



STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

November 19, 2025

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**FULL SILC Meeting
IN-PERSON AND ZOOM**

Voting Members: First Vice-Chair Ryan Wittershein, Second Vice-Chair Deborah Ritcey (Participating remotely due to medical appointments and not having enough time to get there in-person), Secretary Sarah Sweeney (Participating remotely due to not having transportation to meeting), Member Krystal Chase, Member Ryan Donnelly (Participating remotely due to transportation issues), Member Andrew Harmon, Member Joshua Gehling, Member Michelle McConaghy, Member Rob Kallin (Participating remotely due to there not being enough time to be in-person due to prior meetings), and Member Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre.

Staff: Jennifer Beaulieu (NH SILC Assistant)

Guests: Richard Sala (Acting DSE Representative), Amy Clark (Program Coordinator of the Older Individuals who are Blind or Vision Impaired Program at VR), Herb Carpenter (Remote, Applicant), Matthew Greenwood (Member of the Public), Brianne Stone (Presenter, Future in Sight), Carrie Dudley (Member of the Public),

First Vice-Chair Ryan Witterschein called the SILC (Statewide Independent Living Council) meeting to order at 1:01pm due to Chair Randy Pierce being unable to attend.

*Quorum was reached.

Approval of Minutes from Last Full SILC Meeting

Ryan Witterschein asked if anyone would like to make a motion to approve the minutes.

***Deborah Ritcey made the motion.**

Second: Andrew Harmon

Discussion: Andrew Harmon asked if Jennifer Beaulieu got his edits for the minutes. Jennifer Beaulieu mentioned that the edits made it into the minutes.

Roll Call:

- **Yes:** Deborah Ritcey, Krystal Chase, Ryan Donnelly, Andrew Harmon, Joshua Gehling, Michelle McConaghy, and Ryan Witterschein.
- **No:** None

All in Favor: Yes **Abstention:** Rob Kallin, Sarah Sweeney (Wasn't in attendance at time of vote), and Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre (Wasn't in attendance at time of vote)

Motion Carried.

DSE Update

Richard Sala reported that last time he said he was going to be the DSE Representative, shortly after he was nominated by the Governor to serve as the Deputy Commissioner of DOE. He took that to the Executive Committee and let them know we were going to hold off because it doesn't make sense for him

to apply for an appointment to the SILC and then turn around and appoint someone else. He noted that he was given permission to post the SBVI Administrator position by the Governor's Office. That person would fill this role. They have an offer letter out. As soon as he gets an update on that, he will let Randy Pierce know so he can send that information out. Regarding the VR Director position, he mentioned that he will maintain the reins at VR for the time being. There are a few projects he would like to see come to fruition before he hands over the position. If he feels at any point he can't handle the two positions, he will post the position. Otherwise, he will post the position once a couple of the projects are done.

SILC Education

Brianne Stone presented on the Telecommunications Equipment Assistance Program (TEAP), which Future in Sight offers on behalf of the Governor's Commission on Disability. The program helps New Hampshire residents with vision, hearing, speech, mobility, or other disabilities access accessible landline or mobile phones, along with training on how to use them. Training is also available for individuals who already own a device. Depending on income, equipment is provided either free or at a 50% discount. Devices include amplified landline phones with large buttons, the Jitterbug Flip, and the iPhone SE which was chosen for its tactile home button, which supports accessibility. Customizations are available to meet individual needs.

She mentioned a few things that the TEAP won't do. The TEAP program does not cover training or modifications for using a phone to play games or access social media, as its primary goal is to help individuals communicate for essential needs like contacting emergency services or making appointments. It also does not pay for phone or internet service plans, such as cable, cellular, or landline bills, those costs are the responsibility of the individual.

During the Q&A, Carrie Dudley asked if they work with Roger pens. The speaker wasn't familiar with them but assumed staff would know and provide training if needed. She explained that referrals are evaluated by an OT or AT specialist to determine the best equipment or modifications. Andrew Harmon asked how to contact the TEAP program, and she said individuals can call the mainline or visit the website, which includes the application and a certificate of disability form. When asked if landlines can interact with Alexa, she said probably not, but staff can help set up cellphones to work with it. Carrie Dudley also asked about consultation turnaround time. Brianna Stone mentioned that it depends on staff caseloads in specific geographic regions. Jennifer Beaulieu asked about iPhone SE support, and Brianna Stone said Apple plans to support it through 2029.

