



# STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

**September 17, 2025**

**1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

**FULL SILC Meeting**

**IN-PERSON AND ZOOM**

**Members and Ex-Officios Attending:** Chair Randy Pierce, First Vice-Chair Ryan Witterschein, Second Vice-Chair Deborah Ritcey, Secretary Sarah Sweeney (Remote), Immediate Past Chair Carrie Dudley, Member Krystal Chase, Member Jennifer Cook (Remote), Member Ryan Donnelly (Remote), Member Andrew Harmon, Member Joshua Gehling, Member Michelle McConaghy, Member Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, and Acting DSE Representative Richard Sala.

**Staff:** Jennifer Beaulieu (SILC Assistant)

**Guests:** Herb Carpenter (Applicant, Fellowship Housing), Matthew Greenwood (Member of the Public), Brendan Madden (Member of the Public, Service Dogs NH), Laurie Meyer (ASL Interpreter), Jola Lindstrom (ASL Interpreter), Carrie Dudley (Member of the Public), Amy Clark (NH VR), and Whitney Vaillancourt (NH VR).

Chair Randy Pierce called the SILC (Statewide Independent Living Council) meeting to order at 1:06pm.

\*Quorum was reached.

## **Approval of Minutes from Full SILC Meeting**

Chair Randy Pierce mentioned that he would take a motion if one is to be had regarding our prior minutes from 7.16.

**\*Second Vice-Chair Deborah Ritcey**

**Second:** Member Andrew Harmon

**Discussion:** Chair Randy Pierce noted that every single approval is going to be recorded in the minutes as a yes or no for clarity and consistency. You can say whatever you want as long as it is clear to us.

- **Roll Call: Member Andrew Harmon: Yes, Member Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre: Yes, Member Krystal Chase: Yes, Member Michelle McConaghy: Yes, Second Vice-Chair Deborah Ritcey: Yes, Secretary Sarah Sweeney: Yes, Member Ryan Donnelly: Yes, Member Jennifer Cook: Yes, and Chair Randy Pierce**

**All in Favor:** No      **Abstention:** Member Ryan Witterschein (Not in attendance for motion)

**Motion Carried.**

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## **DSE Financial Review**

Richard Sala indicated a plan to periodically review the budget, discussing three grants related to Part B funds, each accompanied by its own table. For specific allocations, see attached tables. Deborah Ritcey sought clarification on the billing of the remaining balance for the 2025 grant, to which Whitney Vaillancourt confirmed that it does need to be billed for that grant. Discussions are ongoing with the vendor regarding the remaining balance, with \$56K recently approved by the Executive Council for distribution by September 30, 2025. The liquidation amount involves funds returned to the federal

government due to late identification. Richard Sala advised that in future grants, unspent funds should be redirected if there is sufficient lead-time, while underscoring that insufficient lead-time would require returning funds to the federal government. Andrew Harmon inquired about the timeline for submitting information to the Executive Council, with Richard Sala stating that submissions should begin 8 weeks in advance. Discussions continued.

Regarding the liquidation, Deborah Ritcey noted that this goes to the frustration between the SILC and VR because we didn't have this level of interest with the SILC and the expenditures last year. She noted that she has been sitting on this council since 2019 and this is the first time that we had representation from VR to talk about the funding. There were funds that weren't being spent that could have been reallocated to another vendor or vendors. She doesn't think it is beneficial to look back but look forward and have a commitment from VR to have those calls with vendors when it's appropriate. Richard Sala noted he doesn't anticipate that this will happen again because they have a better handle on what they are receiving with the federal award. When they are starting to get to the end of a period, they will be reaching out to vendors and asking if they have any more bills or if they would be using the money they have been allotted.

Herb Carpenter mentioned his confusion over how the funding gets liquidated. Whitney noted that how this grant works is that the federal award gets contracted using the state fiscal year which is from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. Historically what has been happening is that they have FIFO-ed (First In, First Out) those unspent funds into an older grant to spend it down. There also were changes to the vendors and a one-time increase in funding. These changes were not communicated to the vendors, leading to a sum of unspent funds that could have been contracted out if they knew in time. This sum was further added too because the FIFO led to vendors thinking they spent more than they have. Richard Sala mentioned they are trying to get away from FIFO because it creates more problems. They are going to make an effort to expend the grant in the year they have it.

