

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Canad Inns, Bismarck
May 4-5, 2023**

Call to Order: Brittney Hogan called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. A quorum was not present.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Jerry Christiansen, Nancy Ludson, Ali Brown, Brittney Hogan, Scott Burlingame, Angie Bosch, Joe Yasenchack, Gillian Plenty Chief, Leon Dietrich

Members Absent: Jan Beddes, Shannon Cook, Russ Cusack, Leon Dietrich, Emma-Leigh Miller, Gillian Plenty Chief, Robyn Soiseth, Pete Yung, Chelsy Sondrol

Non-Council Members Present: Aimee Volk, Damian Schlinger, LaRae Gustafson, Damian Schlinger, Heather Everson, Royce Schultze, Jana Johnson

Approval of November 2022 Minutes: Scott Burlingame made a motion to approve the February 2023 SILC minutes as presented, Nancy Ludson seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Approval of the May 2023 Agenda: Gillian Plenty Chief made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Nancy Ludson seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Correspondence – Brittney Hogan: NASILC has a new subcommittee called ADA SILC. They are looking for a volunteer to serve. We also need another volunteer to take over for Brenda Boehler to serve on the NASILC.

1-Year Technical Amendment SPIL will need to be submitted by June 30th.

Save the Date: October 12-14, 2023, Annual APRIL Conference “The Magic of IL” will be in Orange County, California.

Treasurer’s Report – Aimee Volk: Reviewed the Treasurer’s Report.

Nancy Ludson made a motion to accept the Treasure’s Report as presented, Scott Burlingame seconded the motion to approve. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Disaster Preparedness – Heather Everson

Heather talked about the city and county collaboration of Grand Forks for disaster preparedness. They share an emergency management office and a joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC). In the last five years there has been extensive outreach to form partnerships. Upper Red River Valley Community Organizations Active in Disasters (URRV COAD). Membership in the COAD includes – fire department, police department, sheriff’s department, schools, churches, hospitals,

Mission, American Red Cross, local radio station (KNOX), Grand Forks emergency management, etc. The COAD is known as the “one stop shop” of emergency management.

There is a mitigation plan for Grand Forks County. In 2022, new requirements for state and county Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans were issued by FEMA that would be effective for all plan updates. The reason to have a plan is so they can be reimbursed for damages if it is in your plan. The next plan is due in 2025. There are about 35 agencies in Grand Forks that provide services to individuals with disabilities and the aging population. The value is added emergency management by having solid relationships with services providers or groups like the URRV COAD.

ND School for the Deaf – Kristen Vetter

Kristen described the services that they provide, and the age ranges they work with. Many of their Adult Outreach Services (AOS) involves information and resources on hearing loss. They provide training sessions to increase the public’s awareness of hearing loss, the availability of assistive technology devices, and the importance of access for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Statistically your risk of having age related hearing loss increases as you age. For hearing aids, the ones behind the ear have the most power. Hearing aids range in appearance, size, and power. Hearing aids will not correct hearing the way glasses correct vision. Don’t expect “20/20” hearing!

Cochlear implants are for those that have severe to profound hearing loss in both ears, receive little or no benefit from hearing aids, and usually put on the side of the worse ear.

They work a lot with assistive technology such as Pocket Talker, Comfort Duet, Live Transcribe, FM systems, Hearing Helper, apps, etc.

Legislative Updates – