

**Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council**  
**Quarterly Meeting Minutes ~ June 23, 2016**  
Marlboro College, Brattleboro

Approved July 28, 2016

<b>Present:</b>	Fred Breunig, Terry Holden, Catherine Hybels, Dion LaShay, Clare McFadden, Lisa Rudiakov, Susan Ryan, Miriam Stoll, Adrian Vaut
<b>Absent:</b>	Gary De Carolis, Gina Carrera, Carol Hassler, MD, Rachel MacMartin, Ed Paquin, Marcy Ryan, Cinn Smith, John Spinney, Kay Stambler, Jennifer Stratton
<b>Support Staff:</b>	None
<b>Guests:</b>	Representative Michael Mrowicki, Representative Emily Long, Representative Mollie Burke, Representative Valerie Stuart, Senator Jeanette White
<b>VTDDC Staff:</b>	Kirsten Murphy, Chelsea Hayward

**1. Welcome and Minutes:**

Fred welcomed all participants to the meeting. He noted that the Governor has not yet officially confirmed him as Council President, which is a requirement under Executive Order 05-07. In addition, the Governor has not confirmed the membership of Adrian and Dion, who were asked to continue to abstain from voting. It was determined that unconfirmed members counted toward a quorum and that a quorum was therefore present.

Roles were assigned to various members for the meeting.

We reviewed the Quarterly Meeting minutes of March 24, 2016. Fred made two corrections; page 2 language (for the Executive Session Motion) and page 4 has a typo (“lead” should be “led”). Fred declared the minutes approved with the corrections. Kirsten announced that VTDDC will begin posting Quarterly Meeting minutes on the website as they’re approved.

**2. Executive Director Report:**

Reappointment – Some member terms have expired and need reappointment (Rachel MacMartin, Miriam Stoll, Terry Holden, and Jennifer Stratton). The re-appointments will be retroactive to April 1, 2016 and last for three years.

<b>Motion:</b> Cathy made the motion to reappoint the four members. Lisa seconded. <b>Motion passed: 6-0-2.</b>
--

Extra funding – Because the territory of Puerto Rico is in bankruptcy, their annual allocation has been redistributed to the other 55 Councils. VTDDC will have an extra \$10,000 for FFY2017.

### Recent Activity –

- *ABLE accounts*: VTDDC was the lead advocacy group to partner with State of Vermont Treasurer Beth Pearce in hosting a meeting for all New England States about ABLE savings. Revisions to Vermont law allow the Treasurer to consider contracting with another state or group of states to create an ABLE Program. Participating in a multi-state program will help keep fees low for Vermonters. In collaboration with an advisory group, the Treasurer is expected to make a decision by the end of the calendar year.
- *Technical Assistance*: The Green Mountain Self-Advocates and VTDDC provided technical assistance to New England Advocates Together (NEAT) and trained self-advocates in other states.

### Follow up –

Terry said she'd like a resource page in the member Handbook with links and brief summaries about the projects in which VTDDC participates. Staff will follow up.

### **3. 5 Year State Plan (“the Plan”):**

Kirsten reviewed key findings from HSRI and the Council's work from the May 26 planning meeting. (PowerPoint slides, Attachment 1).

An approved Draft Plan must be posted for 30 days prior to submission on August 15, 2016. Because the Council is not scheduled to meeting until late September, it was decided that VTDDC will have a special meeting on June 28, 2016 so that it can consider public comment before finalizing its submission of the draft plan to the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD), which determines if the Plan is accepted.

Adrian's mother wrote a basic summary of HSRI's report. It can be shared with Council members upon request.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment – Kirsten noted a repeating theme in HRSI's assessment -- gaps between what Vermont says or intends to do versus what's really happening. For example: “Vermont is a great place for kids to get an education. But, students with IEPs aren't doing so well.”

- *Education*: Vermont has the highest per pupil spending and the lowest student-to-staff ratio in the country. VT students test well. But about 14,000 students receive special education: 2285 of those students were in their inclusive classrooms less than 80% of the time; and 748 students

receive their education in an alternative setting. In other words, roughly 3000 students are not experiencing inclusive education.

