

VT Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
Steering Committee meeting
October 12, 2023 11:00a
North Branch Nature Ctr., Montpelier

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Steering Committee:

Chloe Learey	Claire Kendall
Diane Nichols-Fleming	Sarah Kenney
Tabitha McGlynn	Nicole Miller
Keely Agan	Judy Pransky
Carrie Stahler	Cecelia Puleio
Danielle Harris	Sarah Teel
Deb Gass	Sarah Wallace-Brodeur
Sharron Harrington	Dan Winslow

Not in Attendance: Ellen Drolette, Amanda Herzberger, Main Steet Alliance

Staff: Matt Levin, Beverly Boget, Taylor Hughey

Guests: Matthew DeGroot (Action Circles), Steven Berbeco (United Way of NW VT)

1. Welcome, logistics, agenda review

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

2. Minutes from 5/30/23 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 2024 Legislative Agenda

Matt referred the Committee to the Agenda Setting Subcommittee's memo in the packet with their recommendations on the 14 applications received for the Alliance's 2024 Legislative Agenda. He provided some framing for the discussion and the decision-making process to be used to finalize the Agenda, which will guide staff work for the coming legislative year.

During the discussion that followed, Committee members reviewed the details of several of the proposals under consideration. Sarah Kenney reported that the LGK/VTAEYC team is reconsidering their options and needs for advocacy for the year, and they may want the Child Care Bill Monitoring proposal to be on the public/printed Agenda. This would be a change from what they requested in the proposal they submitted. Questions about several proposals followed her comments.

Two proposals, Vermont 211 funding and Connections Call, were discussed in detail. Beverly and Carrie provided an update on the Vermont 211 proposal, and answered questions regarding

the role of the program's sponsoring agency in potential advocacy. They stated that they were still working to determine to what extent that agency was inclined to participate in advocacy, and what the exact advocacy needs might be. Steven Berbeco answered a number of questions regarding the Connections Call proposal, as Committee members sought more information and details about the proposal and potential advocacy to support it.

Consensus was reached to include ten proposals on the printed/public version of the '24 Legislative Agenda:

- Paid Leave
- Housing Funding
- VT Tax Credits
- Reach Up Funding
- Fund Vermont's Future
- PCC Funding
- Doula Medicaid access
- Perinatal Loss
- Vermont 211 Funding
- Child Care Bill monitoring

It was noted that the status of the Child Care Bill proposal was still not finalized. Sarah K. indicated she would proceed as though the project would be on the printed Agenda, though that could change. Committee members agreed to include the Vermont 211 proposal on the list while Alliance staff and Committee members continued the discussion with project leaders.

Consensus was reached to support but not list on the printed/public '24 Agenda three proposals:

- DCF contracting
- State Budget
- CIS

Consensus was reached to not include on Legislative Agenda, but offer limited staff support to one proposal:

- Connections Call

Matt then described the process that will be used to develop the printed Legislative Agenda. He agreed to work with the lead organizations in the coming weeks to develop summary statements for each of the proposals that had been accepted. These statements will be reviewed at the Committee's November meeting.

The discussion continued, with Matt providing more information on the Fund Vermont's Future effort and Beverly describing the organizational merger and leadership transitions within the housing community.

4. Discussion with CDD Deputy Commissioner Janet McLaughlin

Dept. Comm. McLaughlin provided comments on various projects underway at CDD, including the SPARQS launch and STARS reforms, a review of grant oversight and related staff workload, and hiring for new positions at CDD. A question-and-answer session followed.

5. 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.

Taylor provided an overview of the proposal described in a memo in the packet to use gift cards as an incentive to increase responses to the survey the Alliance uses to determine what issues are of interest to people on our newsletter mailing list. A discussion followed. There was agreement that staff would not be eligible for a drawing, but Committee members would be. Taylor clarified that the drawing for gift cards would be open to everyone on the mailing list, not just Alliance members. With an understanding that the project was a pilot and would be evaluated after the first year, the proposal was **accepted by consensus**.

Taylor provided updated membership numbers and some historical context, noting that numbers were returning to pre-pandemic levels. After going down in 2020-22, numbers were back up to about 100 members total. She indicated that the change to by-donation dues for individual members likely helped secure additional members.

Matt noted that the Governance Document requires the Committee to annually review and approve the Alliance membership dues structure. After a brief discussion, the Committee **accepted by consensus** the tiered organizational dues structure previously agreed to and the by-donation system for individual members.

Taylor pointed the Committee to the quarterly Communications Reports in the meeting packet and reviewed some of the highlights of the reports, noting the relatively low level of activity was expected over the summer months.

Taylor then provided an update on planning for ECDL '24. The Capitol Plaza has indicated that space will be available for the event, but she continues to work with them to determine details and confirm availability. She has started to work on securing sponsors, and plans to use the same event planning consultant to assist her work. Taylor and Matt noted that given space and capacity constraints at the hotel, staff are looking into potentially limiting attendance. More investigation will be needed to determine what limits, if any, are necessary. A brief discussion followed.

6. Finance Report and Budget Approval

Matt reviewed the materials in the packet regarding the projected 2023 year-end financials and fundraising. He described his work on the funding diversification project, and provided a generally positive projection for '24. A discussion followed.

Matt then directed the Committee to the proposed '24 Alliance budget. He noted there were no programmatic changes and many items were level-funded from '23. After a brief discussion, the Committee **consented** to the proposed 2024 Alliance budget, as presented.

7. Announcements

Sarah Kenney noted that LGK was hosting a number of events around the state to celebrate the passage of Act 76 and provide updates on implementation.

8. Scheduling next meeting

Matt reminded everyone about the timing for the November and December Committee meetings.

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