

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Holiday Inn, Fargo & Virtual
Aug. 1 - 2, 2024**

Call to Order: Brittney Hogan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Scott Burlingame, Brittney Hogan, Angie Bosch, Warren Granfor, Shannon Bozovsky, Chelsy Sondrol, Robyn Soiseth, Joe Yasenchack, Nancy Lundon, Peter Yung, Emma Leigh Miller

Members Absent: Hope Wolbert, Ali Brown, Ben Wolf Necklace, Jan Beddes, Leon Dietrich

Non-Council Members Present: Aimee Volk, Royce Schulte, Cody Kurtz, Randy Sorensen, Jana Johnson

Approval of the August 2024 Agenda: Scott Burlingame, made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Angie Bosch seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Approval of May 2024 Minutes: Nancy Lundon made a motion to approve the May 2024 SILC minutes as presented, Peter Yung seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Correspondence – Brittney Hogan:

We had to make a correction on the Performance Progress Report (PPR) and that was resubmitting in July.

The State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) was submitted by the due date of June 30, 2024.

The PPR was officially approved for FFY 2023.

The 30th Annual APRIL (Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living) Conference is Oct. 11th-13th, 2024. It will be in Chicago, IL.

Vocational Rehabilitation has a new interim director, Jim Fleming.

Vocational Rehabilitation Annual Training Oct 9-11, 2024, in Bismarck, ND.

Treasurer's Report – Brittney Hogan:

Reviewed the Treasurer's Report.

Robyn Soiseth made a motion to accept the Treasure's Report as presented, Warren Granfor seconded the motion to approve. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

A motion was made to send two people to the 2024 APRIL Conference and an attendant if needed was made by Angie Bosch and seconded by Robyn Soiseth. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Vote on 2025 SILC Dates – Brittney Hogan:

Discussion on dates was held. It was decided to keep the meetings on the first Thursday and Friday of February, May, August, and November.

- Feb. 6-7, 2025 – Bismarck, ND
- May 1-2, 2025 – Grand Forks, ND
- Aug. 7-8, 2025 – Fargo, ND
- Nov. 6-7, 2025 – Minot, ND

Robyn Soiseth made a motion to have the dates above for the 2025 SILC Meeting Dates, Warren Soiseth seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Vote on Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary for 2025 – Brittney Hogan:

Nominations and discussions were held for the chair, vice chair, and secretary positions.

Scott Burlingame made a motion to keep the same Chair (Brittney Hogan), Vice-Chair (Nancy Lundon), and Secretary (Leon Dietrich), Robyn Soiseth seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Consumer Story – Tammy Googins:

Tammy shared that she was nervous about coming to Freedom Resource Center. She stated she has anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. She stated that Freedom gave her life back! She has been able to go to ball games, attend art classes, had someone come to her home weekly.

She disclosed her trauma. She has found healing through mental health services. She has overcome cancer, family problems, etc. She has a positive spirit and stated that “this wild Mustang has been tamed”. She has come to accept herself for the way she is. “If it wasn’t for Freedom Resource Center for Independent Living, I would likely be in a nursing home.”

She started a group and communicating has helped her to accept herself and help others. She stated, “I like me, I love me, and I deserve to be loved.”

Quarterly Director’s Report:

Angie for Freedom.: See attached.

Royce for Dakota Center for Independent Living: See attached.

Scott for Independence, Inc.: See attached.

Randy for Options: See attached.

ND State Representative Update – Gretchen Dobervich:

Representative Gretchen Dobervich serves District 11 (south Fargo). She also works at NDSU for Public Health as she is a social worker. She shared that she is also a person who lives with a disability. Due to this, she tries to bring up accommodations for those who may have an invisible disability. She sits on a board that looks at accessibility for the capital.

Her boss is the people of District 11. She has been re-elected twice and wants to make changes. She serves on the Human Services Committee and the Transportation Committee. She stated since serving on the Transportation Committee she has seen the inequities in transportation for those with disabilities. For equity and disability, she was able to get Sharps containers in all restrooms in the capital building. She is working to get them into all bathrooms in state buildings. She stated she has received a lot of calls regarding accessible and rural transportation. This is something that she is looking at for the next session.

