



STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

July 15, 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, Member Ryan Donnelly (Remote), Member Andrew Harmon, Member Joshua Gehling, Member Rob Kallin, Member Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, and Member Michelle McConaghy (Remote).

Staff: Jennifer Beaulieu (NH SILC Assistant)

Guests: Matthew Greenwood (Member of the Public), Herb Carpenter (Applicant), Jennifer LaSalle (Applicant), Michael Negrete (Applicant), Danielle Murphy (Applicant), Nathalie Fortier (Applicant), Victoria Lee (Executive Assistant at GSIL), Adam Schrier (Brain Injury Association of NH, Remote), 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 5/20 Full SILC Meeting

***Deborah Ritcey motioned to approve the minutes as written.**

Second: Rob Kallin

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

- **Yes:** Ryan Donnelly, Andrew Harmon, Deborah Ritcey, Rob Kallin, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, and Ryan Witterschein.
- **No:** None

All in Favor: Yes **Abstention:** Michelle McConaghy and Joshua Gehling (Weren't in attendance at the time)

Motion Carried.

Q&A and Vote on Applicant: Michael Negrete

Ryan Witterschein introduced Michael Negrete. He mentioned that Michael Negrete attended a previous Membership Committee meeting. He noted that Michael Negrete is applying to sit on SILC NH as a member. He wants to give everyone a chance to ask questions and for Michael Negrete to introduce himself. Michael Negrete mentioned he was injured 25 years ago, suffering a cervical injury resulting in quadriplegia. He has used a manual wheelchair for most of those years, more recently transitioning to a powerchair due to shoulder wear and injuries. He has served as an advocate for veteran's benefits and resources as President of the New England PVA (Paralyzed Veterans of America) serving veterans through all six New England states. He also served as PVA National Vice-President with their main office in Washington, D.C.. He referenced his cover letter to the Membership Committee about simply wanting

to make a positive impact on people's lives. He also referenced President Theodore Roosevelt's quote as a guiding principle for him – "Do what you can, with what you've got, where you are." , and that we all have the same capacity. He then offered to answer any questions the council may have.

Danielle Murphy asked how he heard about SILC NH. He noted that he has been working as a Peer Mentor Coordinator at GSIL (Granite State Independent Living) and there was an email that was sent out about SILC NH and became interested. Andrew Harmon asked which committee he is interested in joining. Michael Negrete noted that he is interested in the Advocacy Committee but is open to help wherever he can.

Ryan Witterschein asked Michael Negrete to step out for the vote. Members discussed Michael Negrete's strong interest in SILC NH, noting his detailed cover letter, relevant life experience, and inquisitive nature as a newer GSIL employee. Rob Kallin viewed him as a potential future leader, and others appreciated how he learned about SILC through a general email from Deborah Ritcey. It was an email that was sent out to 80 employees at GSIL but didn't have anything in it about the council seeking new members. Andrew Harmon suggested he could join the Governance Committee. Deborah Ritcey said she would abstain from the appointment vote due to him being an employee of GSIL and noted similar concerns if he joined the Governance Committee. She would still welcome him into the committee if that was the committee he was interested in, but she would just have to be cautious of any perceived conflicts of interest if there are only 4 members and 2 of them are from GSIL.

Herb Carpenter noted that he would be willing to join the Governance Committee if Michael Negrete was interested in joining the Advocacy Committee. Discussion ensued. It was mentioned that members can move to different committees. Deborah Ritcey noted that she thinks that members of any council should move between the different committees so they can have a better understanding of the overall arching goal of the council. There were questions about whether there needs to be a policy about movement between committees. It was mentioned that it would be better to not have another policy and have it just as a norm.

Deborah Ritcey mentioned how we should be signing conflicts of interest every year.

***Andrew Harmon moved that we accept Michael Negrete's application and forward it to the Governor.**

Second: Rob Kallin

Discussion: Joshua Gehling mentioned how he thought he was no longer a voting member. Ryan Witterschein noted that we are just going to proceed as usual until we know more.

