

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) convened an in-person and virtual hybrid meeting via ZOOM on Thursday March 10th, 2022. Council Members via Zoom requesting a virtual appearance as a reasonable accommodation and because we obtained an in-person quorum; virtual Council Members could vote.

Attendance

Council: Denise Wardle, Sandi Klink, Jack Spencer in person, and Kathy Foley, Clarissa Williams, Chasidy Buchanan, and Dora Easterling via Zoom.

Public: Beth James, Brandon Brown, Mark Woolfall, Katherine Moore, Janie Hadley VR, Cindy Miles DRS Liaison, Amelia Roehm, C Zuckerman, Carrie Carlson, Lauren Percy, and Nicole Briley Earp

Welcome and Call to Order and Roll

Vice Chair Denise Wardle called meeting to order at 10:05 am Central time. Denise explained Nicole Craig Chair could not make it. Denise then took roll.

Minutes

Council reviewed minutes from the November meeting. Denise called for the motion to accept the minutes as written, Kathy Foley made the motion. Sandi Klink made the second. All voting members voted by roll call; all members accepted the minutes, zero opposed. Minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report

FY 2022 Budget/Financials: Jack Spencer presented the Financial Report for the period of 10/1/2021-1/31/2022. He went over all the categories, explained how funds had been used and asked for questions. With no questions, Clarissa Williams made the motion to accept the financials, Sandi Klink seconded the motion. All voting members voted by roll call; all members accepted the financial statement, zero opposed. Financial report was accepted.

Director Report:

Dora Easterling stated that the SPIL Update was in the packet sent to the Council and Directors. She said that statewide numbers are encouraging. Having come more than full circle with COVID and virtual CIL services; numbers continue to rise. Collaborations continue to grow, and goals are being met. She stated it is good to see on the Unmet Needs that Food Security is trending downward. It stands at 31% of consumers have security issues versus 52% this time last year. This number still needs to go down but is moving in the right direction.

Dora gave a SILC update. Nicole Craig resigned from the SILC due to a change of jobs that would not allow her to be free for the meetings. Nicole will be missed. Dora went on to say that we had great news from the Governor's Office and that Rhonda Crenshaw, Clarissa Williams, and Nicole Craig had been reappointed. However, Nicole will decline. She also said that two new members were appointed Carrie Carlson (who was present) and Cecil Williams III. They got news of this the day before and Carrie could join, Cecil could not. [Carrie Carlson gave a brief introduction, stated she lives in Oakland, Tennessee and works for Tennessee Disability Coalition]

Dora discussed the collaboration efforts statewide with the I L Network. She stated that the ACL grantees of the state with DRT have removed physical barriers for 87/95 counties to receive a free in-home vaccination. That CILs were meeting with the ADA coordinator for state parks. The goal is all state parks will be accessible by 2030. She said that FEMA's own Marcus Coleman is supposed to come talk with us at the next SILC meeting. Marcus stated he wants to sit at our table so we can sit at theirs! Emergency preparedness has become so vital to Tennessee.

Dora explained that between now and the next meeting if the Council approved the Policy addition for Council training that she would talk to Council one on one to develop a training plan for everyone.

Dora explained that the state rate for mileage reimbursement went up to .585 cents a mile as of 1/1/2022.

No Old Business.

New Business:

Denise asked Dora to explain the new policy in consideration and why.

Dora stated that during a recent training with ILRU it was mentioned that each SILC needs to have individual training plans for each Council member. Dora went on to say she called Kathy Cooper in SILC Director in Kansas and asked if she could have a look at her training plan. Kathy sent her the Kansas policy. Dora put the Tennessee spin on it and read it to the Council. Sandi Klink made a motion to adopt the policy, Jack Spencer seconded the motion. All voting members voted by roll call; all members accepted the new policy, zero opposed. Policy accepted.

Denise asked Dora to explain about the date change for the next meeting. Dora stated that the original SILC meeting is scheduled to be on May 19th. But since SILC Congress is in-person, that is a travel day. Dora had to choose a date for the meeting to be able to invite Marcus Coleman from FEMA so she picked May 26th. Denise asked for a motion to accept the new date. Jack Spencer made the motion, Sandi Klink seconded the motion. All voting members voted by roll call; all members accepted the new date, zero opposed. Date accepted.

Denise called everyone's attention to the FY2022 beginning budget. This is what the SILC proposed we start 2022 out with. Not knowing what travel would do to the budget, changes were almost inevitable. The budget was gone over line by line. Denise asked for a motion to accept the new budget. Clarissa Williams made the motion; Kathy Foley seconded the motion. All voting members voted by roll call; all members accepted the budget, zero opposed. Budget accepted.