She has heard that there are housing issues with accessibility and affordability.

Is trying to get 'Complete Streets' in Fargo. Complete Streets mean that every street has sidewalks, curb cuts, snow is cleared off, no hoses across sidewalks, lights, roundabouts that have sidewalks, etc.

Representative Gretchen Dobervich expressed that she wants to fix things however there are some things that she is unable to do about certain issues.

Randy Sorensen stated that they have native Americans have trouble getting medical services if Indian Health Services could implement something similar to the Veterans Administration (VA) where they can access services throughout the state. There is a Vocational Rehabilitation for tribal and they have to reapply for funding every five years which is difficult. He also wanted to know if there was anything that would be regulatory for ride shares to get better transportation options. He explained that before ride-share services the transportation in Grand Forks was good with getting accessible transportation.

Representative Tim Mathern will be introducing a bill that will not allow utilities to be shut off in the winter months.

Committee Breakouts

Friday, Aug. 2, 2024

Call to Order: Brittney Hogan called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Scott Burlingame, Brittney Hogan, Angie Bosch, Warren Granfor, Peter Yung, Shannon Bozovsky, Robyn Soiseth, Chelsy Sondrol, Joe Yasenchack, Nancy Lundon, Leon

Members Absent: Ali Brown, Jan Beddes, Emma Leigh Miller, Hope Wolbert, Ben Wolf Necklace

Non-Committee Members: Aimee Volk, Royce Schultze, Cody Kurtzs, Randy Sorensen

Accessible Voting – Protection and Advocacy – Faith Williams and Grace Hudson:

For accessibility for voting at polling locations, you can bring up concerns to protection and advocacy if you cannot get in, cannot use the polling machines, or accessible formats, etc. You can bring someone to help you vote if you have a disability as you have the same rights to vote if you have a disability than those without a disability.

Votend.gov will give you information about voting. There is at least one accessible ExpressVote machine at each polling location. There is an option for absentee voting. You go online or to the County Auditor's Office and must be at least one day before the election. You do not need a reason to vote absentee.

To vote you must provide some form of identification. Voting polls open between 7-9 a.m. and close between 7-9 p.m. To get our community involved in voting you can give rides to those that cannot get there.

Committee Reports:

Governance Committee – Royce Schultze: We have one new board member. We are

Internal Affairs – Nancy Lundon: On GRID.

External Affairs – Angie Bosch: On GRID.

State Rehabilitation Council: No report.

Committee on Aging – Royce Schultze: No report

Olmstead Commission – Scott Burlingame: Will be meeting on Aug. 14th.

NASILC: No report.

Public Comment: None.

The next SILC meeting will be Nov. 7-8, 2024, in Minot, ND and will have the virtual option.

Angie Bosch made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Leon Dietrich seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Dakota Center for Independent Living – Director’s Report – Aug. 2024

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The city of Bismarck’s Human Relations Committee invited staff to participate in a panel discussion about accessibility as part of their Community Conversation Programs.

DCIL participated in the Family Day Riverwalk. We had 2 activities for the kids: an egg race and a 3-legged race. There were 40 booths set up and approximately 1200 attendees.

Staff presented on Universal design for the MFP housing series

Continuing AT presentations

COMMUNITY/SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

For the calendar year, we did

31 MFP transitions

30 TDPP transitions

37 TDPP diversions

Total open referrals, including post transitions 185

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Completed 2 voting site assessments

Completed 1 504 accessibility assessment in Grant County. Did a walk-through at the school in Elgin, that was beyond the scope of what we could do.

