

VT Early Childhood Alliance Steering Committee meeting
December 18, 2018 11:00a Waterbury

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Steering Committee:

Faye Mack	Jessie Carpenter
Judy Pransky	Margaret Atkinson
Becca Schrader	Michelle Fay
Ilene Dickinson	Pam McCarthy
Ann Dillenbeck	Sarah Kenney
Claire Kendall	Sonja Raymond
Diane Nichols-Fleming	Tabitha McGlynn

Not in Attendance: Amanda Cochrane, Ashley Moore, Ellen Drolette, Faye Longo, Holly Morehouse, Katie Watts, Steve Ames

Staff: Matt Levin, Kelly Ault, Sarah Galbraith

Guests: Falko Schilling (Action Circles), Carolyn Wesley (BBF), Michelle Wallace (VT Foodbank)

1. Welcome, logistics, agenda review

Introductions were made, and there were no changes made to the agenda.

2. Minutes from 10/18 and 11/13 Meetings

Matt presented draft minutes from the October and November Steering Committee meetings. There were no edits or corrections suggested, and the drafts were **accepted by consensus**.

3. Executive Committee Report

Matt noted that the minutes from Executive Committee meetings held between Steering Committee meetings are always included in the meeting packet.

Matt reported the Executive Committee has approved the leads for Issue Working Groups on the various issues tentatively or finally approved for the '19 Legislative Agenda. A roster of the Policy/Advocacy Committee was included in the meeting packet. Faye M. then announced her appointment to the Policy/Advocacy Committee of Faye Mack (self-nominated, representing Hunger Free Vermont) and Judy Pransky (self-nominated, representing Emerson Falls Playcare). The two will serve as co-at-large members from the Steering Committee to the Policy/Advocacy Committee.

Matt then shared the staff recommendation on the 2019 dues structure, which was to retain the current structure for the coming year. He noted the Executive Committee had approved this recommendation. He reminded the Committee that the structure called for individual dues of \$20/year and organizational/business dues of \$75/year, and no dues for Strategic Partners. The Committee **consented** to the recommendation.

4. ECDL Planning Update

Sarah G. reported on planning efforts for ECDL '19. She noted that the day's agenda would be similar to previous years, with the addition of a focus on the 25th anniversary of the event. The Committee made suggestions for a speaker who could set the tone and be inspiring in reflecting the past, present, and future of early childhood policy advocacy. Claire suggested framing the day using an equity lens and/or including equity-related issues, and Sarah agreed to add that to the topics discussed by the planning committee.

5. Administrative report

Kelly provided a brief update on membership renewals and recruitment, noting that the new cycle had just begun. She noted recent software upgrades would support outreach efforts.

Matt indicated the discussion of a possible lobbying contract and budget revision would be moved to later in the meeting, after the finalization of the '19 Legislative Agenda.

Sarah provided an update on communications efforts, including upgrades to software and templates used for newsletters and other updates. She indicated she was reaching out to leads to begin work on webpages and other materials. She asked for organizations to share photos and quotes to help in this effort.

6. Legislative Agenda '19 Proposal consideration

Sarah K. provided background on the development of the several Agenda proposals related to child care, including CCFAP, workforce development, and business tax credits. A lengthy discussion followed, covering a wide range of topics. A number of Committee members expressed concerns about the unknown financial size and impact of the tax credits both for businesses and early educators as part of the workforce development proposal, and about the use of tax credits in general as a policy tool. Sarah indicated that the likely CCFAP "ask" would be less than previously thought, closer to \$25 million than \$50 million. Concerns were raised about potential negative impacts of increases in the minimum wage on CCFAP beneficiaries. Staff indicated these concerns would be taken into consideration as part of the work on the minimum wage/benefits cliff issue already on the list of monitoring by staff during the '19 session.

As a result of the conversation, the Committee **consented** to include in the '19 Legislative Agenda the CCFAP "ask" and the scholarship and loan repayment language in the workforce development issue. Sarah agreed that LGK in partnership with BBF's ELD Committee would work further on proposals for tax credits for businesses and early educators, and the Committee agreed to consider them in the future for possible inclusion in the on-line version of the '19 Legislative Agenda.

Carolyn Wesley then presented an update on the BBF funding proposal, and BBF's efforts to secure funding through a federal grant. She indicated that a successful grant application would mean that supplemental state budget funding would not be necessary for FY'20, and the request for support on the '19 Legislative Agenda would be withdrawn. She expected to hear about the application by the end of the month. Regardless of the outcome of the grant request, she indicated that increased state funding would likely be a part of the BBF budget in future years. She also noted that the revised version of the "ask" for the Legislative Agenda focused on the work of regional councils and coordinators. A discussion followed.

Carolyn noted that after discussing options with Matt, one possible option was for the Alliance to support the BBF funding request by authorizing staff work supporting it but not including it on the written/printed Legislative Agenda. Committee members voiced concerns about two issues raised by the proposal – the lack of financial support for BBF from the Agency of Education, and the need to clarify that the funding was supporting systems-level work, as opposed to direct service. After Carolyn pledged to address both of these concerns, the Committee **consented** to authorize staff work on the BBF funding proposal but not to include it on the written/printed Agenda, pending notification that the federal grant application is rejected.

