SILC's governance structure. In one of the conversations he told her that our SILC is in transition and we are working on the SPIL but we may be a bit behind on getting it done by the deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>. She offered him the support of the ILRU to work with the Council to help them become a better council. He asked the SILC to not see this as a negative but as an invitation to help us improve and continue improving. Susan and Erin mentioned that they don't think the SILC is behind on the process of developing the new SPIL, and Erin mentioned that in the past it would piggyback its public input hearings on other meetings in the community. Daniel mentioned it is up to the SILC to decide on how to proceed and that the ILRU will be there in case they decide they need assistance.

#### **➤ Initial Thoughts on Status and Priority Needs of the SILC**

The next item Daniel spoke about were his observations about the status and priority needs of the SILC. He mentioned that he is aware that Jeff's term is going to end soon and that it is critical to work on succession planning, so we have a strong SILC executive. He had a conversation with Jeff, Lisa Hatz, and Deborah Ritcey and he thought that there was a general consensus on the importance of planning for the succession of the Chair. Another point he made was that the Bylaws haven't been reviewed in some time and probably should be reviewed in the year ahead. Andrew mentioned that in the past there has been discussion on creating an ad-hoc group to discuss the bylaws. Erin noted that she and Dorine were tasked with updating the bylaws last year. Andrew mentioned if they needed additional assistance, he would be willing to assist them. Dan mentioned there is some ambiguity around the dates of terms and term limits of members, and they need to be reviewed to make sure the SILC is in-compliance with the law.

#### ➤ **New SPIL Submission Timeframes**

The last item Daniel spoke about was the deadline for submission of the new SPIL, which is on June 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. He mentioned that everyone seems to be aware of the steps required to developing a new SPIL. Daniel offered his expertise and experience in developing the new SPIL. Jeff's thought on the next SPIL is to have goals that are more achievable and manageable.

#### **Discussion about Tobey Partch-Davies' Role**

Daniel responded to a question about the status of SILC consultant Tobey Partch-Davies. His understanding is that Tobey believes that her best role would be providing broad, strategic support of the content of the SPIL. She feels she doesn't have the time, the talents, or the interest that is needed to provide day-to-day administrative support to the SILC. He hasn't met Tobey directly but will schedule a meeting with her in the next few months. Jeff mentioned that as a SILC we need to discuss if our current SILC Consultant fits our needs right now. Jeff reported that he thinks that we got used to Janet's large involvement and role with the SILC, but it's the responsibility of the Executive Committee to provide guidance to the members and task forces, and it's unfair to compare Tobey and Janet. Dorine mentioned that in the past the task forces were struggling, and we needed a person to keep the task forces on task. Susan mentioned that we still need a person to fill that role. Carrie mentioned in the past Janet wasn't doing the day-to-day administration of the SILC, but her work was more managing the SPIL and providing guidance to the task forces.

#### **SILC SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)**

Jeff mentioned that he will bring the topics of SILC SWOT to the Executive Committee. We will then bring it to the full SILC and have a wider discussion about that. His thought is to tie that into the work we do as the SILC and for the new SPIL.

#### **Membership and Leadership Succession Planning**

The following ideas and comments on membership were discussed:

- The need to recruit more members.
- The need to contact former members once they've resigned or their 2<sup>nd</sup> term ends, such as Rose.

- The need for a timeline of members' terms.
- Having members with business knowledge, capital funding knowledge, etc.
- Having a membership with varied skill sets.
- The need for good succession planning.

Andrew asked if an ex-officio member who leaves the SILC activates the year delay (period they would have to wait to apply for membership). Daniel mentioned that there is some disagreement on when a member can return to the SILC after their terms have ended but the general census is that the time away is a year. However, according to ILRU there is no specific regulation that says that.

Jeff reported that Peggy Teravainen has decided to resign from the NH SILC.

Lastly, Jeff shared that he learned that the CEO or the Executive Director of a CIL needs to be an appointed voting member of the SILC. Therefore, we will be sending the appointment of Deborah Ritcey to the Governor. The CIL Executive Director/CEO cannot appoint someone to serve in their place as was mistakenly done in the past, and their membership on the SILC ends only when they leave their CIL position.

### **GCD Report**

Jeff asked Chuck Saia (Executive Director of the Governor's Commission on Disability) and Lorrie Ripley (Client Assistance Program) if they had any updates for the SILC. Chuck briefly updated the role of the GCD and the SILC assistant, and explained that the GCD houses the SILC assistant under the contract with Department of Education which has been a long-standing contract. He mentioned that he has worked with many of the members in different venues and that there isn't much to report on today. He reminded the council that he is more than willing to help answer any questions the SILC may have. He noted that Lorrie and himself can't attend every meeting due to time constraints but the GCD is a phone-call or email-away. He will defer to the Chair to filter the questions the SILC may have to the GCD. Chuck meets regularly with Jen and goes over her workload with her as it pertains to the GCD and the SILC.

### **Other Business**

Jeff thanked Daniel and Deborah for speaking to the SILC.

Andrew mentioned that he will be in Washington, DC next month for the annual National Federation of the Blind conference, and that one of the delegation members cares a great deal about transportation. He wanted to know if the SILC officially would like him to bring up anything or deliver a letter. He asked that they let him know by the 5<sup>th</sup> of February.

### **Adjournment**

**\*Motion to adjourn**

**Motion to Approve:**

**Second:**

**All in Favor: Yes**

**Ellie Kimball**

**Christopher Emerson**

**Motion Carried**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:39pm.

**NEXT SILC MEETING:** Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at GSIL.

Recorded by Jennifer Beaulieu