SUCCESS STORIES

When first referred to DCIL, Susan was in financial debt, about \$20,000 in credit cards, loans, and bills. She never opened her mail and was anxious about not having enough money to pay the bills, so they piled up. It took years, but Susan’s head is above water. Susan, with the assistance of DCIL, learned how to manage money and pay bills. She was able to buy a car, not worry about paying her rent, and buy her grandchildren's birthday and Christmas presents without using a giveaway box. Susan’s future goal is to buy her own place, something she can call home.

Wendy’s referral came to DCIL through the Money Follows the Person Program in March 2022 while she was in the hospital recovering from a double leg amputation. Wendy was given a very small chance to survive and continued to get infections that caused several setbacks in her recovery. Wendy was taken to another hospital for IV antibiotic therapy to try and help her body fight the many infections. When the MFP transition coordinator met Wendy for the first time in the hospital, she was so weak she could barely lift her head off the pillow. She weighed 74 lbs.- And was not given a very good chance to survive. A few weeks later, Wendy was admitted to a local skilled nursing facility. Still recovering, she continued to get infection after infection, which would set back her therapy and ability to recover. She was in and out of the hospital. During all of this, the one thing Wendy did not do was give up. Wendy is one of the strongest, most positive people you will meet, and to be around her is pure enjoyment. Wendy continued to fight, and in early 2023, she got prosthetic legs. She worked so hard to learn how to walk again. Her goal was to get back into the community, and on May 18th, 2024, she did just that with the assistance of DCIL and the Money Follows the Person Program. Wendy has been in her apartment for a month now and is living her best independent life! Wendy’s story of sheer determination is absolutely amazing.

FREEDOM - ND SILC Director's Report – August 2024

MFP/TDPP Updates

The **North Dakota Transition and Diversion Services Pilot Project** or **TDPP** had **71** referrals from April through June. From these 71 referrals, TDPP assisted **41** consumers with successful transitions during this quarter.

Money Follows the Person (MFP) has had **25** referrals in April through June with **17** successful transitions to the community of their choice. Each transition regardless of the program comes with many trials and tribulations. The Independent Living Advocates are working within teams of people from many agencies and coordination of the transition takes a great deal of organization and dedication. Many consumers have many barriers from evictions to severe medical conditions. Some have no income. Others have outstanding previous debt. We are seeing many consumers who are caught up in scams from people they have met online and are taking advantage of them financially. Each transition is a lot of work and takes a great deal of coordination, teamwork, and time. Freedom is fortunate to have such dedicated staff who are doing this difficult but rewarding work.

Consumer Story - From Katelyn Vilmo, Independent Living Advocate, Fargo office

A consumer who's been coming to FRC since 2017 off and on has returned requesting our services. This consumer has made great progress with attending appointments on time and remembering that an appointment was scheduled. This consumer applied for CARES after receiving a disconnect notice from his energy provider. CARES (Coordinated Access, Referral, Entry & Stabilization) called him and he put me as an alternative contact and told them that he was unable to scan documents that were requested but let them know the date and time of his appointment with his advocate. After the denial from CARES, this consumer and advocate will call the central city ministry line to request funding. This consumer also finished a 1915i application and completed the process. This has normally been very difficult in the past.

Upcoming Fargo Freedom In Action Activities

Red Hawks Baseball Game - Thursday, August 8th 12:30PM - 3:30PM

Upcoming Jamestown Freedom In Action Activities

Popsicle Stick Airplanes -Tuesday, August 20th 1:30PM - 3:00PM

Upcoming Jamestown Young Adult Gatherings

Tuesday, August 6th, 2:00PM - 3:30PM

Upcoming Valley City Young Adult Gatherings

The Vault 223 Central Ave

Tuesday, August 6th, 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Tuesday, September 3rd, 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Upcoming Valley City IL Skills Classes

Living Well 101

Tuesdays, August 20th - October 29th

(No class September 24th) 10:00AM – 11:00AM

Event Updates

from our Office Coordinator: Wanda Lokhorst

Upcoming Fargo Event: Freedom Resource Center is celebrating our 35th year anniversary on September 19th. We will have a ribbon cutting at 1:30 PM, followed by an hour of Bingo starting at 3:00 PM! We will have some fun prizes to give away as well. Don't want to play? Come by for some treats and say hello! We would love to celebrate with you!

