

**VT Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance Steering Committee meeting**  
**December 2, 2020                      11:00a                      via Zoom**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Attendance

Steering Committee:

Margaret Atkinson	Sarah Kenney
Faye Mack	Floyd Nease
Tabitha McGlynn	Judy Pransky
Barbara Petrie	Sonja Raymond
Diane Nichols-Fleming	Sarah Teel
Amanda Cochran	Joanna VonCulin
Ann Dillenbeck	Nicole Whalen
Ellen Drolette	Cassie Willner (for Holly M.)
Deb Gass	Mary Zentara

Not in Attendance: Pam McCarthy, Morgan Nichols

Staff: Matt Levin, Amy Russo-Perler

Guests: Amy Shollenberger (Action Circles), Evan Delgado (Turrell Fund), Beth Truzansky (BBF), Drake Turner (LGK), Erhard Mahnke (VT Affordable Housing Coalition)

1. Welcome, logistics, agenda review

Introductions were made, virtual meeting logistics were reviewed, and there were no changes made to the agenda.

2. Minutes from 9/24/20 Meeting

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

3. Discussion of Proposals for the 2021 Legislative Agenda

Matt referred the Committee to the memo from the Agenda Setting Subcommittee with their recommendations regarding the 14 applications for the Alliance's 2021 Legislative Agenda. Margaret provided some framing for the discussion, and thanked the Subcommittee for their work reviewing the proposals.

Matt noted that the Subcommittee recommended 11 issues be on the Agenda, with the Reach Up proposal ideally being more detailed before final approval takes place in January.

During the discussion that followed, **consensus** was reached on including the 11 proposals on the written/public version of the '21 Agenda:

- BBF Funding
- CIS Funding
- FaMLI
- Farm to School/EC Funding
- Housing Funding
- PCC Funding
- Reach Up Funding [pending review]
- Special Accommodation Grants
- Transforming ECE (CCFAP/Workforce/IT)
- Universal School Meals
- Vermonters Feeding Vermonters

**Consensus** was reached to monitor/support, but not list on the printed '21 Agenda, three proposals:

- Coronavirus Relief Fund II
- State Budget
- Responsible Budget (Break the Box)

Several Committee members stressed the importance of the Alliance continuing to support the expanded funding concept from the Break the Box effort. It was agreed that the language accompanying the Agenda should state the need for increased funding for early childhood programs in general.

The Committee discussed the possible use of themes and other organizational structures to present the Agenda issues, including the policy areas outlined in the Alliance Mission. After considering several options, it was agreed that no categories would be used in the presentation, including on the Alliance website.

Amy indicated that she would work with the Alliance's designer on various presentations, including a "printed" PDF version, an online version for the website suitable for both desktop and smartphone viewing, and potentially other more creative formats.

Matt reviewed the next steps in the Agenda development process, and indicated he will work with the lead organizations to develop summary statements for each of the proposals that had been accepted.

#### 4. Staff/Project/Committee Reports

Matt provided a status update on the hiring process to fill the vacant Public Engagement Director position. He noted interviews were ongoing, with Matt and Amy serving as the interview committee. Noting that the responsibilities of the new hire would not be determined until a preferred candidate was selected, he said he hoped a hiring decision would be made by the end of next week. There was a brief discussion about the process being used for the hiring decision and the role of the Steering Committee, comparing this process to recent processes.

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 October meeting minutes.

Matt then reviewed the proposed 2021 dues structure, as recommended by staff and the Executive Committee. The proposal is to continue with the current structure, charging individuals \$20, organizations \$75, and nothing for Strategic Partners. The proposal was **accepted by consensus**. Matt noted that the dues structure will be reviewed next year by the Equity Subcommittee, which will lead a discussion of possible changes that would promote inclusivity in the Alliance.

Amy provided a verbal review of her Communications work, noting that she would provide a written quarterly report at the next full Steering Committee meeting in January. In general engagement levels are good, though lower from the high levels when pandemic response started.

Amy then provided an update on ECDL planning, reporting that the planning committee of staff from the Alliance, LGK, and BBF have agreed to work with Delaney Meeting and Events Management, the firm that has been working with us in previous years, to provide support for the virtual ECDL being planned for '21. Current planning is to have a half-day meeting on the regularly scheduled day (3/10/21) and use an online meeting platform. Some details will depend on the legislative schedule, as their transition to a virtual session continues. Sponsorship and attendance fees are still to be determined. Amy is working with Ansley at LGK on the planning committee – Amy asked any Committee members interested in participating to be in touch with her. Committee members offered feedback on virtual conferences they have attended, and the benefits of online vs. in-person events. Sarah noted that LGK is thinking about how best to schedule their annual rally, but that it will not be timed to be on the same day as ECDL.

Matt provided a brief update on the changes occurring at the Department for Children and Families, and specifically the vacancies in the Child Development Division Deputy Commissioner and CIS Coordinator positions. A brief discussion followed.

Finally, Matt noted that in January the Alliance Policy/Advocacy Committee would begin meeting, and that Margaret as Chair would be nominating a Steering Committee member to fill the at-large position on the Committee. Matt asked those interested in the position to be in touch with him and/or Margaret before the next meeting. Matt provided an explanation of the work/role of the committee.

#### 5. Equity Subcommittee Report, Stipend Policy

Matt directed the Committee to the memo in the packet from Charlie, which summarized the Subcommittee's work over the past year. He noted that Amy would be temporarily supporting some aspects of the Subcommittee's work until a new Public Engagement Director was hired, who would then take over the role of staff support for the Subcommittee.

Matt then reviewed the proposed changes to the Alliance's Policies and Governance Document to provide for a financial stipend to Steering Committee members who participate in meeting. A discussion followed. Ann asked about the "opt out" process. Faye suggested that it could be part of the annual process for initiating Steering Committee membership. It was also noted that the process and paperwork for the stipend should not put pressure to either opt-in or opt-out. Matt asked Amy to work with Loan Fund staff and the Equity Subcommittee to develop more specifics regarding paperwork and process steps. Noting that these details would be clarified at the next Committee meeting, the proposed changes to the Governance Document and a new Policy were **accepted by consensus**.

#### 6. Finance Report and Budget Approval

Matt reviewed the materials in the packet regarding the projected 2020 spending, noting the areas where spending was notably higher or lower than budgeted. In most cases, differences from budget were the result of the pandemic. He also noted that a Turrell trustee had just made an additional gift that was not indicated in materials in the packet. Savings are also likely because of the Public Engagement Director position being vacant for some or all of December. It was agreed that the Executive Committee should discuss the unbudgeted surplus at its next meeting.

Matt then directed the Committee to the proposed '21 budget. He noted that the proposed budget differs from the one initially presented to the Executive Committee in July in two key ways – the Turrell funding is slightly lower, but the projected costs for staff benefits are significantly lower than initially forecast. A discussion followed. Topics included the Alliance's budget surplus, possible additional projects to fund, etc.

The Committee then **consented to** the proposed 2021 Alliance budget, as presented.

7. Announcements

LGK is planning a briefing on its three-year campaign on January 12<sup>th</sup>. BBF is thinking about how best to release the HAVYC report, details to come. FB and HFV are having a briefing on 12/15 on hunger and pandemic response on the community. Amy announced that she will be taking maternity leave starting at some point in May, to last about four months.

8. Scheduling next meeting

Matt reviewed the likely schedule for Steering Committee meetings in the coming weeks. He indicated he would send out a poll to determine times.

After thanks was offered all around, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.