



STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

July 22, 2026

2:00pm

Advocacy Committee Meeting

ZOOM

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

Staff: Jennifer Beaulieu (NH SILC Assistant)

Guest: Mo Baxley (GSIL, Advocacy Director)

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

Review of June Meeting Minutes

Andrew Harmon noted that he would entertain a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting in June.

***Ryan Donnelly made that motion**

Second: Andrew Harmon

Discussion: Joshua Gehling noted that he couldn't attend the last meeting because of technology issues.

All in Favor: Yes **Abstaining:** Joshua Gehling

Motion Carried

Discussion of SPIL Objectives:

a. Goal 1 Objectives

Andrew Harmon reported that regarding the Goal 1 objectives, Deborah Ritcey was going to send him information from the Part B vendors. He hasn't received anything yet from her, but he will give it a few more days.

b. Objective 4.3 Presentation Progress

Andrew Harmon noted that for Objective 4.3, he and Ryan Donnelly were supposed to have a meeting with Ryan Witterschein to discuss the logistics for the benefits counseling sessions. Unfortunately, that meeting had to be postponed. He is hoping he will be able to meet with Ryan Witterschein this coming Friday. He sent out an email to him but didn't get a response back. Jennifer Beaulieu asked him to forward that email to her so she could include the email in her Friday follow-up email.

c. Updates on Ad-hoc Committee regarding Goal 5 objectives

Andrew Harmon noted that with the housing committee, they had a bit of a delayed start and had to postpone the last meeting to earlier this month. They had some good discussions. At this point, they are still having difficulties with getting in touch with 2-1-1 trying to reach out to 2-1-1 even with specific contacts there. He asked if anyone had any contacts at Granite United Way since they held the contract for NH's 2-1-1 helpline. Jennifer Beaulieu noted that Sarah Sweeney had some notes from the call she had with Erica Marden at 2-1-1, but she is still on leave. Mo Baxley will send Andrew Harmon a specific contact at Granite United Way. Jennifer Beaulieu mentioned that Ryan Witterschein created a database. He created a database of resources because when he went to the disability pride event, the number one thing he kept hearing from everyone is that they don't know resources are out there. So, Ryan Witterschein created a new website using an old domain that has a list of resources.

Quick update on Disability Round-Table Group

Andrew Harmon moved on to discuss the disability round-table group. He noted that the group now has a name which is NH LEAF (The NH League for an Equitable and Accessible Future). The group is still having bi-weekly meetings via ZOOM. Mo Baxley noted that budget discussions are on the agenda for tomorrow's meeting. The group has a webpage now on the NH DD Council's website.

Discussion on OSERS and Potential Impact On SILC/NH

Andrew Harmon moved on to discuss some changes that are happening on the federal level. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is moving from the Department of Education to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Recently, there was a public briefing session on the move of OSERS to HHS. He watched it and took notes. It was basically them answering questions they received ahead of time when people registered for the event. A lot of the responses to the questions boil down to basically trust them, it will all work out, and the money won't go anywhere. A lot of the questions were about the move and whether it will impact services going forward. Discussion ensued. He wanted to bring it to people's attention in case they hadn't heard about it. Also, Vocational Rehabilitation is our Designated State Entity and they manage our funds. He doesn't know what this is going to mean for services going forward. Mo Baxley noted how the governor signed a bill that put a school budget cap mandate on the ballot for each town. Discussion ensued. Jennifer Beaulieu noted that the interagency agreements, including the one moving OSERS to HHS, is on the Returning Education to the States' website. Andrew Harmon mentioned that they made clear that OSERS was still under their oversight and HHS was just going to be assisting behind the scenes. Mo Baxley noted that she thinks we are going to see education being squeezed from both directions. Andrew Harmon noted how his school district is already having massive budget discussions. He is a little concerned over how this is going to impact students with disabilities.

Other

Andrew Harmon asked if anybody attended the recent disability pride event. Ryan Donnelly noted that he and Mo Baxley were there representing Granite State Independent Living (GSIL). Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre was also there. The turnout was good and the weather held off till the last hour of the event..