Past Event: On May 16th, we hosted our annual Appreciation Luncheon. This event celebrates those making a significant impact in our community and helping us achieve our goal of assisting people with disabilities to live more independently. It honors those who volunteer their time and effort to work for equality and inclusion for people with disabilities. It is a celebration of Freedom, highlighting our collective efforts to improve society and create opportunities for everyone. We presented 6 Awards along with sharing an incredible testimonial video from 3 consumers who are working closely with our staff.

Volunteer of the Year Award: Kevin Gerdes and Donald Lee

Advocate of the Year Award: Tammy Googins

Youth Advocate of the Year: Matthew Gallegos

Distinguished Service Award: Tammy DeSautel

Employer of the Year Award: Paradiso

Accessibility Award:

Brandon Halverson and the Mead and Hunt Team

Shawn Dobberstein and the Hector International Airport Team

Options IRCIL, Directors Report – Aug. 2024

Options continue to assist people in signing up for various benefits such as Social Security Disability and accessibility funding from the Veterans Administration.

City accessibility evaluations were initiated for the Cities of Cooperstown and Fordville along with Nelson County Courthouse. The City evaluations are required from the USDA. Options also assisted apartment owners, churches, businesses, and not for profits with accessibility evaluations.

Options initiated advocacy for the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund review Committee to add requirements to their grantees requiring them to follow the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Regulations for Outdoor Developed Areas and Regulations for Rights of Ways. The latter two have not been applied outside of Federal Government but will in all likelihood be required in the future.

Options assisted various individuals make modifications to their apartments and homes enabling them to remain in their own homes. To accomplish this Options sends their Accessibility Specialist to the person's home to assess and provide recommendations on how the home can be made more accessible. The possible changes are then discussed and if needed a Direct Service Staff member will help with the identification of funding and making applications for funds. Options staff assisted consumers to get their bathrooms remodeled and ramps added.

Options continue to provide Outreach to businesses and not-for-profits highlighting nursing facilities, human service centers, and not-for-profits. Options continue to conduct a cooking class and a brain injury support group in the Lake Region. Options also collaborate with County and Regional Emergency Management Groups to ensure the issues relevant to P/w/D are addressed in their planning processes. Two of Options staff with one youth representative attended the National Council on Independent Living's National Conference in Washington DC participating in a march and also contacting the North Dakota Congressional Delegation to inform the Staff of the needs of P/w/D. This year due to the possibility of harm attendees were asked to contact their Congresspeople remotely. The streets had a large number of protesters in town.

A Mother of an individual in fourth grade sought Options help in addressing his school's administration's decision to move him from an IEP to a 504 Plan and moving him to another school. He had attended the same school since he had started school so was comfortable with his surroundings and classmates. Options staff and the Mother had a meeting with the Superintendent to explain the disruption to her son's education and how this would affect his Autism. After the meeting the Superintendent asked for some time to consider all the factors, later calling to say he approved her son staying where he was at.

Options assisted an individual with a disability who came in, he was at wit's end due to his apartment manager not addressing various issues within his apartment. When it rained water came under his sliding glass doors and flooded his carpet to such a degree the carpet and wall developed mold. Prior to calling Options he had tried to receive help from High Plains Fair Housing, Grand Forks Building Inspection Office, and the North Dakota Department of Health with none able to provide help. Options found he had written letters to the manager but nothing happened. In brainstorming with the individual and finding out how the problems affected his disability Options helped him write an accommodation request asking for him to be able to get out of his lease due to

the detrimental effects on his health. This letter was transferred to other managers within their system and resulted in an upper manager calling the individual. This manager asked questions about the problems he was experiencing. The manager then set up a meeting to tour his apartment to review the damage. Before the meeting Options staff person was asked to be present for support, coming out of the meeting the Manager apologized saying the problems would be repaired. The problems were repaired enabling the individual to remain living in his present location.