



# STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

**June 19, 2019**

**11:30am – 2:30 pm**

**Room 100, Walker Building**

**21 South Fruit Street, Concord, NH**

**Members and Nominees Attending:** Jeff Dickinson, Andrew Harmon, Rose Prescott, Marcia Golembeski, Shellie Lemelin, Gary Whitmarsh, Dorine Pelletier, Carrie Dudley, Christopher Emerson, Susan Wolf-Downes, Ellie Kimball

**Staff:** Jennifer Beaulieu

**Communications Assistance:** Laurie Meyer and Jola Leary (interpreters) and Donna Wells (CART)

**Guests:** Ferris Al Kurabi (UNH IOD), Matthew Gianino (UNH IOD), Marion James (NDHHS), Pamela Lovejoy (NDHHS), and Karen Francis (NDHHS)

SPIIL task forces met from 11:30 to 12:30. The SILC meeting was called to order by Chair Jeff Dickinson at 1:00 PM. Attendance was taken via introductions.

\*Quorum was reached.

## **Presentation by Susan Wolf-Downes and Staff from Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services**

Susan Wolf-Downes, Marion James, Pamela Lovejoy, and Karen Francis presented on the various services and programs Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Inc. provides. Susan gave an overview of all the services and went into detail about the Emergency Medical Interpreter Services program which provides on-call, emergency interpreting services to hospitals in NH. She noted how her husband was able to use emergency interpreting services to communicate with his doctor about complex medical information. Christopher mentioned how he spent hours at Frisbee Hospital waiting for an interpreter and writing back and forth with medical providers about complex medical information. He noted that he is glad that Frisbee Hospital is in the process of contracting with the Emergency Medical Interpreter Services program. Susan noted that they use Part B funding to provide interpreters for social events, family gatherings, funerals, etc. Part B also funds Support Service Providers (SPP) who are trained mobility guides that assist Deaf-Blind and low-vision people in their communities by providing transportation, serving as a human guide while walking, relaying visual and auditory environmental information, and tactile signing.

Marion talked about how the referral process works for interpreters and other services. She noted that first when a person is going to have an event, appointment, etc. where a Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf-Blind, or Late-Deaf consumer will be present, the host of the event would contact referral which will connect them to an interpreter or other service that meets the hosts' and consumers' needs. She mentioned that NDHHS has profiles on all Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf-Blind, Late-Deaf people who received services from them. These profiles contain information on the person's needs and what are the best matches for their needs. Jeff asked how the environment is for interpreters. Marion responded they have the program at UNH Manchester to train sign language interpreters. Susan noted that NDHHS takes on new interpreters and gives them experience. Many interpreters that are considered the best in the state, started with NDHHS. Susan noted that there are four staff interpreters to assist if no freelance interpreter can be assigned.

Pamela spoke about the Family Sign Language program and early intervention services for children who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, or Hard of Hearing. She mentioned that all newborns in NH have hearing screenings. If the test reveals something wrong, they refer the newborn for more extensive testing to see if they are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. If they are they start to receive early intervention services and are assigned a teacher of the Deaf to see what types of communications should be used, what types of technologies should be used, etc. She also noted how they also try to assist schools with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. The Family Sign Language Program teaches families of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to communicate using sign language. Susan mentioned that the state doesn't pay for her position but a grant does. They will have a temporary teacher of the Deaf while Pamela goes away for a while. Carrie asked if cued speech is still taught. Pamela mentioned that she has one family who uses cued speech. Carrie asked about the value of teaching cued speech if not many use it. Pamela responded that there are transliterators that know cued speech; there are fewer resources for cued speech though. Andrew asked what types of programs or services she provides to Deaf-Blind people. Pamela mentioned that she has a few children with dual-sensory loss who have a range of vision and hearing. She noted that there is an organization called the New England Consortium of Deaf-Blind which provides technical assistance to children who are Deaf-Blind in the New England area. It's based out of the Perkins School for the Blind. She pulls in that specialist and brings them to home-visits with the Deaf-Blind child. She is currently receiving leadership institute training from Perkins to learn how to better respond and meet the needs of children of that population.