Andrew Harmon mentioned that he included a PDF of an article from the Union Leader in the email that was sent out ahead of today's meeting. The article was about how Governor Ayotte vetoed the bill that would increase the toll rates. She also vetoed the 10-year highway transportation plan in its current state. He doesn't know what impact this will have regarding transportation projects. Andrew Harmon clarified that there were two bills; one was HB 2026 which is the overall 10-year transportation plan update for the current biennium and the other was HB 627 which had pieces that provided needed funding for HB 2026. He mentioned how a lot of transportation providers rely on funding from the transportation plan to meet the match requirement for federal funding. Mo Baxley mentioned that she was talking with some people from the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST). They are trying to train people who provide door-to-door services. Some of the case workers were a little nervous about who is deciding who needs door-to-door services. Discussion ensued. Mo Baxley mentioned how in the past it also included people who were neurodivergent and couldn't manage bus rides. The concern was that it would push those people out. She doesn't know where they are in that process. Andrew Harmon noted that one of the meetings he attends, the head of COAST also attends. If the head of COAST is at that meeting, he can try talking to him about it. There were questions about if the vetoes can be overridden. Andrew Harmon answered yes if enough people vote for it. Mo Baxley noted that there is going to be a veto day where the House and Senate have a session to try to override the vetoes. It takes about 2/3 of both the House and Senate to get a veto overridden. She noted that if any of the bills were going to be overridden it would be those two bills because it has strong support from both sides of the aisle. Veto day usually occurs in September or October.

Mo Baxley noted that GSIL is going to be doing some listening sessions around the state. A survey is out and they just want to know what people need. It's up on GSIL's Facebook page and has been posted on SILC NH's social media pages. Joshua Gehling noted that the Brain Injury Association and the Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Advisory board are also having a needs assessment survey. Discussion ensued. Jennifer Beaulieu will post the information on SILC's social media pages.

Jennifer Beaulieu noted that she heard that during the mid-term elections, the Trump Administration is going to be having poll watchers in Manchester and Nashua. Discussion ensued. It was mentioned that the poll watchers would be from the DOJ's Department of Civil Rights. Herb Carpenter mentioned how an organization reached out to him as a housing provider

for people with disabilities. They were asking if their residents needed assistance with obtaining absentee ballots. He doesn't remember what the organization's name was though. Andrew Harmon noted that America Votes or the Collation for Voting Rights has been reaching out to various nursing homes and residential facilities to help residents obtain absentee ballots. Mo Baxley mentioned that it's getting harder to obtain absentee ballots due to the new citizenship proof documentation requirements. Andrew Harmon mentioned how there was some success in the courts because they overturned the citizenship proof documentation requirements for in-person voting. It's being appealed but at least for this coming election, we don't need to provide proof of citizenship for in-person voting.

Andrew Harmon asked if anyone had heard about any issues with the OmniBallot. Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre noted how some towns don't set them up. Andrew Harmon mentioned how the Blind and Vision Impaired Voters Coalition has been working with the Secretary of State's Office and they are aware of that problem. He noted that they are working on creating a list of recommendations regarding the OmniBallot. Mo Baxley asked if anyone is gathering information about towns that don't have the OmniBallot set up. Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre noted that the Disability Rights Center (DRC) has been gathering that information. Andrew Harmon noted that part of the problem is that the training for the OmniBallot is voluntary and if somebody decides not to do the training, there aren't any real consequences.

Jennifer Beaulieu mentioned the DOJ recently had a notice that they are rescinding their Olmstead guidance.

Andrew Harmon noted that the Office of Civil Rights is going to be moving from the Department of Education to the Department of Justice. He noted that they also were trying to shut down the Randall Shepherd program which helps people get on their feet financially if they want to learn how to run a business. He doesn't know what came of that.

The next meeting will be on August 26th. Joshua Gehling noted that it's on a day where he is going to be on the road, he will try to join remotely from his car.

Adjournment

Andrew Harmon asked for a motion to adjourn.

***Joshua Gehling moved.**

Second: Herb Carpenter

Discussion: None

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

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.

Minutes Recorded by Jennifer Beaulieu.