**Maine Silc Meeting Minutes**

**June 24th, 2020**

**Attendees:**

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|  | **MEMBERS** | **PUBLIC** |
| **In Attendance** | Cheryl P)eabody (Chair), PWD; Stephanie Desrochers, Program Coordinator Benefits Services MMC; Diane Frigon, Regional Director, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI); Samantha Fenderson, Assistant Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) | Lee Glynn, PWD; Jessica Cyr, PWD;Rick Langley, Disability Rights Maine (DRM)STAFF: Beth Mogan, Executive Director; Rebecca Eliot, Administrative Assistant |
|  **Absent** | Trish Thorsen, Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) (excused); Tom Newman, Executive Director, Alpha One (excused); Darcy Gentle (Vice Chair), AIVR Program Director (excused) | Karen Mason, Office on Aging and Disability (OADS) |

**Welcome and Introductions:**

All present introduced themselves.

**Acceptance of Minutes:** (April and May)

April minutes accepted as distributed.

May minutes: corrections were offered. Minjtes were accepted as corrected.

**Financial Update:**

Invoices sent to Designated State Entity (DSE) for April & May. Beth to look into the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) conference fees and how they are configured as individual or group rate. Therefore, the update shows an estimate for the NCIL conference. Beth is looking into whether all Maine Statewide Independent Living Council (ME SILC) members are considered as one group registration fee or is each person attending an individual registration fee?

Stephanie reminded members the estimate of dollars returning to the state is due by September 30th, and Sam, Eric, and Libby reviewing before then. It was agreed once the NCIL costs are verified a generous estimate would be forwarded.

Stephanie requested council to put to vote the motion to release current financial agent by September 30th. Formal motion presented to explore and hire new fiscal agency by end of September. Motion was seconded but could not pass at this time due to lack of quorum number of members present.

Referrals of possible candidates to be emailed to Beth and Cheryl. Beth to send out inquiries for quotes during July and August break.

**OLD Business:**

**State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) document update:**

The group discussed changes and additions to the Goals and Objectives section of the SPIL draft document as presented. Highlights include:

**Goal One:** Objective 1.2, Second Action Step: *“…. reach out to state representatives annually, inviting them into consumer’s homes….”* Beth clarified the intent of this action step is the idea of having legislators going into the homes to see the equipment necessary and how used by the consumer for living independently. Suggestions were made to expand the current wording to include other formats to show good representation of what is happening for people, and what is necessary for them within their home. Suggested phrasing may be “… *bridging the gap between consumer and Legislators via home visits, zoom calls, video submissions, and 3-minute testimonials*…”

Goal One, Objective 1.3: *“…will create materials to be dispersed to communities throughout Maine.”*

Beth shared the intent of the written materials is to answer the basic questions of, “Who is SILC? What does SILC do, and how is that accomplished?” These materials would also include information on how to become a member of SILC, and a list of applicable independent living resources. The goal is to have marketing materials ready for use at fairs, conferences, etc. The group agreed the clear objective is about promoting Maine SILC and independent living services in general.

A suggestion was made to add additional action steps to further clarify this objective, to show it is more then just disseminating information, but statewide education and advocacy efforts. One avenue suggested that easily delivers information to a large active mailing list is by utilizing the ‘Constant Contact’ email and newsletter service. Another action step would be to share what SILC is obligated to do under the new Maine State Statue on making annual reports to the state legislature on the status of independent living within the state of Maine.

**Goal 2:** *“Work on Maine SILC Membership to be brought into compliance.”* Discussion covered the concern of clear steps for how SILC can increase membership, other than just contacting individuals who had already expressed some interest. Beth clarified the current key avenues are through reaching out to other councils and including the membership opportunity into the education and awareness piece.

Discussion then moved onto the real concern on this topic, which is the continual inability to get people approved by the governors’ office. Cheryl shared that this concern is clearly addressed in a different section of the SPIL document, and according to directions, should not be addressed again here.

**GOAL 3:** *“Investigate the effectiveness of transitioning Maine SILC to a new DSE.”* A concern was raised on the wording in the heading. Through discussion, all agreed to change this wording to “*explore and identify the best agency to serve as DSE to Maine SILC*.”

Discussion moved to condensing some of the action steps under this goal. This could be done simply by choosing one place to mention the timeline of the needed action steps. It was also agreed to delete all occurrences of the words “new DSE” and leave the goal and objectives to clearly show SILC is only exploring the option. Then, if a new DSE option is identified, the council would work on an appropriate amendment.