Whitney Vaillancourt mentioned that when it comes to federal awards, the Brain Injury Association of NH (BIA-NH) has a dual role when it comes to our state and federal requirements. BIA-NH helps them in two ways. BIA-NH receives federal funds from our grant which has a state match that is required by the federal government. The state match is \$36,673.33. BIA-NH's contract is split in two because they receive state funds and federal funds. If the state match requirement is met, it turns a 12-month grant to a 24-month grant. This allows more time for the funds to be used. BIA-NH has a remaining balance to meet the state match requirement. They submitted an invoice that will use that remaining balance. .

There was additional feedback and questions regarding the tables. Matthew Greenwood asked what would happen if we didn't receive the 2026 award on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. It was noted that we are currently in the second year of that award. Even when we receive the 2026 award, we would still be functioning with the 2025 award. Andrew Harmon requested the inclusion of an Excel version of the tables moving forward because PDFs have accessibility issues. Richard noted that we are looking at different formats for future uses and they can share the Excel versions of tables. Jennifer Cook noted that there are some people who may have difficulties with understanding spreadsheets. Randy Pierce noted that they did ask for an executive summary but because we were putting it together late there wasn't time for it. He thinks Richard Sala agreed that an executive summary will accompany these tables in the future.

Lastly, Whitney Vaillancourt noted that every year they give \$90,000 to the Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD) to house NH SILC's Administrative Assistant and to cover misc. expenses related to meetings. This is through a contract VR has with the GCD. These funds come from VR's federal award and is separate from the IL Part B grants that were just covered. There were questions on who would cover reimbursement for travel to meetings. Someone mentioned that it would likely go through the GCD contract. Richard Sala agreed.

Richard Sala mentioned they need to get the DSE representative appointed by the Governor. Traditionally that position has been housed or filled by the Administrator of SBVI (Services for the Blind and Vision-Impaired) but because of the hiring freeze, that position is unable to be filled. He asked the Commissioner to nominate him to the SILC as the DSE Representative on an interim basis. Discussion ensued. Ryan Witterschein will work with Richard Sala on getting the required forms completed.

### **SILC Education**

Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre presented on the NH Council on Developmental Disabilities (NH-CDD), outlining its key aspects: it is a federally-funded state agency with a minimum allotment status, receives approximately \$500k annually, and was established by the DD Act. Each state is mandated to have such a council. The NH-CDD operates under a 5-year plan, focusing on quality of life, advocacy, and training. Their activities related to their 5-year plan include legislative advocacy, policy work, promoting plain language use, and supporting civic engagement. They are currently developing their next 5-year plan. They are planning to schedule public input sessions in the future.

She discussed grants offered by the NH-CDD, which include small grants for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities aimed at enhancing education or community support. Notable grants include the personal education and leadership development grant for conference attendance, as well as employment and community integration grants. Innovation grants serve as seed money for community projects or educational programs addressing emerging needs. Additionally, contracts are sometimes available, such as one with the DRC to support students facing expulsion, segregation, or self-contained classrooms due to their disabilities.

Herb Carpenter questioned Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre regarding the basis for New Hampshire being considered a minimum allotment state. Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre explained that federal funding for states is determined by the prevalence of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Carrie Dudley inquired if the employment grant could cover self-employment expenses, to which Rodriguez-Legendre affirmed, citing an example of a grant that funded chicks and a coop for an individual selling eggs. Jennifer Cook sought clarification on the definition of developmental and intellectual disability, to which Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre responded that they adhere to the federal definition established by law. Randy Pierce thanked her for the presentation.