Michelle mentioned that with the jitterbug, she has concerns over people being locked to a cell phone plan that doesn't meet their needs. Brianne Stone mentioned how jitterbug has its own service through lively and that is not something they can change or control. Whatever the cell phone plan pays for is up to the client. Michelle McConaghy mentioned how it wouldn't be accessible for a Deaf or Hard of Hearing individual to have a cell phone plan. She mentioned how some companies offer Deaf people data only plans. Brianne Stone mentioned how in that case, something like an iPhone might be more appropriate. She mentioned how the devices they currently carry are not all that they would be willing to provide. They can special-order specific phones if needed.

SRC Representation Update

Carrie Dudley mentioned at the last SRC (State Rehabilitation Council) meeting, they talked about a safety initiative that VR is rolling out for its job developers and VR counselors. She mentioned how it's an action plan for what to do if a VR counselor or job developer feels they are in danger because of a VR participant. It's still in draft form. She mentioned that if anyone is interested in the SRC, they can attend a meeting to get more of a sense of what they do. Deborah Ritcey mentioned that she wants to caution people before attending, because our bylaws require us to have coordination with the SRC. Historically Carrie Dudley filled that role because at one point she was a member of the SRC and the SILC. She is

going to send an email out to the SILC leadership that we need to go back and look at this requirement because Carrie Dudley is no longer a voting member of the SILC. She noted that she wants to roll this out to Randy Pierce before we have people committing to attend a meeting as SILC representatives. She mentioned that someone can still attend the meeting as a member of the public.

PPR

Regarding the PPR (Program Performance Report), Amy Clark noted that she is going to send an email out to the Part B vendors around December 1st. The email is more of a heads up for the Part B vendors to start using the data collection tool to gather the information that is needed for the PPR. They are hoping to have all the data from the Part B vendors by the end of December. Discussion ensued. Amy Clark noted that she will instead send an email out either Monday or Tuesday next week.

Part B Survey Results

Ryan Witterschein tabled the item until the next Full SILC meeting because Randy Pierce was not in attendance to present on Future in Sight's consumer satisfaction survey results.

Later, Krystal Chase reported that only one Part B survey was returned for the Brain Injury Association of NH's neuro-rehabilitation program, likely due to survey fatigue from the volume of surveys currently circulating. Despite the low response, she hears consistent anecdotal feedback from providers that individuals and families are highly satisfied with the program, especially its ability to connect them to needed services. The survey process was rushed this year due to a misunderstanding about responsibilities, but Krystal Chase plans to improve participation next year by conducting follow-up phone surveys. In response to Jennifer Beaulieu's question, she clarified that the primary service funded by Part B is the neuroresource facilitation program, which offers referrals and assistance to individuals with brain injuries and their families.

SPIL Alert

Ryan Witterschein asked how we are doing with the SPIL. Last time he knew there was a transition objective that was of concern. Jennifer Beaulieu mentioned some of the alerts were regarding objectives assigned to advocacy. Andrew Harmon mentioned that they are still having presentations for the 4.3 Objective from benefits specialists. He is still working on getting together a starting point for the information for our Goal 5 Objectives. He noted how there was some confusion over what we need to do for our Goal 1 objectives. He is going to be addressing that at their upcoming meeting.

Vote on Edited Policies and Procedures

Deborah Ritcey noted that for those who were in attendance at September's Full SILC meeting, these policies and procedures were on the agenda but there wasn't enough time to review and vote on them. She noted that these are the policies and procedures that the governance committee has been working on with some assistance from Ryan Witterschein and Jennifer Beaulieu.

Deborah Ritcey asked for a motion to accept the policy and procedural manual as submitted.

***Krystal Chase made a motion to accept it.**

Second: Joshua Gehling

Discussion: Andrew Harmon asked if the policies and procedures includes the changes that were discussed at the Governance Committee meetings. Deborah Ritcey responded that it does.

