STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL OF TENNESSEE

Quarterly Council Meeting — Minutes · Thursday, August 14, 2026 · Hybrid (in person and via Zoom)

Called to order: 8:22 a.m. CT **Adjourned:** 10:47 a.m. CT **Presiding:** Edward Mitchell, M.B.A., Executive Director **Location:** Jackson, TN
Quorum: Established with 6 voting members present.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Council members present: Edward Mitchell, M.B.A. (Executive Director, presiding); Dr. Tiffany Glover (Treasurer); Lee Brown; Pamela Johnson; Amelia Roehm; Cecil C Williams; Charles Valdez (joined in progress; confirmed at adjournment). Chastity Campbell; Katherine Moore (virtual); Amy James; Beth James and Christina/Christine Cliff.
Council members absent: Dr. Eliza Jones (noted as appearing in court; will listen virtually); Regina "Gina" Lynette; Lauren Percy; Cindy Miles (stepped away). Called without response: Mark Woodfall, Laura Peacry, Jennifer Wright,
Proxies and designees: Annette Porter for Lauren Percy; Kasondra Farmer in a proxy capacity for Regina Whitley (and delivered the Empower Tennessee report); Chastity Campbell delivered the membership report for Cindy Miles. Both proxies were seated in the public section.
Presenters: Deborah Wink and Barbara Potts, TN Dept. of Health, West Region; Kelly Cortesi, TN Dept. of Revenue (titles in §2).
Public attendees and guests: Annika Easley (student); Rhonda Crenshaw (incoming Center Director, Arkansas); Heather Henderson (TBI Service Coordinator); Mike Scripa (Disability Resource Center, Knoxville); Annette Porter; Kasondra Farmer; Lynette Porter; and additional members of the viewing public.

2. GUEST PRESENTATIONS

- **2.1 CHANT and CSS — TN Dept. of Health, West Region (Deborah Wink; Barbara Potts).** CHANT — Community Health Access Navigation in Tennessee — connects families to local resources, merging TennCare Kids Outreach, HUGS, and Children's Special Services since 2019. Anyone may refer in person, by email, or online; a care coordinator makes three contact attempts, screens, and triages the family onto pathways covering behavioral health, dental, developmental screening, employment, housing, insurance, prenatal care, and social services. CHANT operates in every county through 7 regional health departments and 5 metros; the West Region covers 19 counties excluding Madison and Shelby.
- **CSS pathway.** Tennessee's federal Title V program for children and youth with special health care needs, and the only pathway with income limits — recently raised from 225% to 250% of the federal poverty level. Applicants must be under 21, Tennessee residents, and have a physical diagnosis; roughly 250 qualified. CSS provides care coordination for TennCare children; covers co-pays, coinsurance, deductibles, and excludes hearing aids for privately insured children; covers diagnosis-related care for the uninsured through contracted providers; and covers up to $500/month in special foods for metabolic disorders. Annual reapplication and an in-person coordinator visit are required.
- **2.2 Precious Cargo Program — TN Dept. of Revenue (Kelly Cortesi).** Precious Cargo lets a registrant add a confidential note to a Tennessee vehicle registration indicating the driver or a family member may need extra time, patience, or assistance. It is free, voluntary, and confidential, with no marker on the vehicle — only law enforcement and certain dispatchers can see it by running the plate. Eligible: people who have difficulty communicating, use wheelchairs or assistive devices, or have autism, Alzheimer's, Down syndrome, or another developmental, cognitive, neurological, or medical condition, and anyone in the care of a parent, guardian, or conservator. Apply via the form at tn.gov/revenue, then return it to the county clerk. A May survey found 76% had not heard of it and 63% did not know the form goes to the clerk — awareness, not interest, is the barrier.
- **Q&A.** The designation is tied to the registration and license plate — not a driver's license or ID — so it holds regardless of who drives, does not transfer to a rental, and requires divorced parents in shared custody to apply separately. Ms. Cortesi will confirm whether it is visible out of state. Asked what assurances exist for undocumented registrants, she stated that legislation passed this session requires proof of citizenship to register a vehicle, that the Department administers the law as passed, and that law enforcement questions fall to the Department of Safety.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion	Approval of the minutes of the previous Council meeting as distributed.
Moved/seconded	Moved by Amelia R. Seconded by Lee Brown
Result	No discussion. Motion carried by voice vote; no opposition noted.

