



STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

May 24, 2026

2:00pm

Advocacy Committee Meeting

ZOOM

Members Attending: Andrew Harmon (Committee Chair), Ryan Donnelly, Joshua Gehling, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, and Herb Carpenter.

Staff: Jennifer Beaulieu (NH SILC Assistant)

Guests: Mo Baxley (GSIL, Advocacy Director)

Committee Chair Andrew Harmon called the meeting to order at 2:02pm.

Review of April Meeting Minutes

Andrew Harmon mentioned that he would be willing to entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

***Herb Carpenter moved.**

Second: Andrew Harmon

Discussion: None

All in Favor: Yes **Abstaining:** None

Motion Carried

Discussion of SPIL Objectives:

a. Goal 1 Discussion

There was some confusion over where we were on the process of the goal 1 objectives. Discussion ensued. Part of this goal is reaching out to the Part B vendors. Andrew Harmon will try to reach out to the Part B vendors. There were questions on who to reach out to for Future in Sight. Andrew Harmon noted that he has an individual he can reach out to there. The Part B vendors are Future in Sight (FIS), Granite State Independent Living (GSIL), Northeast Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services, Inc. (NDHHS), and Brain Injury Association of NH (BIA-NH).

b. 4.3 Framework Discussion

The group selected GSIL, VR, and Community Crossroads (or another area agency) as presenters. Jennifer Beaulieu shared Ryan Donnelly's outline, which will guide the presentations. Ryan Donnelly will contact Jeff Nelson at GSIL, and Andrew Harmon will

reach out to VR. Presenters will follow the outline and take questions from the audience rather than receiving prewritten ones. Herb Carpenter noted that when looking at the tracker, we said the presentation was going to be broken up into two 45-minute sessions at September's and November's Full SILC Meetings. Joshua Gehling noted that it was Deanna Johnson that gave a presentation from Community Crossroads, which is an area agency. He noted how the area agencies offer similar services but in different areas of the state.

Andrew Harmon mentioned that the only concern he has at this point is how we are going to divide the presentation into two sessions. Would the two sessions cover the same material, or would it be divided into two parts? Discussion ensued. Jennifer Beaulieu noted that she thought it was going to be two parts because Ryan Witterschein, who was at the last meeting, mentioned that he can only give us 45 minutes to present per meeting.

The committee discussed how to advertise the upcoming sessions. Jennifer Beaulieu can feature the sessions in a monthly Union Leader column. Ryan Donnelly will share it through GSIL's social media and newsletters. Ryan Donnelly and Jennifer Beaulieu agreed to collaborate on creating advertising materials and will send a draft to the committee within the next couple of weeks. Andrew Harmon requested that the advertising be released before early July, so it reaches the public as people return from their summer vacations.

c. Ad-hoc Committee Update

Andrew Harmon noted that the committee had their second full meeting and they had some good discussions. They are still in a bit of a holding pattern. They have some good steps set up to get more information. He is hoping something will come out of that committee in the next couple of weeks. Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre noted how they talked about how NH is facing a housing supply issue and that it impacts people with disabilities to a greater degree. Until we solve the bigger issues with housing supply, the best we can do is connect people to the resources that are available. They have been in communications with the ADRC as well.

Transportation Updates

Andrew Harmon noted that regarding transportation bills, the one that was about transportation funding was discussed at a committee of conference last Thursday. He couldn't find anything about it though. Andrew Harmon mentioned how at the end of the legislative session, any bills that go back and forth between the House and Senate can have a committee of conference on it to see if they can reconcile on the bill. They can either agree to it, amend it, or don't agree and the bill dies. He noted that SB 627 which was set to go to study committee, which is a polite way to kill a bill in the second year, at the last-minute went to a committee of conference. The bill looks

like it is going forward but he can't find any details on what happened to the bill. Hopefully it means we will have a modest increase in some of the funds so some of the services might improve a little bit. Andrew Harmon noted that there were two bills related to transportation. The first is HB 2026 which is the main funding for the 10-year transportation plan. The second was SB 627, which provided funding by increasing fees for out-of-state E-ZPass users and NH residents would be provided a free E-ZPass. Mo Baxley will look for more information about it.

