**ME SILC Annual Meeting Minutes, September 25, 2019**

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|  | **MEMBERS** | **PUBLIC** |
| **In attendance –** Beth Mogan | Cheryl Peabody, Diane Frigon, Stephanie Desrochers, Trish Thorsen | Tom Newman, Jess Cyr (via Zoom)  |
| A**bsent** | Darcy Gentle | Sam Fenderson, Karen Mason |

**Membership Updates**

Beth shared with the group that Lincoln Hunt withdrew his application to renew his membership for personal reasons. Patricia Washburn who attended the August meeting and was considering membership, has decided due to her work schedule she cannot join at this time.

**August 28, 2019 Minutes**

The Council discussed a clarifying statement be added to the minutes and a section removed. Stephanie motioned for the approval of the minutes with the changes; Trish seconded the motion. The August minutes were accepted as corrected.

**Activity Table Review**

The Council looked at the rolling Activity Table as a group. Many were confused not knowing if there were duplications by mistake or how to interpret the roll up. We discussed going forward, Beth will add a column for the person’s name who is submitting the Table and a column for the time period the information is for. This will aid in any confusion about duplication. The Council agreed that the roll up would be tabulated at the end of the reporting timeframe. Clarification was given that the information on the Activity Table reflect only areas that a member of the Council participated, not that someone else from the member’s organization participated.

**Meetings scheduled for FY 2020 – October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020**

Meeting dates for Fiscal Year 2020 were scheduled. There were adjustments due to the holidays, but typically will be the 4th Wednesday of the month. The meetings will continue to have a physical location – one in Augusta at 45 Commerce Drive and the other in Portland at 151 Jetport Boulevard, open for the public to attend. Meetings will be held from 10am-12pm on the following dates.

* 2019 – October 16, November 13, December 11
* 2020 – January 22, February 26, March 25, April 22, May 27, June 24, no meeting in July, August 26, Annual Meeting in September

**Budget Update**

Cheryl, Stephanie, Sam and Beth had a conference call with Eric Dibner and Libby Stone-Sterling. SILC originally had requested $6,000 more than FY 2019 budget. This was not supported, and we were asked to go back to see if we could cut the budget proposal. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation’s position was it is hard to justify increasing the budget when SILC has consistently released funds back to (DVR) Alpha One programs each year.

Beth went through the budget again and discussed with Cheryl, asking for the same budget amount at FY 2019 for FY 2020. The thinking behind this decision was that in this year alone we gave back $35,000. Instead of asking for additional funds we utilize the $35,000 that had previously given back for SPIL Coordinator tasks. Cheryl and Beth submitted the final budget, the same as FY2019 to Eric Dibner, who in turn accepted the proposal.

Discussion with the Council was as we move through the year, there might be a need to shift funds around to support various areas. For example, the budget might not support two people going to NCIL, that we might send one person to NCIL and another to SILC Congress or no one, it would depend on funding in the budget and what we could support at that time.

Stephanie and Beth shared with the group that SILC currently has a primary and a secondary account. The secondary account consists of $10,000 that is transferred into the primary account when funds are low, and we are waiting for payment from the State. Tom was asked to check with Dennis Fitzgibbons to see if he could share where the funds in the secondary account came from and do we have to keep the funds separate (primary and secondary accounts)? Having Dennis clarify what the money is for we can have it documented and on record for the Council going forward. Currently, the budget between the two accounts is under $1,000. An invoice for May through July was submitted to our DSE, but the funds have not been deposited into the account. Stephanie explained that we do not receive our funding in a lump sum at the beginning of the year, rather we invoice based on actual monthly expenses.

This discussion brought forth the topic of our current bookkeeper. The previous fiscal agent tracked all expenses, kept receipts, submitted an invoice each month and would notify the Treasurer if funds were getting low of if there were any other issues with the account. The current bookkeeper is processing payroll, paying the payroll taxes and writing checks for signatures and reimbursements. To date, he has not prepared the invoice that goes to the State.

