

VT Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance Steering Committee meeting
October 17, 2019 11:00a Montpelier

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Steering Committee:

Amanda Cochrane	Jessie Carpenter
Ann Dillenbeck	Judy Pransky
Barbara Petrie	Margaret Atkinson
Cassie Willner (for H. Morehouse)	Sarah Teel
Ellen Drolette	Pam McCarthy
Faye Longo	Sarah Kenney
Faye Mack	Steve Ames
Floyd Nease	Tabitha McGlynn
Ilene Dickinson	

Not in Attendance: Ashley Moore, Sonja Raymond, Katie Watts, Diane Nichols-Fleming

Staff: Matt Levin, Charlie Gliserman, Sarah Galbraith

Guest: Amy Shollenberger

1. Welcome, logistics, agenda review, Treasurer election

Introductions were made, and there were no changes to the agenda. New members were welcomed to the Committee. Matt reported that Barbara and Sarah Teel would now be representing the Vermont Community Loan Fund and Voices for Vermont's Children on the Committee, respectively.

Matt noted that given Becca Schrader's resignation from the Committee following her departure from the Loan Fund, a new Treasurer needed to be elected. He also noted that traditionally this position has been held by the Loan Fund's representative to the Committee, but suggested this practice may be re-examined at the next full election of officers, given the Alliance's evolving relationship with the Loan Fund. Steve Ames then nominated Barbara Petrie to be Treasurer, seconded by Faye Longo. The nomination was **accepted by consensus**.

2. Minutes from 5/29/19 Meeting

Matt presented draft minutes from the May Steering Committee meeting. There were no edits or corrections suggested, and the draft was **accepted by consensus**.

3. Discussion of Proposals for the 2020 Legislative Agenda

Matt referred the Committee to the memo from Agenda Setting Subcommittee reporting their recommendations regarding the 16 applications for the Alliance's 2020 Legislative Agenda. Faye provided some framing for the discussion, and thanked the Subcommittee for their work reviewing the proposals.

During the discussion that followed, **consensus** was reached on including these 12 proposals on the written/public version of the '20 Agenda:

- CCFAP funding
- CIS funding
- Medicaid Coverage for Doulas
- FaMLI (Family/Med. Leave Insurance)
- Farm to School funding
- Housing
- Office of Child Advocate
- PCC Network Master Grant
- Reach Up funding
- Universal School Meals
- Vermonters Feeding Vermonters
- Workforce Development for EC Educ.

Consensus was reached to monitor/support, but not list on the printed '20 Agenda, two proposals:

- Pre-K/Act 166 reform proposals
- Minimum wage/Benefits cliff

Consensus was reached to not include on the Agenda the proposal to oppose the commercialization of marijuana.

The proposal to specifically engage the State Budget process was considered. Discussion focused on the ways in which many of the proposals that had been accepted address the state budget and the need for increased revenue. **Consensus** was reached that the issues raised in the budget tracking proposal would be referred to in side bar/introductory language in the printed Legislative Agenda. Steering Committee members expressed their understanding that Alliance staff would continue to work on budget-related issues, and that the themes noted in the application would be raised in Alliance communications and newsletters as needed.

After considerable discussion about options for possible framing, themes, and grouping, it was determined that the issues would not be presented in any particular order. Matt responded to Committee members' observations about possible, unintended implied prioritization and indicated that he would work with the Alliance's designer on the layout so as to avoid as much as possible any visual prioritizations (i.e. appearance of "front/back" page).

Matt agreed to work with the lead organizations to develop summary statements for each of the proposals that had been accepted.

Committee members then shared updates about the issues covered by the Agenda proposals.

4. Committee Reports

Matt noted that the minutes from Executive Committee meetings held between Steering Committee meetings are always included in the meeting packet. There were no questions about the July or September Executive Committee meeting minutes.

Sarah Galbraith then provided an update on planning for ECDL '20, noting that the planning team, which includes Let's Grow Kids and BBF staff, had begun meeting. She asked any Committee members with ideas for a theme for the event to forward those to her.

