

VT Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance

Steering Committee meeting

October 20, 2021

9:45a

via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Steering Committee:

Margaret Atkinson

Faye Mack

Tabitha McGlynn

Barbara Petrie

Diane Nichols-Fleming

Ann Dillenbeck

Ellen Drolette

Deb Gass

Sarah Kenney

Pam McCarthy

Janet McLaughlin

Margot Holmes (for PCCN)

Morgan Nichols

Carrie Stahler

Sarah Teel

Joanna VonCulin

Mary Zentara

Not in Attendance: VT Afterschool, Sandra Cross, Judy Pransky

Guests: Amy Shollenberger, Keith Williams

Staff: Matt Levin, Dan Brown, Taylor Hughey

1. Welcome, logistics, agenda review

Introductions were made and there were no changes made to the agenda. New members were welcomed to the Committee. Taylor Hughey, the new Alliance Outreach Manager, introduced herself to the Committee. Matt noted that an updated Committee roster, with staff contacts, was included in the meeting packet.

2. Minutes from 5/26/21 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 2022 Legislative Agenda

Matt referred the Committee to the memo from the Agenda Setting Subcommittee reporting their recommendations regarding the 12 applications for the Alliance's 2022 Legislative Agenda. Margaret provided some framing for the discussion, and thanked the Subcommittee for their work reviewing the proposals.

During the discussion that followed, topics included the Alliance's role in monitoring issues, DEI outreach initiatives, details of the Reach Up proposal, etc. **Consensus** was reached on including eight proposals on the written/public version of the '22 Agenda:

- CIS funding
- FaMLI
- Farm to School funding
- Housing funding
- PCC Funding
- Reach Up funding
- Transform ECE (CCFAP/workforce)
- Universal School Meals

Consensus was reached to monitor/support, but not list on the printed '22 Agenda, two proposals:

- CDD Dismantling proposals
- UPK Monitoring

The Committee then discussed the proposals to engage the State Budget process – both for the development of the ongoing/base budget, and consideration of one-time expenditures and allocations of federal funding. There was agreement that these issues were critical for a number of reasons, including the intersectionality of the issue, the amount of funds available, and the underlying question of who government should serve. **Consensus** was reached that an additional issue/topic should be developed to capture all three budget-related topics. Carrie, Margaret, and Joanna agreed to work on developing language for the combined issue listing.

Matt then described the process used to monitor issues during the session (including the Policy/Advocacy Committee) and the process used to develop the printed Legislative Agenda. He agreed to work with the lead organizations to develop summary statements for each of the proposals that had been accepted.

4. Project/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.

Matt indicated that the current plans is for the December Steering Committee meeting to take place virtually, though plans for meetings in '22 (including ECDL and Annual Meeting) are still undetermined. He noted that the Executive Committee has discussed a more permanent arrangement for the Steering Committee to meet virtually for their December and March/April meetings regardless of the public health situation, for reasons of convenience and to minimize travel and winter weather issues. The Executive Committee will continue to discuss the issue in the coming months.

Taylor pointed the Committee to the quarterly Communications Report in the meeting packet and reviewed some of the highlights of the report. A discussion followed. Carrie asked for clarification about the intended audiences for the various communications tools the Alliance uses. Matt encouraged Carrie and Taylor to have an in-depth discussion of this question, as both become more familiar with the Alliance's work, and use that to form recommendations for communications adjustments in the future.

The discussion continued, with a focus on social media, accessibility, and alternative platforms. Topics included balancing quality and quantity, possible use of video, and platforms preferred by different age ranges in the early childhood community. At Matt's suggestion, Taylor agreed to work on a memo considering alternatives for enhancing/expanding Alliance communications to be reviewed at the December meeting, and asked Committee members to share their thoughts and suggestions with her.

Taylor then provided an update on planning for ECDL '22, noting that the planning team (which includes herself, Dan, Ansley from LGK, and Beth from BBF) had begun meeting. The team is currently proceeding on two tracks, laying the groundwork for either an in-person or a virtual

event, as either scenario still seems possible. The situation in the State House will have a major impact on the final decision. A discussion followed, with Committee members sharing their thoughts about options, pros and cons, and their individual comfort level with in-person meetings. Taylor noted that planning would continue, and that she would be reporting on the status of the planning process at the Committee's December meeting.

5. Discussion with Keith Williams, CIS Director

Keith introduced himself to the Committee, noting his professional background and his personal/family connection to CIS. He provided a brief update on a number of topics, including CDD/CIS staffing transitions, changes being considered for the SAG program, etc. A discussion followed. Topics included regional issues with fiscal agent changes, workforce/staffing, regional differences with program implementation, computer/data system plans, and an overall vision for the CIS system. During a discussion of his connections to the early childhood community, Matt suggested the idea of a virtual "coffee hour" that would allow Keith to have more exposure to the members of the CIS community around the state.

After about 30 minutes Keith left the meeting, and a follow-up discussion took place. Committee members shared their thoughts, concerns, and reflections on the discussion and the status of the CIS program. Matt encouraged Committee members to reach out to their legislators and our CIS legislative champions to voice their support for CIS and also share their concerns.

6. Project/Committee Reports, continued

Matt provided an update on the "Fund Vermont's Future" state budget/revenue project, which staff have been working on behind the scenes for a number of months. A brief discussion followed, during which Matt talked about how a number of Alliance funders have been supporting the effort over the last few years.

Dan then provided a brief update on the work of the Equity Subcommittee, summarizing the topics the group has worked on in the last few months. These have included the Steering Committee stipend, discussions of extending that program, and the development of the membership dues change proposal.

Dan then presented the proposal for making changes to the dues structure for Alliance membership, reviewing the materials provided in the meeting packet. The proposal would remove the requirement for individual members to make a financial contribution, instead making that voluntary and substituting a new pledge of commitment to the Alliance's goals and the Legislative Agenda. A brief discussion followed. The Committee then **consented** to the proposed changes to the Governance Document, use of the pledge language drafted, and a '22 dues structure of \$75 for organizations and a suggested donation of \$20 for individuals.

7. Finance Report and Budget Approval

Matt reviewed the materials in the packet regarding the projected 2021 spending, noting the areas where spending was notably higher or lower than budgeted.

Matt then directed the Committee to the proposed '22 budget. He noted the specific line items

where changes were proposed from '21. This included a decrease in the staffing subsidy for ECDL that the Alliance had been charging to the event, as well as a proposed one-time contribution to support the Fund Vermont's Future campaign. After a brief discussion, the Committee **consented to** the proposed 2022 Alliance budget, as presented.

8. Announcements

Sarah K. announced that LGK would soon be initiating a hiring process for a new member of their Communications team.

9. Scheduling next meeting

Matt indicated he would send a poll shortly to determine the timing for the November and December meetings.

After thanks offered all around, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40pm.