Roll Call:

- **Yes:** Deborah Ritcey, Krystal Chase, Ryan Donnelly, Andrew Harmon, Joshua Gehling, Rob Kallin, Michelle McConaghy, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Sarah Sweeney, and Ryan Witterschein.
- **No:** None

All in Favor: Yes **Abstention:** None

Motion Carried.

Committee Updates

Membership

Ryan Witterschein reported for the Membership Committee. He mentioned that they didn't have a meeting last month, but they did have a meeting yesterday. They adopted a SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) for reappointments where they will reach out to members 6 months before their reappointment and ask if they are interested in serving another term. He noted that they are going to also create a SOP to use when people are interested in joining and what the process would be. He noted that there has been some confusion over the process. Deborah Ritcey asked if the SOPs would need to be included in the policies and procedures. Ryan Witterschein noted that it's more of an internal policy for the Membership Committee.

Governance

Deborah Ritcey reported out for the Governance Committee. She noted that the committee met a few weeks ago. There have been changes to the bylaws that have been suggested by the Executive Committee and Sarah Sweeney. VR has also commented on the changes as well. The changes were on who counts towards quorum and who can vote. The changes are not yet ready to be voted on for the Full SILC but she hopes to have it up for a vote at the next Full SILC meeting.

The committee has also been working on creating a policy and procedure on SPIL implementation. In the past, the council has been very disjointed with creating the SPIL and with its timeline, leading to rushing through at the last minute. The policy is more of a timeline for creating the SPIL. The committee has reviewed the policy and will work on it further in December, maybe in February as well. Jennifer Beaulieu mentioned making sure to follow what the Q90 portal requires for the SPIL. Deborah Ritcey mentioned that it is not the intent to create a line by line that is required of the SPIL, but a timeline of SPIL creation.

Advocacy

Andrew Harmon reported out for the Advocacy Committee. He mentioned that the committee has been having presenters come and present during committee meetings. Their most recent presenter was Kristen Venator from VR regarding benefits counseling. This is about completing Objective 4.3. He is hoping to have someone present from Community Crossroads at the next committee meeting. The committee will also get a handle on and go forward with their Goal 1 and Goal 5 objectives because some of them have been on the backburner for a while. Deborah Ritcey asked how that information gets to the Full SILC. Discussion ensued. Andrew Harmon noted that his goal is to ultimately have a panel discussion for the public, between a group of presenters and the audience. The presentations at the committee meetings are more about seeing which presenters should be on that panel. He noted that they had one presentation that he hopes they will be able to present to the Full SILC in the future. Joshua Gehling mentioned that a number of those presenters had PowerPoints and other information that can be shared with the Full SILC. Deborah Ritcey mentioned that part of the SPIL is collecting data on how an objective is completed. When she looks at Objective 4.3, which requires collaboration to increase awareness of that service for those with a disability wishing to seek employment, she is trying to get back to how do we get to that end goal. She thinks it's great that they are having these info sessions internally, but she is wondering if we are at the point where we should be creating a presentation for the public. Andrew Harmon mentioned that he is hoping that they are close to that point, they are going to discuss it more at the advocacy committee meeting next week.

Other Business

Andrew Harmon shared that the State and Federal governments are making changes to the Medicaid program, specifically requiring Granite Advantage participants to either meet work requirements or prove

they are exempt. He plans to discuss this further at next week's Advocacy Committee meeting. GSIL recently sent out an email about these changes, which Andrew offered to forward. Ryan Donnelly, who authored the email, noted that the issue is complex since the federal government hasn't yet provided full guidance, which is expected by June. Deborah Ritcey added that Ryan Donnelly's advocacy alerts are available to anyone in New Hampshire and encouraged those interested to contact him to be added to the distribution list.

Jennifer Beaulieu mentioned that coming January 2026, the Age Adjustment Act increased the age of disability from age 26 to age 46 to be eligible for an ABLE account. The annual contribution amount for ABLE accounts will also increase to \$20,000 as well.

Motion to Adjourn

***Deborah Ritcey moved.**

Second: Michelle McConaghy

Discussion: Ryan Witterschein noted that we don't have to roll call this, we just need to have a regular vote on this.

All in Favor: Yes **Abstention:** None

Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:12pm.

Minutes recorded by Jennifer Beaulieu.