Other Legislative Updates

Andrew Harmon asked if there were any last-minute bills that anyone wanted to bring up that they were keeping an eye on that need action or further discussion. Mo Baxley noted that the only action anyone can take at this point is calling the Governor. She mentioned how right now, a committee of conference is going over all the absentee ballot bills. We will have to wait until we get the reports to see what happened because what is said in the room doesn't necessarily make it into the report. Regarding SB 627, she mentioned how the Governor intends to veto that bill. Andrew Harmon mentioned that he thinks with all the support it has, it is possible for a veto override. There are more people for it than against it, at least from what he has heard from the hearings. She will look for the reports and share them.

Ryan Donnelly noted that there was a bill that he was following this session that unfortunately looks like it is dead. The bill is HB 1215 which is relative to supporting preferred methods of communication for an individual. Mo Baxley noted that bill was killed in the committee of conference. Jennifer Beaulieu asked about the bill to investigate the developmental disabilities system. Mo Baxley noted that some of that bill is moving forward, Karen Rosenberg from the DRC is the go-to person for that.

The committee discussed HB 1337, a bill that would disband the New Hampshire Council on Autism Spectrum Disorders effective December 2027. Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre raised concerns about passing a bill that eliminates the council while simultaneously expecting it to demonstrate its value within the next year. Mo Baxley explained that the council slowed during COVID, similar to many other boards. Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre mentioned how leadership vacancies left it without support which resulted in several unfilled annual reports. Recently, agencies that are required to sit on the council have been trying to rebuild it. The council has regained quorum, submitted an annual report, and is developing a training series. Its funding is tied to the Quality Council, which is something that the council would like to address and may require legislative changes. She mentioned that the problem with this bill is that they would need to put together another bill for the next legislative session to save the council. Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre who is the Acting Chair of the council, described the council's purpose which is the following: (1) To support and advocate for the autistic community; and (2) Serve as a resource hub for families impacted by autism. She mentioned the importance of the council due to the growing number of autism diagnoses, including the number who don't qualify for waiver

services but still need support. The council also holds seats on several related bodies. Andrew Harmon suggested circulating the information to the Advocacy Committee.

Other Business

Andrew Harmon mentioned to Mo Baxley how he hasn't heard anything from the coalition that is trying to be more proactive with legislation. Mo Baxley noted that the coalition had a few meetings and they had a meeting last week. Mo Baxley will see why Andrew Harmon is not getting the meeting invitations. Andrew Harmon asked if there was anything from the coalition that she would like to share. Ryan Donnelly noted that last week, they had an awesome hybrid meeting to go over their initial plans. People from GSIL, DRC, DD Council, and other organizations are part of the coalition. He noted how these are groups that are working on similar things and following the same things legislatively but don't always communicate with each other in the most effective ways. This is an opportunity to reduce duplication in work, make sure everybody is really playing to their strengths, and advancing disability policy in a positive way. Herb Carpenter asked for clarification on if it is just focusing on legislative issues. Mo Baxley mentioned that it is beyond legislative issues, the coalition will be having some public education and will be doing something for disability pride.

Summer Meeting Schedule

Andrew Harmon mentioned how the schedule for everyone changes in the summer. He asked if everyone was still okay with meeting on the 4th Wednesday at 2:00pm every month. Discussion ensued. Everyone in attendance was okay with that schedule.

Adjournment

***Joshua Gehling moved to adjourn.**

Second: Andrew Harmon

Discussion: None

All in Favor: Yes **Abstaining:** None

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 2:52pm.

Minutes Recorded by Jennifer Beaulieu.