



STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

May 20, 2026

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

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

Voting Members: Acting Chair Ryan Witterschein, Second Vice-Chair Deborah Ritcey, Acting Secretary Krystal Chase (Remote due to back-to-back meetings), Member Ryan Donnelly (Remote due to transportation issues), Member Andrew Harmon, Member Joshua Gehling, Member Jennifer Cook, Member Rob Kallin, Member Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, and Member Michelle McConaghy.

Staff: Jennifer Beaulieu (NH SILC Assistant)

Guests: Matthew Greenwood (Member of the Public), Herbert Carpenter (Applicant), Carrie Dudley (Member of the Public), Jennifer LaSalle (Applicant), Kacie Lawrence (ASL Interpreter), and Erika Burgess (ASL Interpreter).

*Ryan Witterschein called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

*Quorum was reached.

Approval of Minutes of 3/18 Full SILC Meeting

Ryan Witterschein asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

***Joshua Gehling made the motion**

Second: Jennifer Cook

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

- **Yes:** Jennifer Cook, Ryan Donnelly, Krystal Chase, Andrew Harmon, Ryan Witterschein, Rob Kallin, Michelle McConaghy, and Joshua Gehling
- **No:** None

All in Favor: Yes **Abstention:** Deborah Ritcey (Due to being absent at the prior meeting) and Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre (Not being in attendance during vote)

Motion Carried.

Presentation on Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Inc.

Michelle McConaghy shared an overview of Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Inc. (NDHHS), a Concord-based nonprofit that has served people across the hearing loss spectrum statewide for 25 years. There are four departments within the agency. The first is the Communications Access Department, which matches community members with interpreters, maintains an online interpreter portal, and provides ASL and CART services. The department also offers emergency medical interpreting through contracts with five hospitals, with interpreters available within 60–90 minutes and two on call daily. Additional services include the SPP (Support Service Provider) program and the Part B–Communication Access program. SPPs are trained guides who assist Deaf-Blind individuals in navigating

their communities. The Part-B Communication Access program covers the costs to provide interpreter or CART services for personal events where costs would otherwise fall on the individual. Both programs are funded with Part B dollars that the DSE (Designated State Entity) disseminates for independent living services.

Michelle McConaghy mentioned the second department which offers assistive technology services. One of programs is called iCanConnect, which provides telecommunications equipment and training for Deaf-Blind residents of New Hampshire and does not require total blindness to qualify. In response to Andrew Harmon's question about partnerships, she emphasized that collaboration is built into their process, particularly within the iCanConnect program. She explained that applications are reviewed to match individuals with the best provider, and services are often contracted out to organizations like Future in Sight for more specialized support. She also highlighted ATinNH (Assistive Technology in New Hampshire), which offers demonstrations, device loans, and information about assistive technology. She noted additional services such as Relay NH, IP Relay, and Relay Conference Captioning for meetings and events.

The third department they have is their education resource center where they provide support and services for those who have hearing loss in the education system. They provide service from early intervention to early adulthood. They have ASL interpreters, sign language instructors, communication facilitators, etc. They have trainings that they offer to parents and families of children who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing so they can communicate with their child.

Their fourth department is community services, which offers Information and Referral services and has the NH Hears program. Individuals can call the Information and Referral line for any questions they have on anything related to communication and hearing loss. They have a new initiative called NH Hears which provides support to older individuals with hearing loss. Deborah Ritcey asked if there was anything that Northeast Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services, Inc. would love to be doing but can't because of funding. Michelle McConaghy answered yes and mentioned the idea of having a workshop that is fully accessible on topics such as how to advocate for yourself.

Presentation on NH Housing

Nixzaliz Baez gave a presentation on some of the services that NH Housing offers. She is the supervisor of program operations at NH Housing and oversees the housing choice voucher waitlist and eligibility process. NH Housing's mission is to promote and finance affordable housing solutions in New Hampshire, including financing 1,950 multifamily rental units last year and administering federally funded rental assistance for more than 19,000 households. They also support homeownership, helping 1,078 low-income families buy homes in 2025. Nixzaliz Baez's division manages the housing choice voucher program, which serves individuals earning 50% or less of the area median income, and oversees the Family Self-Sufficiency program, which provides financial and employment coaching for voucher holders seeking greater independence. Additional programs include vouchers for veterans through a partnership with the VA (Veterans Affairs). Nixzaliz Baez noted that more than 70% of their program and waitlist population has a disability, and emphasized that while vouchers subsidize rent, recipients must find their own housing placements.

