

# VT Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance Steering Committee meeting

December 15, 2021

10:00a

via Zoom

## MEETING MINUTES

### Attendance

#### Steering Committee:

Margaret Atkinson

Faye Mack

Barbara Petrie

Diane Nichols-Fleming

Sandra Cross

Ann Dillenbeck

Ellen Drolette

Deb Gass

Sarah Kenney

Pam McCarthy

Janet McLaughlin

Morgan Nichols

Carrie Stahler

Sarah Teel

Joanna VonCulin

Not in Attendance: VT Afterschool, Tabitha McGlynn, Floyd Nease, Judy Pransky, Mary Zentara

Staff: Matt Levin, Dan Brown, Taylor Hughey

### 1. Welcome, logistics, agenda review

Introductions were made and Margaret announced that the Executive Committee report would be expanded to include a discussion of a proposed change in the Steering Committee stipend policy. This topic was accidentally left off the meeting agenda.

### 2. Minutes from 10/20 and 11/8/21 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 Reports

Margaret 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 November Executive Committee meeting minutes.

Margaret announced that she was appointing Tabitha to the At-Large position on the Policy/Advocacy Committee (P/AC). Tabitha is serving on the SC representing health issues as an individual member, and was nominated by herself. Margaret noted that the meetings were open to all Steering Committee members. Matt then reviewed the structure and purpose of the P/AC, noting that the Executive Committee had approved Issue Working Group leaders for each item on the Legislative Agenda and that those leaders made up the P/AC, and he'd be happy to add others to the notification list for the meeting. Janet asked to be added.

Margaret then asked staff to present an overview of the proposed changes to the Alliance policy on stipends for Steering Committee members not otherwise compensated for their time, which

has been supported by the Executive Committee. Dan walked through the proposal, which would expand eligibility for the stipends to include meetings related to Alliance administration (Executive Committee, Equity Subcommittee, and Steering Committee meetings of less than 2 hours) that were at least 30 minutes long, at a rate of \$15/hour. A discussion followed. In response to a question from Sarah K., Matt explained the decision to limit the stipend to just administrative functions, focusing on work that was specifically done to support the Alliance as opposed to the advocacy goals of the lead organizations. Ann asked if staff had talked to those impacted, and if there was a sense that the proposal would accomplish the stated goals. Dan noted that the proposal came out of a discussion by the Equity Subcommittee, which discussed these questions. Matt added that as Alliance outreach efforts increase, staff will make it a priority to monitor use of the policy to determine if it is succeeding, and what additional changes may make sense, if any.

Committee members then asked about the proposed rate of pay, wondering if \$15/hour was too low and where the figure came from. Matt acknowledged that the rate was a vestige of past discussions when the target for raising the minimum wage was \$15/hour, and suggested the rate in the policy be increased to \$20/hour. There was general agreement on that suggestion, however there were also suggestions that other formulas could be used, such as a monthly stipend. A discussion followed about possible alternatives.

After Matt suggested that staff could continue to lead further discussion of the topic in the coming months, there was **consensus to accept** the proposal as presented, with the rate adjusted to \$20/hour. Matt noted that Dan would be working on the Equity Subcommittee's '22 work plan, and this topic would be part of that.

#### 4. ECDL Planning Update

Taylor provided an update on planning for Early Childhood Day at the Legislature '22. Currently staff are working to develop two different versions of a virtual event, one that would have everyone being virtual and the other (a more complicated and expensive one) that would take into account the possibility that some or all legislators would be working in-person in the State House. That second option would require setting up Zoom stations at the Capitol Plaza.

A discussion followed, during which it was noted that other organizations had used a similar format successfully. Taylor noted that other details, such as the line-up of speakers and issue sessions, would be determined in the coming weeks.

#### 5. Administrative Report

Taylor reported on membership retention and recruitment, noting that the membership cycle began in November. The website has been updated and outreach is continuing. Currently (as of this meeting) the Alliance has 28 organizational members, 20 individual members, and 3 strategic partners, and the numbers have been increasing as her outreach has continued. She has been reviewing the database to update information and resolve some issues. Matt encouraged Committee members to renew their membership if they have not already done so.

Matt provided an update on the Fund Vermont's Future project, reporting that the campaign is in the process of hiring its first campaign manager, and developing a legislative plan for '22. An intensive outreach effort to BIPOC communities is also in process. Ann asked if the Alliance has

a formal role in the oversight of the project. Matt replied that the coalition running the campaign is using an informal structure, but the campaign manager will likely be making things more formal in the future. He noted that he has been providing the Executive Committee with detailed reports on the project's development, and would continue to do so as work progressed.

Taylor then reviewed the memo on the packet regarding the Alliance's use of social media and other communications tools. She summarized her findings, noting her concerns with equity and content generation led to her recommendation to maintain current strategies. A wide-ranging discussion followed – topics included use of different platforms, content generation, equity concerns (access and ability to generate content), Alliance staff capacity, target audiences, policy vs. advocacy as the focus of content, etc. No formal action was taken, and Matt asked Taylor to continue working on the issue with this feedback in mind, and report back to the Steering Committee at their March/April meeting.

#### 7. '22 Legislative Agenda approval

Matt directed Committee members to the draft graphic presentation of the '22 Legislative Agenda, and a discussion followed about various aspects to revise. Matt and Taylor gathered the feedback and will work with the Alliance designer to finalize the graphics and language, for release in the next week or so.

Several members of the Committee offered updates on their Agenda issues. Topics included efforts to include supports for child care providers in the Budget Adjustment bill, and CCFAP changes and IT issues.

#### 8. Announcements

Janet provided information about VTAEYC ending copays in the TEACH program. Faye provided an update on Hunger Free Vermont's work related to access to school meals during the holiday break.

#### 10. Scheduling next meeting

Matt noted the next meetings of the Committee would be in late March or early April and then at the Annual Membership Meeting, and that he would send out a poll in early January for the next meeting.

After thanks offered all around, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45am.