Maine Statewide Independent Living Council

Minutes

October 2021

# Members Present: Darcy Gentle (Chair), Director, 121 Vocational Rehabilitation Program; Stephanie Desrochers, Program Manager, Benefits Counseling Services, Maine Medical Center (BCS-MMC); Lee Glynn, Person with a Disability, Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Council (ABIAC); Jessica Cyr, Person with a Disability; Samantha Fenderson, Assistant Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR); Diane Frigon, Regional Director, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI).; Tom Newman, Executive Director, Alpha One.

Members of Public Present: Julia Endicott (Application Pending), Disability Advocate, Disability Rights Maine (DRME); Nancy Moulton, Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI-SRC); Kelly Osborn, Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (SRC-DVR); Rachel Dyer, Associate Director, Developmental Disabilities Council.

Absent: Trish Thorsen, Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP).

The group started with Welcome and Introductions. Guests Kelly, Nancy, and Rachel were in attendance to discuss how all four of the Councils can work collaboratively with each other. Kelly reminded everyone that the Rehabilitation Act mandates that both SRCs and Maine SILC work together. The Councils share a mission and purpose to advocate for people with disabilities and to make sure people with disabilities have a voice with all Councils. They would like to talk about shared goals and not have each Council duplicating efforts. An example was given: the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Accounts. The Councils could collaborate with Bangor Savings and other entities like Maine CiTE to create a webinar about ABLE Accounts. They could then all use their Council to get the word out to people with disabilities so everyone could view the webinar. Rachel reported that a few entities are meeting on October 28th about ABLE Accounts. Stephanie will be the point person for Maine SILC to engage in meetings related to ABLE Accounts. Another example was transportation. Transportation is one of the biggest barriers for people with disabilities to live, work and engage in their communities. Tom pointed out that Maine SILC should always be working on a SPIL by gathering information. A great way to do this is to seek input from other Councils on what the needs are for people with disabilities. A final example of how the Councils can work together is capacity building. All Councils struggle to gain new members of each Council. The discussion ended with the consensus that, together, all Councils have a larger voice than individual Council alone.

*Nancy and Kelly exited the meeting.*

Acceptance of Minutes:The September minutes were accepted as distributed.

Financial Report: Cheryl will send to the Council the final month (September) of the fiscal year for review. Tom noted that continuing to meet virtually saves money but, more importantly, it allows Maine SILC to get more representation statewide. Everyone was in agreement.

Program Progress Report (PPR): Everyone had a chance to review that draft PPR. There were some typos noted that will be addressed. Cheryl will go over the document again and will put the data into the PPR portal. The deadline is November 1, 2021, by 11:59pm.

State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL): The Council reviewed the goals, objectives, and action items. Diane reported that she, Jess and Cheryl did meet and are working on a balanced PowerPoint to use in recruiting new members. The list on the SILC OneDrive of organizations that members work with will be utilized to set up presentations before these Councils to recruit new members.

Stephanie reported that she has been working with Cheryl on the OneDrive. The hope is to get financial documents in order before asking the SILC bookkeeper to take on the responsibility of invoices that are sent to the state.

Announcements: Julia reported that DRME is hosting an Employment First Forum on October 28th from 3:30 – 5:30. Registration is still open. DRME will be recording the forum and this video will be available for those who cannot attend the forum. Julia also asked Council members to view the email send out regarding recruitment of community transportation leaders.

Samantha noted that DVR Casework Supervisors have been hired. One casework supervisor in the Augusta region and two in the Bangor region. Sean Keegan has been hired for the Regional Manager for Regions 2 and 3 (Lewiston/Auburn and Augusta).

Jess reported that she has been working with DVR for several years to obtain an accessible van. The van has hand controls. She just obtained her driver’s license. Jess said she would be happy to talk with anyone who wants to learn more about that process.

Public Comment: No comment was given.

Adjournment: 11:52am.