

**VT Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance**  
**Steering Committee meeting**  
**September 30, 2025            11:30a            Montpelier, VT**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Attendance

Steering Committee:

Diane Nichols-Fleming	Claire Kendall
Tabitha McGlynn	Nicole Miller
Keely Agan	Cecelia Puleio
Carrie Stahler	Emilie Tenenbaum
Michelle Fay	Beth Traver Adolphus
Danielle Harris	Beth Wallace
Amanda Herzberger	Dan Winslow

Not attending: Chloe Learey, Deb Gass, Michelle Kessler, Main St. Alliance, Christina Nelson  
Guests: Sarah Kenney, Ellen Amstutz, Amy Shollenberger, Christy Swenson

Staff: Matt Levin, Beverly Boget, Taylor Hughey

1. Welcome, logistics, agenda review

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

2. Minutes from 5/28/25 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. 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 June or August Executive Committee meeting minutes.

Matt then referred the Committee to the proposed changes to the Governance Document to update language referring to early childhood education to reflect current preferred wording. The changes were **accepted by consensus**. Sarah Kenney noted that further changes to language would be necessary to reflect the preferred language used in the ECE professional development bill. Matt noted that adjustments could be made in the coming months, after the bill is hopefully passed by the Legislature.

Taylor reviewed the latest membership numbers and the Communications Report that was in the packet, noting that both were more or less running at expected levels. She indicated that the increase in organizational membership dues had increased revenue more or less as expected, and that the transition to the new structure seemed to be smooth. Matt added that the organization had modest goals for both areas, agreeing with one Committee member who observed that “growth was not our goal.”

Taylor then provided an update on ECDL planning, reporting that she had begun discussions

with the event planning consultant we have used in the past about a contract and event details. She then asked the Committee for feedback on a possible increase in ticket prices, reporting that the event lost several thousand dollars in '25. The loss was in part due to increased scholarships as well as increases in charges by the hotel. Staff feel that the modest loss was acceptable for one year but was not comfortable planning a similar loss in future years without Committee approval. She said options are to accept the loss, increase ticket prices to cover costs, or increase sponsorships to cover costs.

Matt provided additional financial context, noting that the ECDL loss was modest and could be covered by Alliance reserves. This reserve includes \$30,000 in transitional funding LGK has granted the Alliance as they are in the process of ending their operations. Staff are planning to use some of these funds over the next few years to replace the significant ECDL sponsorship funding provided in past years by LGK.

In the discussion that followed, Committee members noted that any ticket price increase would particularly impact programs that send multiple staff to the event. Matt noted that Chloe had reflected to him in an earlier conversation that many Alliance member organizations were still adjusting to higher membership dues, and might not be able to increase sponsorships as well.

After further discussion, Committee members agreed that the ticket prices should be left at current levels for one year and the issue should be revisited after the '26 event, with staff continuing to work to increase sponsorships as possible from a variety of sources, including businesses. Taylor agreed to send information about sponsorships to the full Steering Committee, and to assist any outreach members might be able to do to identify potential sponsors.

#### 4. Group Discussion – Federal Funding uncertainty

Committee members discussed their thoughts on the current situation, comments on the shared articles in the packet on managing through uncertainty, and reflections on how best to manage through the current situation. Committee members also agreed that at their December meeting they would consider language for a unified/unifying statement on the state response to any federal funding cuts, to be included as part of the '26 Legislative Agenda.

#### 5. Legislative Agenda '26 Discussion

Matt referred the Committee to the Agenda Setting Subcommittee's memo in the packet with their recommendations on the 16 applications received for the Alliance's 2026 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.

He noted that the Subcommittee was recommending that all the proposals be included in the Agenda in one form or another, and noted that their feedback/suggestions to lead organizations on ways they might strengthen their proposals will be provided to them directly through staff.

A discussion followed. Topics included the interplay between the finger printing, background check, and ECE funding proposals; the overall context for the emergency shelter proposal in relation to other advocacy efforts related to housing; and the Alliance's state budget and federal budget response advocacy, among others. It was noted that in several cases, proposed campaigns were still developing.

**Consensus** was reached to include 14 proposals on the printed/public version of the Alliance's '26 Legislative Agenda:

- Background Checks
- CACFP Sponsor Funding
- CIS/SAG funding
- Doula Medicaid eligibility
- ECE Funding/support
- ECE Profession bill
- Emergency Shelter Funding
- Fair Share for VT
- Federal Funding Response
- Fingerprinting
- PCC Funding
- Reach Up Funding/admin.
- SNAP State Funding
- VT 211 Funding

**Consensus** was reached to support two proposals but likely not list them on the printed/public Agenda:

- Paid Leave
- State Budget

It was agreed that discussions would continue over the coming weeks including staff, Lead Organizations, the Executive Committee, and the full Steering Committee to finalize the full list of issues to be included on the printed Agenda and the website.

Matt reviewed the process that will be used to develop the printed Legislative Agenda. He noted he would be working 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.

#### 6. Financial Report/'26 Budget

Matt directed Committee members to the '25 Projected Year End Financials and proposed '26 Budget in the meeting packet. He reviewed the items where final numbers are still to be determined, including major donor gifts for '25 and employee benefit costs for '26. He hoped to have more refined numbers for those costs sometime in the next few weeks, and noted that his fundraising efforts are continuing. He also noted that the proposed budget would need to be adjusted to include the proposed break-even or small loss for ECDL in '26, given the discussion earlier in today's meeting.

With an understanding that the Executive Committee would review and approve a slightly revised version of the budget at a future meeting, the draft budget was **accepted by consensus**.

#### 7. Announcements

Sarah noted that this was her last week at LGK, and provided the Committee with her personal email (skenny802@gmail.com) should folks want to stay in touch. Emilie noted that LGKAN staff would be off-line for three weeks in October, but would be fully operational the last week of the month.

#### 8. Scheduling next meeting

Matt summarized the meeting schedule for the rest of the year.

After thanks were offered all around, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35pm.