Faye M. then provided background information on the pending proposal regarding support for increasing the minimum wage. She indicated that based on her discussions with Steering Committee members, no clear consensus was emerging on the issue. A brief discussion followed. Matt offered an explanation of the difference between the Alliance taking an affirmative stance of having no position on an issue versus being neutral on an issue. After additional discussion, the Committee **consented** to have no position on the proposal submitted to support the Raise the Wage Coalition's efforts to increase the minimum wage.

7. 2019 Legislative Agenda approval

Matt summarized the status of the issues approved for inclusion on the Agenda, and the Committee then **consented** to the full make-up of the '19 Agenda, pending decisions as noted earlier in the meeting. Matt also noted that the current plan was for modest press outreach on the release of the Agenda in January, and to generally defer to leads and other partners for more in-depth, issue-specific press coverage. He indicated that he would work with the Alliance's layout consultant to finalize the graphical presentation, and seek approval of the printed version by email as soon as possible.

8. Project Issue Updates

Michelle Wallace, Director of Community Health and Fresh Food Initiatives for the Vermont Foodbank, provided the Committee with a brief overview of their Vermonters Feeding Vermonters program, which secures contracts for vegetables from Vermont farmers to meet some of the Foodbank's needs. While the program is still being developed, she indicated it was likely that the Foodbank would seek state funding in the future, and might ask the Alliance for support of that request.

Matt then offered a brief status update on the BBF Think Tank's work. Becca noted that the group's funding subcommittee will be transitioning into a formal BBF Action Plan committee, and she will serve as co-chair. Matt noted that projects outlined in the Think Tank report will be sent to various BBF committees for review and additional work. In response to requests, Matt agreed to tentatively put on the Committee's March meeting agenda an update from BBF on the work of those committees related to the Think Tank.

Faye M. provided an update on Hunger Free Vermont's tracking of state IT developments. She reported that the state is now focusing on incremental improvements, rather than attempting large projects. She indicated there was increased transparency, and that a stakeholder group may be formed in the coming months to advise the state and inform the work.

Matt then provided a brief update on the impacts of the November election, indicating that the biggest likely changes would come from House retirements leading to new Committee chairs,

and changes in Committee rosters. There was a brief discussion about possible policy initiatives that might be proposed by the Administration.

9. Justice, Equity, and Privilege, and Budget Revision

The Committee considered a proposal from staff to amend the Alliance Governance Document to include the words “diversity, equity, and inclusion” in the Guiding Principles section, as proposed in the memo distributed in the meeting packet. After a brief discussion, the Committee **consented** to the proposal.

Matt and Kelly then presented information on two proposals they had received for consulting services to support the Alliance’s continuing work on this topic. After indicating that the proposals made it clear to staff that they were still not sure what the Alliance’s needs were, they asked for feedback. A discussion followed. Committee members expressed an awareness that members/segments of the Alliance community were in different phases of engagement with the issues. There was general agreement that any Alliance work should start internally, rather than externally, and focus on our own processes and to support Alliance staff and core Alliance leadership circles rather than offering services to the general membership. It was agreed that the Annual Membership meeting should be considered as an opportunity to include the broader membership in this work. Committee members indicated that work should focus on the systems level, rather than on influencing service delivery, and focus on policy advocacy functions and spheres of influence.

After additional discussion, it was agreed that staff should develop a survey to be sent to Steering Committee members to determine their level of engagement and learning on the topic, and use the results as a basis for determining next steps, and possible re-engagement with consulting firms. The Executive Committee was tasked with reviewing this work.

Matt then asked the Committee to review a proposal for a revised 2019 budget. The proposal was initially drafted because of an interest in spending funds in 2019 on consulting for justice/equity issues, and was expanded to take into account the finalizing of the Legislative Agenda and a review of staff workload and responsibilities. Matt explained that the proposed revised budget allocates funding for committee tracking in the State House by a consulting firm. The proposal also would provide additional funds to support an expansion of the communications contract to include more event coordination and community organizing. This expansion would allow Kelly to take on more responsibilities in the State House as her position evolves to include more direct advocacy work. These changes taken together would cost less than the initial proposal to hire an additional contract lobbyist, which staff recommend is no longer needed. After increasing the proposed allocation for justice/equity consulting from \$3,000 to \$5,000, the Committee **consented** to the revised budget proposal that included all these elements.

10. 0-5/0-8 Early Childhood Definition

Matt directed the Committee to the memo in the packet which presented staff research on this topic and possible next steps. A discussion followed. Pam and Ann both expressed support for creating more connections across the full 0-to-8 age range, and other Committee members agreed. Staff was asked to do more work to expand the proposal in the memo to recommit to strengthen work through the full age range, and report back to the Committee.

11. Announcements

Committee members made a number of announcements about events and developments in the community.

12. March Committee meeting

Matt noted that the Steering Committee would next meet in late March or early April, and that he would send out a meeting poll in January.

After thanks offered all around, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.