CIL Directors Reports:

disABILITY Resource Center: Katherine Moore reported that they are nearly finished with the first Disability Awareness Campaign. Our first video is almost complete on accessible parking. It is called Have a Heart, Park Smart. We have our rack cards, and they are beautiful! We have window clings ordered. This is being sponsored by Regions Bank and the City of Knoxville. She said dRC was going

to have a small ADA celebration on 7/22/2022 at dRC where they will hand out their Spirit of ADA Awards to community members with finger foods. The larger ADA celebration will be held in Kentucky to further their education. dRC has opened back to public however it is by appointment, we are open Mon.-Fri. 8:30am to 4:30 pm. dRC is meeting with Don Tate the ADA coordinator on 4.4.2022 at a park (Seven Island State Birding Park) and he has 4 more he would like our input on. We are excited for this opportunity.

Denise Wardle mentioned that she, Beth James, and Dora Easterling were meeting Don at Paris Landing, but no date has been set.

Empower Tennessee: Brandon Brown reported that on 3.11.2022 we will have our monthly Empower Con focusing on Emergency Preparedness. They will have guest speakers from Office of Emergency management, Nashville Severe Weather, and Red Cross. We will discuss what can be done to prepare for an emergency, what to do during an emergency and also after an emergency. We will offer emergency preparedness plans with an I L Specialist and they will receive go-bags upon completing a plan. He said you could register on the website. Our Tech Talk and More is now called BLAST which is for blind or low vision specific group. Empower Tennessee has started 2 new support groups. The first is called Living Your Best Empowered Life focusing on housing and employment and the second called Empowered Gents. As discussed with PHWF dollars Empower Tennessee is going to do a mental health focused project. We will bring aboard Certified Peer Specialists and a Mental Health Professional. This will provide direct mental health support in response to COVID issues as well as other things that may be impacting people with disabilities. More to come later as we now know what it is we are working with. The I L Network will co-presenting sponsors with TDC. We were upgraded because TDC desired we be given more coverage. I am still working on the flyer to hand out to communities about IL, what CILs do, what SILC do, and our contact information. We are also working in collaboration with TN Dept. of Health on youth activities, they hold a summer program 2 weeks before our Youth Leadership Academy. We have started conversations for 2023 about a much larger statewide Youth event and of course we welcome other CILs to join us. Brandon Brown was appointed to NCIL Board of Directors as member at large.

Denise Wardle thanked Brandon and Empower Tennessee for the chance to be co-presenters of DDH.

TARP: Denise Wardle said TARP is continuing on and is collaborating with JCIL on events and just had their first event of the year last Tuesday with the Jackson Fire Department. There are 3 or 4 more collaborative events coming up in March and April on Weather and emergency preparedness. We have go-bags with weather radios, supplies and this year we added first aid kits. She went on to say TARP is partially opened. People still are not coming in, but we talk to them outside if they need to pick up items or DME. Consumers are fine with that. They prefer talking to us on the phone and using our website. We have our intake forms on our website and our consumers have almost doubled because of the ease of communications. We have started to drop ship DME especially to counties like Dickson. We are building ramps and have a huge ramp list, so there is not a problem with spending Part B money. We have not yet thought of ADA yet, that is still out there a bit.

JCIL: Beth James reported that JCIL is busy too! We have done the first of three emergency preparedness events. JCIL is also expanding emergency preparedness to our transitional kids in the academy. The young people are asking great questions and it is definitely an area we need to work

with our younger people. Jackson is going to have an emergency practice drill and we will be providing staff and encouraging our consumers to be a part of that. Jackson is becoming a 4-minute city. So, no matter where you are in Jackson, you will not be more than 4 minutes away from a defibrillator (AED). The fire department is going to furnish the AEDs and the training. We have two AEDs here but look forward to the training. If anyone near our area would like to join the training, the Jackson Fire Department would love for you to come be a part of the training event. Amerigroup contacted us a few months ago about having a room set up here should they need to meet with a consumer. That room is up, and they put in a computer. So, if you or anyone else needs to use this space please contact us. There is a domestic abuse grant (federal) being targeted for our area. We are in the process of writing for that. We are always looking for a way to expand our partnerships. We are finishing up with our CARES money. JCIL too has a long ramp list. The Part B dollars may not be spent yet but are all allocated for use. We are just waiting for the builders and pretty weather.

MCIL: Sandi Klink reported MCIL is totally virtual. All staff work from Home. But as of APRIL 1st, we are going to go to the people. We have three community centers targeted: we are taking short surveys first, then we hope to be putting on workshops in the community this spring and summer. We have coming up MCIL on the Road. We will go to the people. We are excited for this new phase, anticipating more consumers and more disabilities served. MCIL is on 4.1.2022 having a Zoom training concerning housing called "The Big, The Bad, and The Ugly." We have a couple speakers coming from CLS. I have sent out one announcement but will send out another in a week or so. We also have our Senior Symposium which is mainly aimed at senior populations, and they too will speak about housing. It is a major concern. Rental costs are rising, and many seniors are priced out of their homes. This symposium will be March 25th. I sent out flyers on that yesterday to the network. MCIL is meeting with Nick Lewis from the state parks. We are meeting at Reelfoot State Park to discuss ADA accessibility. We will do a walk through of one or two of their cabins that they have made accessible, as well as trails and other things they have. We are discussing another park on the outskirts of Memphis to meet at. We are reinstating in-person Deborah Cunningham Access Awards for July 29th and we have a contract under review at Dickson Galleries. MCIL is also working with Kelly's Kitchen, and they are making a stop in Memphis, and I am going to meet with them about our nutritional and affordable cooking classes.