Roll Call:

- **Yes:** Ryan Donnelly, Andrew Harmon, Rob Kallin, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Ryan Witterschein,
- **No:** None

All in Favor: Yes **Abstention:** Deborah Ritcey (Conflict of interest as his supervisor) and Joshua Gehling (Came in late, didn't get to listen to Michael Negrete's introduction)

Motion Carried.

Ryan Witterschein notified Michael Negrete of the results of the vote. Deborah Ritcey asked for clarification on if applicants would now go to the Governor's website to submit their application. Jennifer Beaulieu mentioned that she has been in communication with the Governor's Office. The Governor's Office is no longer using the online form but are instead asking for an Excel spreadsheet that lists out the individuals interested in being appointed to the Council. She noted that she had sent out the spreadsheet and included the individuals who applied using the online form.

DSE Update

This agenda item was tabled because Lisa Beck, the DSE (Designated State Entity) Representative was not in attendance.

Officer Election Update

Ryan Witterschein reported that they will be holding officer elections at September's Full SILC meeting. The Governance Committee created a tentative slate of officers. The tentative slate is the following: (1) Ryan Witterschein as Chair; (2) Krystal Chase as First Vice-Chair; (3) Deborah Ritcey as Second Vice-Chair; and (4) Andrew Harmon as Secretary. There were questions on whether Krystal Chase was still interested in going for the First Vice-Chair position. Originally, Krystal Chase was going to go for the Secretary position, and Andrew Harmon was going to volunteer for the First Vice Chair position. But after he mentioned his concerns about the extra time needed to properly learn from the chair position as part of the duties, she suggested he go for the Secretary position. She also suggested she go for the First Vice-Chair position instead. Deborah Ritcey mentioned that she is willing to continue for another year as the Second Vice-Chair, but she would be willing to step off if anyone else is interested in the position.

Deborah Ritcey noted that she has been very clear with this council and with every Chair, that she has zero interest in running for Chair. She believes there is a conflict of interest particularly in how the funding is now going to be funneled to the Part B (Federal funding for independent living services) vendors. VR NH (Vocational Rehabilitation New Hampshire) currently awards Part B IL (Independent Living) funds through an RFP (Request for Proposal) process. The process is shifting back to the intended model where GSIL becomes the sole Part B recipient. GSIL will assess statewide IL needs and decide how to allocate funds. They can either decide to keep all the funding or allocate funds to other organizations. Since GSIL is not a specialist in certain disability communities, the plan is for them to subcontract Part B funds to the current vendors once the transition occurs.

Deborah Ritcey explained a bit about the responsibilities and time commitments of being on the leadership team such as attending more meetings, serving as a committee chair or committee member, and assisting on the SPIL. Matthew Greenwood mentioned the idea of having a training course for members to prepare them for leadership positions. Discussion ensued. Deborah Ritcey noted that in her opinion the best way to learn is to try out a leadership position. She noted how everyone recognizes that nobody really knows what they are doing till they get there. Most people on this council are supportive of people new to leadership positions. Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre mentioned her possible interest in the Second-Vice Chair position. Deborah Ritcey recommended that to her that she think about and if she is still interested, she can contact her and she can put her on the slate.

Deborah Ritcey explained the officer election process. Deborah Ritcey explained that in August she will send a proposed slate of officers, separate from the Full SILC agenda. At the September meeting, each position on the slate will be voted on. Because it's a public meeting, anyone may nominate themselves or others from the floor. If multiple people run for a position, each candidate is voted on, and the person with the most votes wins.

Reminder that Part B Vendor Surveys Need to be Done by October 1

Ryan Witterschein reminded everyone that the Part B vendor surveys need to be done by October 1st. Deborah Ritcey noted that the Part B vendors are required to do an annual survey. Typically, the surveys are done in August, and the executive summaries are presented at November's Full SILC meeting. She doesn't think that October 1st needs to be the date, she thinks it can be a bit later. What she thinks needs to happen is that the Part B vendors must have their executive summaries done by October 1st. Deborah Ritcey will talk with Nathalie Fortier after the meeting about the surveys.