- *Eligibility:* Per the Federal definition of “developmental disability,” 13.8% of Vermonters have a developmental disability (86,250 people). By the State of Vermont’s definition, only 1.8% of Vermonters have a “developmental disability” (approximately, 10,000 people). Vermont’s System-of-Care Plan for the developmental services system further prioritizes resources for home and community based supports, which 2,917 Vermonters receive. In other words, the vast majority of Vermonters who have a developmental disability do not receive Medicaid-funded home and community based supports. We know very little about these individuals and what, if any, their support needs may be.

Cathy asked, “How do we reach 86,000 Vermonters and represent them?”

- *Healthcare:* More than 95% of Vermonters with disabilities have health insurance. There is a lot of evidence that Vermonters with disabilities experience *significant* health disparities. For example: 13% of Vermonters without disabilities have diabetes or pre-diabetes, while 25% of Vermonters with developmental disabilities have diabetes or pre-diabetes.
- *Employment:* Vermont has a lower poverty rate than many other states, but many Vermonters with disabilities are living in poverty.

Kirsten also noted that in focus groups conducted by HSRI, people with developmental disabilities spoke about feeling that decision-makers do not listen to them.

Miriam said, “We as a council have to set an example by making sure self-advocates who serve the council feel heard and know they have an impact.”

Goals and Objectives 2017-2021 – VTDDC focused on three themes during the April and May planning meetings: 1) Building a powerful movement of self and family advocates; 2) Systems change efforts that emphasis a wider distribution of resources and more pro-active, crises prevention; and 3) Addressing the needs of Vermonters with I/DD living in pockets of significant poverty through improved employment opportunities and better health/healthcare. Underserved groups include: New Americans; people living in southern Vermont, the Northeast Kingdom and under-resourced rural areas; and pockets of urban poverty in Rutland and other small cities.

- *Family stressors:* What would it take to mobilize a movement aimed at strengthening self-advocates’ and family advocates; voices, leadership, and

information? *We need...* A way to reach people. Ways to keep people engaged. Ways to share personal stories.

- *Systems change*: How do we use systems change strategies to influence programs that deliver home and community-based supports to people with developmental disabilities living in Vermont? *We need...* Data on folks without home-and-community-based services. Strategies to expand who gets home-and-community-based services. Strategies to leverage other services.
- *Poverty*: What initiatives would address barriers to service within rural areas and/or culture groups experiencing poverty? *We need...* Better data on who's underserved. Use existing tools and/or create new tools. Advance peer-to-peer support. Employment assets and development.

Based on Council discussion, Kirsten revised the draft goals and objectives. The Council made further edits following lunch.

**Motion:** Cathy made the motion to approve the draft 5 Year State Plan Goals and Objectives (attachment 2) for public comment. Terry seconded.

**Motion passed: 5-0, with 3 abstentions.**

**Council members and local legislators spoke informally during lunch about the many needs of Vermonters with disabilities, especially in southern Vermont.**

**5. Membership Vacancy:**

Three of the four members that the Council recommended for appointment have accepted (Dion, Adrian, and Gina); one recruit has declined, leaving one vacancy. Stacey Emerson represents the Saint Johnsbury area and is a parent of a child with autism and an adult with autism. At the March 24 quarterly meeting, the Council had decided to keep her application active as a potential member if a vacancy were to become available.

**Motion:** Miriam made the motion to nominate Stacey Emerson as a family member. Terry seconded.

**Motion passed: 6-0, with 2 abstentions.**

**6. Financial Policy:**

Kirsten recommended that the Council adopt four basic “internal controls” for budget management. She reviewed the Attachment 3.

Clare McFadden asked if keeping a cash reserve would be inconsistent with the approach typically used by state departments. “You’re supposed to spend the money you have, otherwise it’s assumed you don’t need it.” Kirsten explained that the Council’s money is 100% federal and that we have three years to obligate and spend the annual appropriation. A small cash reserve protects Council operating funds (distinct from grants and contracts) in the case of a federal government shut-down that could reduce or obstruct the Council’s appropriation.

**Motion:** Terry made the motion to adopt the financial policies as presented. Lisa seconded.

**Motion passed: 6-0 with 2 abstentions.**

## **7. Budget for FFY 2017:**

Kirsten reported that VTDDC is comfortably under budget for FFY2016.

## **8. Public Comments:**

No one was present for public comment.

## **9. Meeting Evaluation and Adjourn:**

Members were pleased with the process and grateful for good communication, teamwork, and a successful conclusion. The Council asked that Kirsten convey their appreciation to Patty Cotton for her expert facilitation.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.