TRAC: Mark Woolfall reported that TRAC was successful the launching the Pair and Share Program that addresses Housing issues. We have encountered many consumers who have had at least a 48% increase in their monthly rental costs and expenses. Some called us within 24 hours of being homeless. We stepped in and educated Landlords and we were able to get them from a 24-hour eviction to a 90-

day extension. There was tension in some of these homes as well, so we were able to alleviate some of that tension. We enrolled them in the Pair and Share so they could be matched up with another person in need of shared living. We have had a few placed already. TRAC met with one of the Fire Captains from Chattanooga who is looking to start a program that addresses first responders initial contact with persons with disabilities. He wants to try to revamp that, and they can look for a different way to respond and provide services more effective and efficiently. I look forward to brainstorming with him about this benefitting everyone in the Chattanooga area. Mark said he also met with other individuals looking at a different approach to the housing issues. Trying to get people expedited on waiting lists.

And on Nursing Home transition, we are any day expecting our latest consumer to come home from the nursing home! There is a ramp being constructed now. We anticipate that by March 15th that individual will be back home. Our food program has been very successful. Every consumer that has requested food has met that goal. We are very pleased we could aid them!

Denise Wardle asked who does security to see if people are compatible? Mark stated They have at least three meetings. At that point they meet individually to discuss any issues or state they feel they are compatible. At this point they sign a disclaimer so that TRAC is not held responsible. Denise asked if Mark could share the disclaimer and Mark agreed to send it out to the Network.

DSU Membership Report, DSE Report & Update:

Cindy Miles reported: Mandy Johnson, our DRS Assistant Commissioner, resigned in January and Kevin Wright, Director of Operations was promoted to the Assistant Commissioner's role in February.

A University of Tennessee - Martin alum, Mr. Wright's commitment to DHS began in 2000 when he joined the Tennessee Technology Access Program. As Director, Mr. Wright led state policy development for assistive technology and managed the program's budget according to federal and state standards. Beyond providing coordination and consultation for state agencies involved in assistive device delivery and use, Mr. Wright was also responsible for overseeing procurement processes and technical assistance associated with assistive technology. After managing the TRIMS Vocational Rehabilitation case management system launch, Mr. Wright was promoted to the role of Director of Operations for the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

In his most recent role, Mr. Wright led the development and implementation of a wide range of IT strategies while overseeing the division's contracts. He leveraged data collection and analysis to guide the division's \$150 million budget according to federal and state guidelines. Additionally, Mr. Wright collaborated with divisional leadership to formulate transformative strategies for 18 facilities and their staff. He brings not only a talent for collaboration and management to his role, but also a passion for helping people help themselves that is fueled by his own experiences as a person with a disability.

VR Updates -

Since July 1, 2,460 individuals have applied for VR services

Currently there are 8, 250 VR participants

Average Caseload size is 92 cases for regions 1 through 9

Average Caseload size is 70 cases for regions 10 and 11 or the Sensory caseloads

Since July 1, 3,027 customers have achieved their employment goals.

Average wage per hour \$12.36

Average hours worked per week 29.72

Announcements/Public Comment

Jack Spencer wanted to share that he participated in monograph with students from Vanderbilt Kennedy did about the housing crisis with PWD in Tennessee. I spoke with him about my eviction last year and my ideas for housing cooperatives. It is on the Vanderbilt-Kennedy website. I also was a party

to the Justice Dept. ADA lawsuit against Amtrak. I received a small check but more importantly they have committed 45 million dollars to making all the Amtrak stations accessible in the next 5 years.

Lauren Percy introduced herself as Executive Director of TNCDD. She wanted to mention two things to keep on our radar, 1. Partners in Policymaking institute in accepting applications this month. We are doing a new process of taking applications for a one-month window. Partners in Policymaking is a program for people with disabilities and their family members that is a leadership program. Please help us get the word out, I can send a flyer. Secondly, we are revamping the way we recruit Council members. We want people that are cross disability and with diverse backgrounds. The Partners in Policymaking is now a hybrid of 2 in person meetings and 5 virtual.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 11:088 p.m. CST. Jack Spencer made the motion to adjourn. Kathy Foley seconded the motion. Unanimously approved by voice, zero opposed, meeting adjourned.

SILC Secretary signature

Date