4. TREASURER AND FINANCE REPORT — DR. TIFFANY GLOVER, TREASURER

	Actual	Budget to Date	Variance
Total revenue	$191,971.42	$166,666.67	$25,304.75
Total expenses	$173,223.17	$168,914.82	$4,308.35

Motion	Approval of the previous Council Finance as distributed.
Moved/seconded	Moved by Amelia R. Seconded by Lee Brown
Result	No discussion. Motion carried by voice vote; no opposition noted.

- **Variances.** Over in some categories and under in others — characterized as a timing issue from continuing resolutions and delayed funding, not a budget problem. Payments were withheld from October forward pending notices of award; NOAs entered the DSE process only in the prior month, and back payments are still arriving.
- **Budget amendment.** In progress to shift unspent funds to the Centers for Independent Living for supplies, consistent with the Council's customary practice at the close of two-year money. The centers were emailed notice. No further questions; report received.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT — EDWARD MITCHELL

- **Partnerships, outreach, and NCIL.** Grant partnerships developing in rural transportation and health care resiliency; work began with the new Traumatic Brain Injury Program and Council. Upcoming: African Street Festival, Tennessee Mega Conference, and the DRC ethics conference September 11. At NCIL, the Executive Director co-presented and served as region 4 representative and membership coordinator; the most productive Hill visits were with the offices of Senator Hagerty and Representative David Kustoff, both struck by how much of the state map lacks a CIL and interested in increasing the state match and examining I&E funds.
- **ACL visit and PPR.** ACL Commissioner Dr. Rebecca Hines and Ms. Ophelia McClain visited the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center on a nationwide tour; network partners spent the day in Nashville on programs and cross-collaboration. The PPR was approved July 13, 2026; the mid-year PPR was submitted early to the DSE.
- **Social media and fundraising.** Facebook views rose to 5,800 and interactions to 199; LinkedIn impressions increased, led by the SILC fact sheet and National ASL Day. A member urged pursuing partnerships with fundraising in mind — a year-end event or gala — so a future federal shutdown would not halt operations; the Executive Director agreed to convene ideas.

6. OLD BUSINESS

No old business items were brought before the Council.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- **7.1 Proposed OMB final rule.** Addresses allowable uses of federal grant funds — travel, conference attendance, and membership dues. Not yet law; effective no earlier than December. It applies across all federal grants, so it will affect the Council but is not targeted at it; UCEDDs and larger organizations would lead any litigation. NCIL, APRIL, and NASILC will provide updates.
- **7.2 Statewide needs assessment.** 34 respondents plus partials the Council is seeking; about 50% live in West Tennessee. Transportation and financial resources are the top barriers; most requested services are assistive technology, information and referral, and home modification. Mobility disabilities lead, followed by chronic medical conditions, blindness and low vision, cognitive and mental and emotional health, and TBI. Christine described APRIL's rural voucher program, noting such programs generate no revenue for three to four years and require unfunded staffing, so partnering with existing rural providers is more feasible. Lee Brown noted transportation to and from work is the largest barrier after a job placement.
- **7.3 Monthly SPIL development meetings.** Well attended; have advanced goals and objectives, SPIL language updates, and review of Section 1.5 with VR in light of potential I&E funding.
- **7.4 Year 3 budget.** Identical to the prior year in categories and amounts. Asked whether excess funds to centers recur, the Executive Director attributed this year's surplus to continuing resolutions, a missed first meeting, and attendance fluctuation, and confirmed the Council routes remaining second-year funds to the centers. Representatives confirmed funds were received.

Motion	Approval of the Year 3 budget as presented.
Moved/seconded	Moved by Lee B* Seconded by Amelia R
Result	Voice vote taken. Motion carried; the Year 3 budget was approved.

- **7.5 Meeting calendar; 7.7 training plans.** A calendar vote was requested but not taken—a Microsoft Form with proposed November, February, May, and August dates is live for two weeks, with voting limited to council members. Members were also asked to update their training plans and self-report outside trainings, webinars, and media features.
- **7.6 Bylaws, policies, and procedures.** Gina raised that a contract clause might restrict tools containing AI features, including Dragon NaturallySpeaking, autocorrect, and Microsoft Office. NASILC advises the clause targets work in state systems (SSA, Medicaid, Medicare), and that the SPIL and Council work product belong to ACL, not the state, with the DSE as fiscal agent. Written guidance will follow, and the next SPIL and bylaws will include language affirming reasonable assistive technology use.

8. CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING REPORTS

- **[Center serving Henry County — name not clear in the recording].** A newly hired Executive Director introduced herself in her second week; outgoing Director Denise serves through September 29. Quarter: an ADA event, outreach at Dyersburg State, a partner resource meeting, DSE policy work, several hundred meals delivered with the local hospital and churches, and school-supply backpacks.
- **Empower Tennessee (Kasondra Farmer).** Davidson and six surrounding counties. A successful ADA event, emergency preparedness training, Access Music City Blue Path accessibility surveying, and six weekly peer support groups. A mental health EmpowerCon is planned for fall 2026.
- **Disability Resource Center, Knoxville (Katherine Moore, relayed by Mike Scripa).** LOL Academy served 17 participants; the ADA celebration drew about 115, with Spirit of ADA awards to the zoo and state parks. A UT Art and Movement Project partnership begins in September, and the Health Fair and Fun Festival is October 9. One consumer moved from a Clinton nursing home into subsidized housing. Awarded a $6,000 city grant.
- **Disability Connection Midsouth, Memphis.** Hired two part-time IL specialists on June 1, both people with disabilities. July's Access Awards honored Gordon Boniman and the Fair Housing Council of Metropolitan Memphis. APRIL CARES Year One (rural library toolkit) moves to implementation; the Dollar General-funded LIFT ASL program begins in October; an Adaptive Sports and Field Day is October 16 at Tom Lee Park. The center is seeking new space that does not flood.
- **Jackson Center for Independent Living.** First nine months: 515 consumers served, over 1,900 services, 498 goals set with 264 achieved, 101 DME items loaned, and 42 ramps built. A University of Montana health pathway project involved 28 participants and generated $7,000 in unrestricted income. Free ASL classes restarted with the local library, taught by two part-time Deaf staff. Upcoming: the Holiday Safety Open House November 17 and a family holiday breakfast December 5. With Homeless Solutions, the center supported a young man aging out of foster care, now employed and living independently.

9. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT — CHASTITY CAMPBELL (FOR CINDY MILES)

- **Terms and vacancy.** The seat formerly held by Carrie Carlson is vacant. Serving first terms: Charles Valdez, Gilbert Lee, Jennifer Wright, Regina Whitley, and Eliza Jones; Lauren Percy is serving a partial term. Members must notify the Executive Director whether they seek reappointment and submit packets promptly. A follow-up email will address the SILC representative seat; the Council will decide.
- **Leadership update.** Martina Stomp has joined VR as Assistant Director of Transition Youth and Employment Services for Pre-ETS, with more than 27 years of experience.

10. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENT

- **Rhonda Crenshaw.** Introduced herself as an incoming Center Director in Arkansas and thanked SILC-TN for the experience gained alongside the Tennessee team.
- **Heather Henderson.** Asked whether missing transportation infrastructure itself is a primary barrier, welcoming Senator Hagerty's recognition of the rural coverage gap. The Executive Director agreed it is twofold — infrastructure and Tennessee's geography — compounded by grant restrictions on crossing service boundaries and offered to connect her with APRIL and NCIL transportation committees.
- **Annika Easley and announcements.** Ms. Easley, a student affiliated with Disability Connection Midsouth and a Memphis transportation organization, asked to learn more about the CILs; a Zoom meeting will be scheduled the following week. Travel forms are due to the Executive Director, and the SILC office remains in the same building, pending larger space.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion	Motion to adjourn.
Moved/seconded	Moved by Lee brown Seconded by Cecil Williams
Result	Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:47 a.m. CT. Mr. Charles Valdez's attendance was confirmed and recorded at this point.

* *Movers and seconders could not be identified from the recording: in-room audio was captured through a single microphone, so the transcript attributed all in-room speech to one channel. Complete these fields from the presiding officer's or secretary's notes before the minutes are approved.*

12. ACTION ITEMS AND FOLLOW-UPS

All council members: complete the meeting-date form (two weeks); submit reappointment packets and travel forms; update training plans and review the bylaws and policies before the next meeting; complete and promote statewide needs assessment. **Executive Director:** distribute Precious Cargo and CHANT/CSS materials; obtain NASILC guidance on the AI clause and draft SPIL language; complete the budget amendment; connect H. Henderson with APRIL and NCIL transportation committees; schedule a Zoom with A. Easley; convene fundraising ideas. **Presenters:** K. Cortesi to confirm out-of-state visibility of the designation; D. Wink to email CHANT/CSS referral forms._____