### **Governance Committee Presents Slate of Officers for Vote**

Deborah Ritcey noted she sent out an email regarding the Governance Committee's proposed slate of officers. The slate of officers is the following: (1) Randy Pierce as the Chair; (2) Ryan Witterschein as the First Vice-Chair; (3) Deborah Ritcey as the Second Vice-Chair; and (4) Sarah Sweeney as the Secretary. She opened the floor for any additional nominations. There were none.

### **Voting occurred on approving the slate of officers.**

**\*Second Vice-Chair Deborah Ritcey moved.**

**Second:** First Vice-Chair Ryan Witterschein

**Discussion:** None

- **Roll Call: Member Andrew Harmon: Yes, Member Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre: Yes, Member Krystal Chase: Yes, Member Michelle McConaghy: Yes, Second Vice-Chair Deborah Ritcey: Yes, Secretary Sarah Sweeney: Yes, Member Ryan Donnelly: Yes, Member Jennifer Cook: Yes, Member Ryan Witterschein: Yes, and Chair Randy Pierce: Yes**

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

**Motion Carried.**

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### **SPIL Progress**

Randy Pierce tabled this agenda item to the next meeting due to time constraints.

**Reminder that Part B Vendor Survey Results and Executive Summaries are due by November 1**

Randy Pierce reminded that the survey results and executive summaries for the Part B Vendor Consumer Satisfaction surveys are due by November 1<sup>st</sup>. He asked for that information to be sent to Jennifer Beaulieu so it can be included with the other meeting documents for the Full SILC Meeting on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Committee Updates**

**Membership**

Ryan Witterschein reported for the Membership Committee. He noted that they had a meeting yesterday. They are currently working on creating a SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) for membership and plan to present it in the future.

**Governance**

Deborah Ritcey reported out for the Governance Committee. She went through the changes that were made regarding the Immediate Past Chair's position and how long they can sit on the Executive Council. The language was changed to the Immediate Past Chair will sit on the Executive Committee for one year. Jennifer Cook had some concerns over the requirement that the Immediate Past Chair assist in the transition of chairs because there may be reasons that an individual cannot take on the position as Immediate Past Chair. Discussion occurred on if there needs to be language added to the bylaws regarding absences and resignation of members. Deborah Ritcey noted that they will look into the matter. Deborah Ritcey tabled the discussion on the changes to the policies and procedures due to time constraints.

**Voting occurred on the approval on the bylaws change to the Immediate Past Chair's position.**

**\*Second Vice-Chair Deborah Ritcey moved.**

**Second:** First Vice-Chair Ryan Witterschein

**Discussion:** None

- **Roll Call: Member Andrew Harmon: Yes, Member Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre: Yes, Member Krystal Chase: Yes, Member Michelle McConaghy: Yes, Second Vice-Chair Deborah Ritcey: Yes, Secretary Sarah Sweeney: Yes, Member Ryan Donnelly: Yes, Member Jennifer Cook: No, Member Ryan Witterschein: Yes, and Chair Randy Pierce: Yes**

**All in Favor:** No      **Abstention:** No

**Motion Carried.**

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**Advocacy**

Andrew Harmon reported out for the Advocacy Committee. He noted that the committee is continuing to have presentations about benefits counseling. Recently they had a presentation from someone from Impact Consulting about the Statewide Transportation Needs Assessment.

**Other Business**

Andrew Harmon mentioned GACIT's (Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation) ten-year transportation plan and how they are going to hold input sessions around the state.

**Adjournment**

**\*Chair Randy Pierce moved.**

**Second:** First Vice-Chair Ryan Witterschein

**Discussion:** None

- **Roll Call: Member Andrew Harmon: Yes, Member Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre: Yes, Member Krystal Chase: Yes, Member Michelle McConaghy: Yes, Second Vice-Chair Deborah Ritcey: Yes, Secretary Sarah Sweeney: Yes, Member Ryan Donnelly: Yes, Member Ryan Witterschein: Yes, and Chair Randy Pierce: Yes**

**All in Favor: Yes      Abstention: Member Jennifer Cook (Left before motion)**

**Motion Carried.**

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Meeting adjourned at 2:29pm.

Minutes recorded by Jennifer Beaulieu.