

**VT Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance Steering Committee meeting**  
**March 31, 2020**                      **1:00p**                      **by teleconference**

**DRAFT**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Attendance

Steering Committee:

Faye Mack (Chair)	Margaret Atkinson
Barbara Petrie (Treasurer)	Morgan Nichols
Ilene Dickinson (Secretary)	Pam McCarthy
Ann Dillenbeck	Sarah Kenney
Cassie Willner (for Holly M.)	Sarah Teel
Diane Nichols-Fleming	Sonja Raymond
Ellen Drolette	Steve Ames (EC at-large)
Floyd Nease	Tabitha McGlynn

Not in Attendance: Amanda Cochrane, Deb Gass, Faye Longo, Jessie Carpenter, Judy Pransky

Staff: Matt Levin, Charlie Gliserman, Amy Russo-Perler

Guest: Steven Berbeco

1. Welcome, logistics, agenda review

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

2. Minutes from 12/16/19 Meeting

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

3. Executive 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 March Executive Committee meeting minutes.

Matt noted that the Executive Committee had not met since the public emergency declarations began earlier in the month. The Executive Committee does have a meeting planned for April 14, and will be discussing emergency response and any impacts on Alliance operations at that time.

4. Administrative Report

Staff provided brief updates on a number of issues. Matt noted that staff have continued to work in their roles with relatively little disruption. Advocacy support functions are returning to a more normal state, as legislative committees have started to meet and activity has picked up.

Amy reported that membership recruitment has been disrupted both by the cancelation of ECDL and the community's attention to emergency response. She anticipated returning to recruitment in the coming weeks. She will provide a more detailed report on Communications at the next Steering Committee meeting.

Matt reported that plans for the Annual Membership Meeting were in flux, as the planned in-person meeting on May 27<sup>th</sup> will not take place. Amy noted that she would begin to focus on a “Plan B” for a meeting, and asked for Committee feedback on alternatives. Committee members indicated a preference for an in-person meeting scheduled for later in the summer. At the end of the meeting, Amy noted she would send an email to Committee members asking for volunteers to serve on a Meeting planning committee.

Matt provided a brief report on the “Break the Box” campaign, reporting that work on the project to examine state revenues had been halted while most advocacy efforts focused on supporting emergency response. He promised to stay in touch with the Executive Committee as those discussions were re-started, though the timing was not clear.

#### 5. ECDL Debrief

Amy provided a brief update on the financial impacts of the cancelation of ECDL. Because of charges that could not be canceled, walk-up payments not collected, and refunds made, there is projected to be a deficit of about \$4,400. The Alliance will work with LGK and BBF in the coming days to develop a plan to address the deficit. Amy reported that all the food purchased (and cooked) for the event was donated to charitable causes. In response to questions, she noted that most sponsors did not ask for a refund, and that the event contracts did not allow for refunds due to cancellations. Matt noted that the Alliance’s financial position was strong, and the deficit would not have a negative impact on overall finances.

Amy and Charlie thanked the Committee members who had volunteered to assist during the day.

#### 6. Comments by Deputy Commissioner Berbeco

Matt then welcomed Steven Berbeco, the new Deputy Commissioner of the Child Development Division (CDD) of the Department for Children and Families. Dept. Comm. Berbeco provided an overview of the status of CDD’s emergency response work, and took questions from the Committee. In the course of the discussion, Committee members raised a number of needs, including the funding needs that will remain in spite of and after the emergency, such as CIS and TEACH. Berbeco assured Committee members he was aware of these issues, and thanked the Alliance for raising them and for their support for an integrated, multi-faceted approach.

#### 7. Advocacy and Emergency Response

The Committee transitioned to a general discussion of advocacy in the context of the ongoing emergency. Matt provided an update on the status of legislative discussions about budget revisions and use of federal emergency funds. Committee members raised a number of topics, including funding for ongoing needs in CIS, Early Intervention, and other programs outside of the early care and education area. Matt asked for feedback on timing for advocacy during the crisis, and offered some suggestions for ongoing advocacy.

Several Committee members agreed to work together on drafting a letter requesting more immediate attention from the Administration and legislators on broader early childhood policy needs. Matt offered to assist with drafting.

8. Equity presentation

Charlie made a presentation to the Committee regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion issues that arise in the context of emergency response.

9. Announcements

There were several announcements about emergency response support services being provided by Alliance members, and increased availability to food assistance for children through a federal waiver secured by the state.

10. Scheduling next meeting

Matt noted the next meeting of the Committee would take place at the Annual Membership Meeting, when elections for Committee seats and officer positions would also be held. He encouraged members to review their status and consider their plans for the election.

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