**GOAL 4:** *“Advance disaster preparedness supports and services.”* A suggestion was presented to change wording in this goal to emergency preparedness, vs disaster. This new word choice is more inclusive of all emergency events, especially as we have recently experienced with COVID-19.

Goal 4, Objectives 4.1 and 4.2: A suggestion was brought forth that one of these objectives could highlight the need for community-based vendors and organizations to provide continued access to their resources during the covid19 pandemic.  This would include the planning and provision of accommodations for individuals with disabilities which allow for full participation in virtual training and ongoing services that are provided by these entities.

**A call for other Goals to add:**

The listening sessions survey results, and the topics of Transportation and Communication were brought up repeatedly in the forums. Council agreed that Transportation should certainly be added as a goal in this SPIL.

Discussion then moved to clarifying the objectives. One objective would be to work in partnership with many groups via a task force on transportation. Rick offered to investigate further the existing task force with the Greater Portland Council of Governments and the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT). They are currently reviewing concerns and barriers in the current transportation systems. Rick to report back to the council at a later date on applicability and resources.

Stephanie offered adding action steps that were fairly broad in scope, such as promoting opportunities to share transportation concerns, and notifications of public hearings on related transportation bills when they arise. SILC would advocate and notify the public when these hearings are happening and to encourage people to attend and give comments.

Stephanie encouraged Cheryl and Beth to review the previously submitted two SPIL documents for some good ideas, wording, and reference in writing this new goal. Rick suggested referring to the Brain Injury Council’s annual report to the legislature. This council has certainly refined their pieces on transportation over the years, so that would be a good reference resource.

Request was made to the council attendees if any other goals and objectives arising from the surveys should be included in this SPIL document. Topics mentioned were social connectedness, economic self-sufficiency and the need for more Personal Care Attendants. Discussion moved toward confirming these topics were important for SILC to continue promoting awareness of these topics to other agencies. However, these topics may not necessarily be a goal or objective on this SPIL. SILC certainly wants to ensure consumers feel the survey results were heard and are considered important.

Rick mentioned the importance of adding some language in the SPIL on Employment First. He would be willing to forward a short-written piece to Beth and Cheryl before the 30th. It would explain this topic fully and stress SILC’s interest in informing and assisting consumers with all of the options and resources available on the Employment First initiative.

The council came to agreement for Beth and Cheryl to send out an updated SPIL draft, with all applicable changes as discussed, to be sent out to council members by the end of today. Members would review the draft and email back any further comments or suggestions by end of week.

**NCIL Conference:**

Cheryl corrected original information given about fees. It is not $25.00 per session, as previously announced. The question Beth is to research and verify for an accurate estimate, is if there is a membership fee for all of us as a group, or a per person registered membership fee? There are no attendance caps. Stephanie shared an example of how NCIL may structure the charges. A virtual conference she is attending this week, has up to 1000 people per call and they charge each individual a membership fee for a login code. Cheryl confirmed she has received Rebecca’s and Jessica’s workshop choices. Samantha, Diane, and Beth are to send their seminar choices and attendance requests to Cheryl before the July holiday weekend. Cheryl asked for a vote to pay for Rick & Lee to attend, if they wish.

Cheryl also extended invitation to become council members to Rick and Lee. If they are interested, they will contact Beth for packet application materials. Vote approved.

**Membership Approvals:**

Nothing new to report.

**Monthly Activity Table:**

Please submit them to Beth and Rebecca for October to May. Easier to input data per month then in mass at end of fiscal year.

**Covid-19 Updates:**

Stephanie shared the upcoming COVID-19 Webinar on July 8th done by BCS. They have capacity of 500 people for this session, with 200 people registered so far. Samantha stated she would forward the invite onto her list of contacts to spread the word. Stephanie also shared the news of an open Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) position in the Rockland/Belfast area. This candidate would help people on SSI/SSDI recipients with how working affects their benefits. Position requires travel throughout the state to meet with clients. She requested all to spread the word to their contacts for referrals. Information on the position is on the BCS website.

Diane shared that the Business Enterprise Program was reviewing and installing cleaning protocols and sanitation practices, especially around food and various surfaces. She will forward to attendees the name of a product discussed that kills virus but not harmful to pets or people. It shows effectiveness on surfaces continues for up to 90 days.

Cheryl thanked everyone for their input and comments on the SPIL goals.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:54am.**