Sarah referred Committee members to the memo in the packet summarizing the Alliance's communications efforts during the first six months of the year. Faye Longo raised the topic of language accessibility in the Alliance's materials used for communications and on the website.

She noted that the Foodbank had a tool they used to evaluate their materials. Sarah replied that staff would keep this issue, as well as other communications accessibility topics, in mind as the Alliance's equity efforts progress. Committee members offered other suggestions for the possible use of video and social media platforms in communications. Matt noted that the planned new staff position, to be discussed later in the meeting, would be able to focus on these issues in the coming months. Sarah reminded Committee members that the goal of Alliance communications reflects the general Alliance role, which is to magnify members' efforts rather than compete with them. Staff noted that they would investigate social media use further, to determine where the Alliance's supportive/echoing role might be productive.

Sarah also updated the Committee on the developing website improvement project, which she will be working on in the coming weeks.

Matt then provided an update on the state revenue project, which staff have been working on behind the scenes for a number of months. A brief discussion followed.

Charlie then provided an update on the work of the Equity Subcommittee, summarizing the steps taken since the subcommittee was formed earlier this year. Those steps include reviewing and approving a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement on the Alliance website, offering feedback on staff work on the topic, and shaping the Steering Committee's consideration of the topic. Charlie noted that staff was working on a variety of DEI projects, including engaging new communities, reviewing and updating of internal documents and procedures, and incorporating DEI initiatives into workplans and project proposals. She reported that as part of these efforts, she held weekly phone calls to answer questions about the Alliance's Legislative Agenda application process, and the DEI question on the application. While there were no callers, she was pleased that the Alliance made a public invitation and felt that kind of open presence is a critical aspect of inclusionary work.

5. Finance Report and Budget Approval

Matt reviewed the materials in the packet regarding the projected 2019 spending, noting the areas where spending was notably higher or lower than budgeted. He asked the Committee to agree with the Executive Committee's recommendation to add spending in 2019 to allow for the hiring of the proposed Communications and Events Coordinator position in December, rather than January. This timing would ensure the transition took place before the start of the legislative session. After a brief discussion, the Committee **consented to** this recommendation.

Matt then reviewed the job description for the new Coordinator position, noting that the main change in the '20 budget from '19 was the addition of this new position. Faye Longo suggested the language regarding qualifications be adjusted to not specifically reference a level of education, unless there was a particular reason applicants needed a specific degree. After a brief discussion, Matt agreed to adjust the language to make it more general. There were additional suggestions about possible edits to the non-discrimination language in the applications. After assurances from Matt that appropriate edits would be made, the Committee **consented to** the description. Matt indicated that he and Charlie would be serving as the interview committee, asked that anyone interested in joining them be in touch with him, and that the position would be posted the next day.

Matt then directed the Committee to the proposed '20 budget. Ann asked about the process used to determine staff salaries, including cost of living and merit-based increases. Matt indicated that the levels were set in keeping with the Loan Fund compensation structure, and that about two years ago there was a review of Executive Director salaries at similarly sized organizations to provide a comparison for his salary. Ann suggested that the Executive Committee should discuss this issue further, given the need to ensure compensation levels were supporting retention of Alliance staff. After a brief discussion, Matt agree to put the issue on the agenda for the next Executive Committee's meeting. The Committee then **consented to** the proposed 2020 Alliance budget, as presented.

6. Equity exercise

Charlie then led the Committee through an exercise to explore the issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion, which focused on a viewing of an excerpt from the video "[I am from here](#)". The video features testimonials from students, parents, educators, and school administrators on racism in Vermont schools.

7. Announcements

There were several announcements about job searches currently underway by Alliance members.

8. Scheduling next meeting

Matt indicated he would send a poll shortly to determine the timing for the November Committee meeting, to be held by conference call, and for the in-person December meeting.

After thanks offered all around, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.