Karen spoke about how Relay NH gives people with various disabilities access to the telephone system using accessible telephones and other devices. She brought in some of the accessible telephones such as the captioned phones. Susan reported that they lost the contract for the Telecommunications Equipment Assistance Program (TEAP) program to Future in Sight. Jen asked if they have closed-captioned cellphones. Susan noted that they tried to use the TEAP program to get closed-captioned cellphones. They tried to alter the rules and mandates, but were told no for the last several years. Karen noted that Sprint offers closed-captioning through their cell phones or through a laptop attached to the cell phone.

Jeff mentioned that Susan will be retiring from NDHHS soon but they haven't hired her replacement yet so she will still be working with the SILC.

## **SPIL Development - Zoom Demonstration**

Jeff noted that in the past, the SILC has had a hard time getting people to show up in-person at SPIL input sessions, so we've decided to look into using ZOOM online conferencing services to reach more people. Matthew and Ferris from the IOD demonstrated how ZOOM would work for public input sessions and answered questions from the audience.

Matthew noted that the system is used frequently by the Institute on Disability (IOD). With this system you can record interpreters, the room, etc. You can use microphones to pick up audio, attach closed-captioning to the ZOOM program, record the meetings, have a call-in option, and have a chat feature. Another feature is "raise your hand" mode (only available in ZOOM webinar) which allows a remote participant to get the attention of the host. Basic ZOOM is also free.

Some of the questions that were asked are the following:

- Would internet connection affect participants' and the host's experience?
- How will interpreters be available for remote participants?
- What types of venues would be appropriate for the SPIL input sessions?
- Are there user customization options available?
- What types of questions should be answered when looking at venues?
- Will any camera do if you have a small group?
- Would there be video from remote participants and how many remote participants can fit on the main screen?
- Do the keyboard short-cuts connect with screen-reader accessibility?
- How competitive is this program?

Matthew responded that internet connection will affect participants' experiences and the host's experiences. He noted that when looking at venues checking the internet connection is important. If a remote participant has low quality internet, video quality and audio may be affected. They checked the internet connection at the location where the meeting was held, both the Wi-Fi signal and by hard-wiring the devices to the Ethernet outlet.

Matthew mentioned in response to the question on interpreters, that it will be a priority to have an interpreter in-person at the SPIL input sessions. They could have the camera focus on the interpreters for the remote participants. Susan responded that one problem with that is that the screen would be too small to see. She said that having the camera focused on the interpreters won't meet the needs of remote participants and that there needs to be a remote interpreter.

Matthew noted in response to the question on venues that last December, Tobey mentioned that we should look into venues that are free around the state, and also accessible. Matthew is thinking about using the regions that the Area Agencies divide into. Questions that should be asked when looking for venues should be related to internet access, power, accessibility, meets your logistic guidelines for the event. There is no need to worry about having the right camera, as the camera that is being used and all the other equipment being used will be brought to all the SPIL input sessions by IOD staff.

Matthew noted in response to a question on user customization, that the host can control what will be on the participants' screens and switch between programs.

In response to the questions related to the number of participants, Matthew answered that ZOOM webinar allows 500 participants, but not all of the people will be visible on the main screen. Matthew mentioned that they shouldn't allow people to show their webcams because it can be confusing. 50 participants' video-feeds can be shown on the main screen.

Matthew answered in response to the question related to keyboard short-cuts that he didn't know if the keyboard short-cuts relate to screen-reader accessibility. In response to the program's competitiveness, Matthew answered with his personal opinion that nothing can beat in-person meetings, but ZOOM is a great way to communicate between in-person meetings and when in-person meetings aren't feasible.

### **Voting for New Officers**

Jeff mentioned that the nominees were the following:

- Jeff Dickinson, Chair
- Gary Whitmarsh, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair
- Andrew Harmon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair
- Shellie Lemelin, Secretary

The vote took place by Ballot vote. The above were elected as the new SILC officers for 2019-2020.

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### **Minutes Approval**

Jeff mentioned that the Executive Committee voted to send the nominations of Christopher Emerson and Ellie Kimball to the SILC to the Governor for his approval.

### **SILC Membership Update**

Jen mentioned that all members whose terms had expired have been reappointed, and the new members were appointed. She noted that nominees should receive appointment letters in the mail.

### **Adjournment**

**\*Motion to adjourn**

**Motion to Approve: Andrew Harmon**

**Second: Susan Wolf-Downes**

**All in Favor: Yes Motion Carries**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:38pm.

**NEXT SILC MEETING:**

Recorded by Jennifer Beaulieu