Committee Updates

Membership

Ryan Witterschein reported for the Membership Committee. He mentioned that right now they have a bunch of applicants. He would rather wait to see if the pending applicants are appointed before we bring more applicants in. That doesn't mean that people aren't allowed to apply or participate in meetings. They are just not actively seeking members until the pending applicants are appointed. The committee has also been focused on standard operating procedures. They developed a resignation protocol and a new member policy. These policies will be voted on at a future Full SILC meeting. Deborah Ritcey voiced her concerns over some of the requirements of the resignation protocol such as having discussions over why someone is resigning. Rob Kallin noted that some people were confused over if they could resign.

Governance

Deborah Ritcey reported that the Governance Committee has been focused on the slate of officers and preparing for the next SPIL (State Plan for Independent Living), as the current plan ends in September 2027. The development process begins this September, guided by a timeline policy created last year. She noted the current SPIL tried to take on too much and that no one had taken clear ownership of its pieces. The committee has handled SPIL development for the last two cycles and would appreciate help. Rob Kallin offered to assist with making goals measurable. Danielle Murphy asked about required SPIL components, and Deborah Ritcey explained that while the council chooses the focus areas, they must still create goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes. She will send out the federal requirements and the current SPIL. Andrew Harmon volunteered to help run public input sessions. Deborah Ritcey explained that past SPILs were shaped by previous plans, public input, and members lived experiences. Public input sessions, typically in March or April, will be moved to January to provide more time to use the public input feedback in the development of the SPIL.

Danielle Murphy noted the idea of looking at data from other plans that exist in the state. She noted that DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services NH) has a state plan and that Go-North has a plan. Deborah Ritcey mentioned that GSIL is in the middle of a needs assessment. Many organizations have done needs assessments. She noted that these are tools we can use but we need to make sure they are focused on the aging and disability community. Danielle Murphy wondered if there was a way to touch base with other SILCs or if there are quarterly collaborative calls for SILCs. Jennifer Beaulieu mentioned that there are monthly calls which include a whole bunch of SILCs throughout the country. Jennifer Beaulieu will send out the links to that website.

Advocacy

Andrew Harmon reported that the Advocacy Committee remains stalled on Goal 1. He plans to contact Part B vendors for information on service gaps. For Objective 4.3, the framework is in place, but logistics for presentations at the September and November Full SILC meetings still need work. Deborah Ritcey will forward GSIL's call information to Andrew Harmon and include the other Part B vendors. The email will mention that Andrew Harmon is looking for this type of information. Joshua Gehling will reconnect with IOD (Institute on Disability) to see if broader data is available beyond Part B vendors.

Andrew Harmon shared that the Ad-hoc Housing Committee has met but progress is slow due to summer scheduling. They identified initial outreach targets, but collected information has been limited. The committee is having difficulty obtaining additional housing resource data from 2-1-1.

Other Business

Andrew Harmon mentioned the veto of both the toll increase bill as well as the ten-year highway transportation plan and questioned the impact these actions would have on independent living. He mentioned how the whole 10-year highway plan will be affected because it was reliant on that toll increase bill. He noted how a lot of transportation providers rely on funds from the 10-year transportation

plan to meet the match requirement for funding from the federal government. He is hoping that these vetoes will get overturned.

Andrew Harmon mentioned that there is a website titled KeepNHMoving.com which includes various transportation resources in the state. There is also information about the state coordinating council for community transportation, regional coordinating councils, and the different regions in the state. It was mentioned that ABLE NH has great webinars regarding transportation. There was one on Managed Care Organizations and Non-Emergency Medical Transportation.

Motion to Adjourn

Ryan Witterschein asked for a motion to adjourn.

***Deborah Ritcey moved.**

Second: Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

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

Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:13pm.

Minutes recorded by Jennifer Beaulieu.