This led to a conversation as to whether the bookkeeper is meeting our needs and do, we need to look for a new fiscal agent. Beth mentioned it might be good to have a conversation via phone or Zoom with the current bookkeeper setting clear expectations and then determine if he is following through with the duties.

Beth will follow up with Eric Dibner about the deposit that has not been made into the SILC account. The suggestion was made that perhaps SILC applies for a line of credit. It was motioned to approve looking into getting a line of credit when ready and that this is not a priority at this time. Stephanie made the motion and Trish seconded the motion. The motion was accepted.

The Council formally approved the new budget for FY 2020. Trish made the motion and Stephanie seconded it. The motion was accepted.

**Client Assistant Program Update**

Diane shared with the Council that CARES will no longer be handling the Voc Rehab advocacy program. Pam Waite will be on interim basis until the Governor appoints another entity for the Client Assistant Program. This will be effective 10/1/19.

**SPIL Coordinator**

Cheryl and Beth will look over the SPIL Coordinator Job Description. The suggestion was made that we call it a SILC Coordinator instead and all were in favor.

Discussion regarding a consultant, independent contractor or SILC employee and the pros and cons to each. Clarification on the various roles were given. A consultant would be hired for their expertise, given tasks, and a beginning and end date. You can’t tell a contractor when they work or how they work. An independent contractor would be someone coming in, but due to IRS rules you are not able to tell the person what to do.

The responsibilities section of the job description seems to be relevant regardless of consultant, employee, or anyone else hired.

Tom shared that he has information from Steve Higgins who is the Coordinator for Region 1 and is directly involved in creating the SPIL in Massachusetts. Tom will forward that information to Beth and Cheryl to review. Tom, Cheryl and Beth will work together looking at the information and bring it to the Council for the October meeting.

Thoughts are that SILC would be advertised in November, interviewing through December and have them begin in January.

Discussion around forums took place. How many, how to reach out to the public, and ways to reach a broad range of not only disabilities, but also various areas around the State.

**Empowerment Forums**

Discussion about the importance of having another Empowerment Forum and the need to start planning as soon as possible. This might be a way of celebrating the 30th anniversary of the ADA being signed into law.

**Goals to work on through June 2020**

There was a great deal of discussion around personal care services. The new change that allows people with disabilities (PWD) to employ a spouse if they are receiving services from an agency. The response from legislators and agencies around financial concerns. Specifically, right now there is a shortage of PWD utilizing the allotted number of hours given from the assessing agency, Maximus. The general feel from legislators is that they want more oversight. The reality is that a PWD can only use the number of hours approved by the assessing agency and that hiring a spouse should be considered no different than hiring a parent or an adult child. This discussion ultimately identified the great need of educating legislators and others by showing the obstacles a PWD faces versus just their story. A bigger impact would be to have the legislator physically go to someone’s home and see firsthand what duties the care giver provides. In the long term, legislators could then have a face with a name, firsthand knowledge of challenges, so when a bill is submitted, they can take these factors into account.

We also talked about the importance of growing membership and having a working knowledge of what other agencies are doing. For example, Housing is a SILC goal. Although SILC does not participate directly with housing it is important that we know of issues involved and what strategies are being put in place. Again, the priority at this time is to have PWD be on the Council.

There is a bill LD949 that states SILC needs to give an annual report to the legislators around what has been worked on throughout the year. This was implemented in January 15, 2017. Neither Cheryl, nor Beth were aware of this. To date, there has only been one report submitted. The general consensus was that we could submit a report either after the Progress Report goes out or after the SPIL has been written. This will be a priority as it is a requirement and only one report has been submitted thus far. Cheryl and Beth will work on a plan to submit this information to the legislators.

The following 5 goals were decided on as our priorities for FY 2020. These will be standing items on the agenda

1. Membership/Capacity Building
2. State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL)
3. Report to legislators (after SPIL)
4. Educating about independent living
5. Empowerment Forum/ADA Celebration