NH Housing has over 4,000 vouchers, out of those 4,000 vouchers they did put aside about 500 for project-based vouchers. Those are properties that are tax credited and are already working with NH Housing on the multifamily side. With those properties, they subsidize their rent. Herb Carpenter mentioned the bridge program which is a state program that offers temporary housing. She noted that they have a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the bridge program. They give them about 75 spots so that they could transition their individuals from the bridge voucher to the housing choice voucher to free up more space. Herb Carpenter asked that the 70% with disabilities, is that for the all the 18 local

agencies. She responded it's just for their program. Jennifer LaSalle asked if you must wait 12 months to live in the state before you can take the voucher. She responded that yes it's our policy. If you live in NH when you apply with NH Housing, you can get the voucher and use it right away. If you don't live in NH, you'll have to wait for 12 months before you can take the voucher. However there are reasonable accommodations that can be used if needed. She stressed that different public housing authorities have different policies. Joshua Gehling asked if in order for those applying to get on the waitlist, does someone else have to lose their voucher or it's more of a real estate issue. Those to get on the waitlist, someone else has to no longer have a voucher or it's more real estate issue. She noted that it would be more that some are terminated. Jennifer Cook clarified that they have a limited amount of slots. Discussion ensued on the waitlists.

Michelle McConaghy asked for further clarification about the 70%. She asked what percentage on the waiting list receive a waiver. Nixzaliz Baez noted that she cannot get a percentage but it's probably close to 600 who have a waiver. Carrie Dudley mentioned a situation where a small town was upset because there was going to be low-income apartments placed in the town. She asked what NH Housing does in those types of situations. Nixzaliz Baez mentioned they have a division within their agency that goes to those small towns and works with developers on getting more low-income housing into those small towns.

Q&A and Vote on Applicants; Jenny LaSalle and Michael Negrete

Ryan Witterschein mentioned that Jenny LaSalle and Michael Negrete are applying to join the NH SILC. They have both gone through the Membership Committee. Due to Michael Negrete not being in attendance, the vote to move him forward in the membership process was tabled. Jenny LaSalle was in attendance. Ryan Witterschein noted that she comes from an extensive background in social work and has experience in many different things. He opened the floor up for introductions and a Q&A. Jenny LaSalle noted that she started her career working in residential treatment with adolescents and families with emotional disabilities. She also focused on transitioning youth between 12 and 18 and helping transition them from the youth system to the adult system. After working in residential treatment, she worked in the Managed Care Medicaid and Medicare Advantage field. She worked for WellSense in their case management department where she learned a lot about Medicaid, waivers, and the gaps that exist in our state. As a licensed social worker, she spent a lot of energy investing in helping people transition and trying to figure out the gaps between the behavioral health and developmental disabilities system. Right now, she works at DaVita Dialysis. Andrew Harmon asked if she knows what committee she would be interested in. Discussion ensued. It was noted that the Governance Committee would be happy to have her as they only have three members in total. Jenny LaSalle was asked to leave the room so the council could vote on if she would move forward in the membership process.

*** Ryan Witterschein motioned to adopt Jenny into SILC and for her to receive the next step to go to the Governor for appointment.**

Second: Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

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

Motion Carried.

Jenny LaSalle was asked to return after the vote. Ryan Witterschein noted that the next step will be to send her application to the Governor.

Jennifer Cook Resignation

Ryan Witterschein reported that Jennifer Cook has decided to resign from the NH SILC. He noted that she has been a tremendous force here at the council and he thanks her for her work. He opened the floor for her to say a few words.

Jennifer Cook mentioned that even though she is resigning, she still agrees with the mission of the council. She enjoyed her time with the council. She noted that she had an opportunity to talk with the Membership Committee the day before about her resignation. She wants everyone to question things. She noted how she had a sort of dissident voice on occasion. She lastly noted that she is thankful for the opportunity to serve.

Everyone thanked her for her contributions. Jennifer Cook officially resigned on May 20th, 2026.

