



STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

August 26, 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)

Guests: Kristy Stellato (President of the NH Association of the Deaf) and Danielle Murphy (Applicant).

Committee Chair Andrew Harmon called the meeting to order at 2:04pm.

Review of July Meeting Minutes

***Joshua Gehling submitted a motion to approve the minutes.**

Second: Andrew Harmon

Discussion: Danielle Murphy noted that her application is still pending. There were questions on whether she can vote. Andrew Harmon noted that she can go ahead and vote. Until he gets told otherwise, he is just going to ask for forgiveness rather than permission.

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

Motion Carried

Discussion of SPIL Objectives:

a. Goal 1 Objectives

Andrew Harmon reported that at this time, he still doesn't have any new information. He did get a brief email from Deborah Ritcey, letting him know she will send something in November.

b. 4.3 Presentations

Andrew Harmon noted that we are pretty much set for the presentations on benefits counseling for September's and November's Full SILC meetings. They secured all the presenters for those presentations. They will have around 45 minutes for each meeting to have the presenters present at those meetings. He was concerned about having only one presenter at November's meeting and thinks it would be a good idea to have a second presenter. He asked if anybody had any ideas of who could be the second presenter.

Discussion ensued. There were concerns over whether there was enough time to vet and review additional presenters. Jennifer Beaulieu suggested using the September meeting to assess how each presentation is received. If a presenter doesn't have enough time or attendees show stronger interest in a particular topic or presenter, that presenter could be selected as the second presenter for the November meeting. Discussion ensued. Multiple members agreed with that idea. Andrew Harmon noted that he could also ask Kristen Venator to present at November's meeting as well as September's meeting.

Andrew Harmon moved on to discuss advertising for the presentations. The problem is that the flyer that was created for the event is not screen-reader accessible. Discussion ensued on the accessibility of the flyer. Andrew Harmon mentioned that he will work with Ryan Donnelly after the meeting on the accessibility of the flyer. He asked for people to push this event out to their networks. Joshua Gehling noted that he would be happy to share information about the event in the BDS weekly newsletter that goes out to several family members, service coordinators, and provider agencies. Jennifer Beaulieu noted that information about the presentation was included in a monthly column in the Union Leader.

The presentations for September's Full SILC meeting will be from 1:00pm to 1:45pm.

c. Ad-Hoc Housing Committee Update

Andrew Harmon mentioned that the ad-hoc housing committee met on Monday. They were finally able to get in contact with someone at United Way. The contact's name is Nanci Carney who is the Regional Director for the north country region of United Way. She attended the meeting and they had a good discussion with her on various subjects related to housing. They are hoping to move forward with the resources they gained from their discussions with Nanci Carney.

Andrew Harmon noted that he will reach out to Ryan Witterschein about the website that he repurposed to be a resources database. This might be the place to house the resources they got from Nanci Carney.

Upcoming Granite State Debates Question Submissions

Andrew Harmon mentioned that he isn't sure if it would be easier for this committee to receive the information about the debates via email or for him to drop the information in the chat. Discussion ensued. The Granite State Debates are where the candidates running for federal office engage in debates with each other. He heard on Channel 9 that there is going to be at least one debate on September 1st. The debate organizers are asking for people to submit questions prior to the debates. He will send out the information via email to the committee.

Veto Day Updates

Andrew Harmon gave the committee a brief report on the actions that were taken on veto day. He noted that the legislature overrode the Governor's veto on the transportation bill and sustained the Governor's veto on the Autism Council. He noted that the 10-year transportation plan covers the funding for all transportation projects across the state through the department of transportation. Public transit gets a small portion of that funding. The plan had a huge deficit, and the bill tried to shore that up by increasing the tolls for anyone who doesn't have a NH EasyPass. NH residents would have around 6 months to get a NH EasyPass. The Governor vetoed that bill, but that veto was overridden by large margins on both sides of the aisle. The legislature also sustained the Governor's veto on the bill that would get rid of the NH Council on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Danielle Murphy mentioned that she has concerns about the work requirements coming up for Medicaid because enrollees will have to show that they are going to job interviews or working. Public transportation and other resources are critical to make sure enrollees don't lose their Medicaid. Ryan Donnelly noted the Medicaid Matters work group. That work group is a large coalition of various organizations. Recently the bulk of their focus has been on the future Medicaid work requirements. The group meets bi-weekly virtually. There were questions on whether WellSense is a part of that group. The work group is not open to the public, but they do have events that are open to the public. Ryan Donnelly mentioned the DHHS Oversight group will be meeting on August 28th and he expects there will be some discussion about the upcoming work requirements. The meetings of that group are open to the public. Ryan Donnelly will send the link out to the meeting to Andrew Harmon.

Other Business

Andrew Harmon noted that the NH Commission for Aging finalized their report on the community transportation needs assessment that Impact Consulting assisted with. The report on that assessment is hosted on the commission's website. The report was the result of a comprehensive effort to look at current transportation gaps and barriers in specific populations such as veterans, people with disabilities, and senior citizens.

Andrew Harmon asked Kristy Stellato to give a brief overview of the organization that she is a part of. Kristy Stellato mentioned that the NH Association of the Deaf is a full volunteer organization for Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing community members all over New Hampshire. The organization was founded in 1973 and is associated with the National Association for the Deaf. The organization focuses on social opportunities, advocacy, and networking for their community all over the state. They also have a full board with a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. She serves as the President.

Andrew Harmon noted that the disability roundtable group they have been talking about at the last few meetings have adopted the name of LEAF (League for an Equitable and Accessible

Future). He noted that the group has a couple of events coming up, one of which is an in-person meeting. The group is made up of various organizations that are either directly or indirectly related to the disability community. The group was formed to try to be more proactive in the legislative process and with the legislature. They recently created some questions for the candidates that are running for office. They have meetings every two weeks virtually.

Andrew Harmon noted that Impact Consulting has a couple of surveys they have been working on because they are trying to capture information regarding the 9-8-8 hotline which is for mental health. The surveys are for people with lived experience who may or may not have used the hotline. He has an email and will send it out. He asked everyone to share it with whoever it might benefit.

Jennifer Beaulieu noted that with the upcoming primaries and elections, Future in Sight will be hosting some sessions virtually and in-person on how to use the OmniBallot. The OmniBallot was created to make voting accessible for everyone. He asked everyone to share the information about the sessions and the OmniBallot because it's not just for people with print disabilities, but for everyone to use.

Adjournment

Andrew Harmon noted that he would entertain a motion to adjourn.

***Ryan Donnelly made that motion.**

Second: Andrew Harmon

Discussion: None

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

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 2:50pm.

Minutes Recorded by Jennifer Beaulieu.