Maine Statewide Independent Living Council

Minutes

January 26, 2022

Members Present: Darcy Gentle (Chair), 121 VR Program Director; Trish Thorsen (Member-at-Large), Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP); Jessica Cyr, PWD, Moving Maine Network; Lee Glynn, PWD, Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Council (ABIAC); Samantha Fenderson, Assistant Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR); Diane Frigon, Regional Manager, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI); Tom Newman, Executive Director, Alpha One (CIL); Stephanie Desrochers, Program Manager, Benefits Counseling Services, Maine Medical Center (BCS-MMC).

Members of the Public Present: Julia Endicott (applicant in waiting), Disability Advocate, Disability Rights Maine (DRME); Keenan Weischedel, Disability Advocate, Disability Rights Maine (DRME); Katy Bizier, Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA), Maine Chapter; Julie Hovey, Independent Living Specialist, Alpha One; Karen Mason, Associate Director, Office on Aging and Disability Services (OADS).

Acceptance of Minutes: There were two corrections to the December minutes. The minutes were accepted as corrected.

Financial Report: A financial report of the first quarter of FY2022 was provided prior to the meeting. There were no questions or concerns.

Julia asked for the floor because she had to leave the meeting early. She reported that there are no vans in Maine with which to do high tech driver evaluations. Jessica has recently been through this and now has her license. Jessica reported she worked with Don Sampson from the Central Massachusetts Safety Council to do her driver evaluation. Driver evaluations are necessary to evaluate what the specialized needs are of an individual with a disability. Don is the only person in New England who has the equipment and knowledge on how to assess drivers needs to make recommendations of specialized equipment needed for a van. He is still available to do the driver evaluations, but vans are no longer available. Massachusetts VR has been able to purchase two vans but other states are unable to use these vans, most likely due to the grant money used to obtain the vans. One thought was to ask Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) if they would have the means available to provide these vans. Sam said she would follow-up with the DVR director and other states to see if there are any options available.

Program Progress Report (PPR): The PPR for FY2021 is due on January 31st by 11:59pm. The final draft has gone out to everyone. Last call for comments/edits. Please get these to Cheryl by the end of day today. Stephanie has been working hard to get the SILC OneDrive organized. The activity tables are all set up and ready for people to document their work.

State Plan on Independent Living (SPIL): The group as a whole went over Maine SILC’s goals and objectives – see OneDrive.

**Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Accounts: Stephanie reported that she has been working with Bangor Savings Bank and the Maine State Treasurer’s Office to present a webinar on ABLE accounts. The webinar is February 2nd from 1:00 – 2:30. They have the capacity for 500 attendees and already have over 400 registered. Stephanie urged the group to register soon. The webinar will be recorded and made available as soon as possible. It may be possible to have a link to the recorded webinar on the Maine SILC website. Stephanie reported OADS and DOL are helping with CART and ASL for the webinar.**

**Committee Updates:**

**The membership presentation PowerPoint is complete. A subset of the Membership Committee will start work on a orientation manual for new members.**

**The Designed State Entity (DSE) committee tasked to evaluate if there is a more effective agency to be the Maine SILC DSE has not been able to meet. The pandemic has demanded a lot of work from the partners working to look at the possibility of a new DSE.**

**Jessica reported that the Moving Maine Network has not met since the December SILC meeting.**

**Lee provided the group with two attachments prior to the meeting. One is the ABIAC Annual Report, and the other is a comprehensive needs assessment that was done. Maine SILC can use this assessment when looking at what the needs are for individuals with disabilities in Maine.**

**National Association of Statewide Independent Living Councils (NASILC) versus the Association of Programs on Rural Independent Living (APRIL): NASILC had previously send Maine SILC a letter offering membership to their group. Last month, the group asked Cheryl to do a little research to see what, if anything, would be the benefit of joining NASILC. Cheryl reached out to several SILC Executive Directors asking them if they are members of NASILC or APRIL and why. The individuals who did respond to her query said they have membership in order to get a better rate on conferences that NASILC and APRIL provide. It seems that the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) and APRIL offer resources at no cost so the group felt it unnecessary to pay membership for NASILC or APRIL.**

**How the CIL Helped Someone: Both State Rehabilitation Councils have an item on their agendas each month. It is How VR Helped Someone. It’s a brief story about how a VR consumer was able to receive services to reach their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) goals. Cheryl wondered if Alpha One would do something similar to demonstrate what CIL services were used and how it helped a consumer gain or regain independence. Tom was on board with this, and this agenda item will start in February.**

**Strategic Planning: Cheryl is working with a mentor. This mentor suggested that Maine SILC hire someone to provide a strategic plan. It will help clarify the SILC goats and how Maine SILC wants to accomplish these goals. Cheryl has spoken with someone who said she would propose doing a four-hour workshop, broken down into two-two-hour segments. Cheryl will ask this person to come to the February meeting and talk a bit about how this may benefit Maine SILC.**

**OK Rehab Email: Cheryl received an email from OK Rehab asking that Maine SILC post links to their website on the SILC website. It turns out OK Rehab is an addiction rehabilitation organization in the UK. Maine SILC will not post their link to the Maine SILC website.**

**NCIL Conference 2022: The NCIL conference will be held virtually again this year. Members were encouraged to think about attending sessions. Cheryl will look out for the conference agenda.**

**Announcements: None.**

**Public Comments: None.**

**Adjournment: 11:40am.**