Appreciation Award for Matthew Greenwood

Ryan Witterschein moved on to the next Agenda item. He noted that on behalf of SILC and everyone here, he wanted to thank and show our appreciation for all Matthew Greenwood has done because he regularly attends meetings and is a foundation of this council.

DSE (Designated State Entity) Update

Lisa Beck (Designated State Entity Representative) mentioned that she doesn't have a ton of updates. She is getting ready to work with Erin Hall, Michelle McConaghy, and Deborah Ritcey on the contracts for next year because even though the contracts don't expire till September 2027, they must work on them now. They are going to have a meeting and talk about it. She lastly noted that she appreciates the presentation on the housing situation. She is floored by how much of the percentage of that number have disabilities. She wondered how we can serve all those people and will ask for more money anytime she can.

Committee Updates

Membership

Ryan Witterschein reported for the Membership Committee. He mentioned regarding membership, they may have two new members joining. He noted that at Jennifer Cook's recommendation, they are also going to be developing a standard operating procedure for resigning from the NH SILC, so people know how to navigate the process.

Governance

Deborah Ritcey reported out for the Governance Committee. They will be looking at the strategic SPIL tracker to see what they can help with. The bylaws and policies & procedures are up to date. She noted that the officer elections are coming up at September's Full SILC meeting. She mentioned that if anyone is interested in a position, to reach out to her. She would be more than happy to talk about the commitment it takes to be an officer. The last thing that she wants to instill upon the members present is the importance of everyone to do what they can for these roles and not rely on the same people over and over again to be on the leadership team. The positions up for election are Chair, First Vice-Chair, Second Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

Advocacy

Andrew Harmon reported out for the Advocacy Committee. He mentioned that the committee has been hard at work on their 4.3 objective. They plan to put together some presentations at the two Fall Full SILC meetings on benefits. They have narrowed it down on who they want for their presenters. Regarding the Goal 1 objectives, they are still a bit behind, but they are making steady progress. The goal 5 objectives were sent to an ad-hoc committee. They had a little bit of trouble meeting but they had one

good meeting and have a lot of good starting points to work on. The ad-hoc committee will be meeting again next Tuesday instead of on a Monday due to it being Memorial Day this coming Monday.

Other Business

Carrie Dudley mentioned that she emailed Jennifer Beaulieu about when she can apply to be a member of the SILC. Discussion ensued on whether she has been off the NH SILC for one year. Jennifer Beaulieu mentioned that Carrie Dudley's appointment is kind of odd because her appointment letter said that she was appointed on June 4th but her term ends on May 15th of 2025. Deborah Ritcey mentioned that if she intends to join as a member, she thinks she should go through the process because by the time she gets appointed, a year would have passed.

Carrie Dudley mentioned that she got an email from ACL for the 2025 PPR. Discussion ensued. The Executive Committee will discuss it more offline.

Herb Carpenter mentioned that on June 11th, Fellowship Housing is celebrating its 60th anniversary. The event will be at the Bank of NH state in downtown Concord from 6pm to 11pm.

Andrew Harmon mentioned that the National Federation of the Blind of NH is having their annual convention on May 30th. If anyone is interested in attending, they would need to register by Memorial Day. It's going to be at the Grappone Center. He will email out information about the conference. The other event he wanted to mention was that the NH Transit Association and the State Coordinating Council for Community Transportation are going to have their annual conference.

Michelle McConaghy mentioned how they receive so many documents for the meeting. She wondered if there was a way to place the documents in a centralized location like OneDrive or Google Drive. Jennifer Beaulieu mentioned that it would probably need to be OneDrive because that is what the state usually uses. Deborah Ritcey asked about the website. Discussion ensued on where to put the documents on the website. Deborah Ritcey asked if everybody wants a printed packet every time we met. Jennifer Cook mentioned that there are people on this council who don't work for a company so they're using all their own ink to print everything. Ryan Witterschein mentioned the idea of when Jennifer Beaulieu reaches out about the Full SILC meeting, she will ask if people want their documents to be printed for the next meeting.

Motion to Adjourn

*** Rob Kallin mentioned a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

Second: Ryan Witterschein

Discussion:

Roll Call:

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

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

Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 1:53pm.

Minutes recorded by Jennifer Beaulieu.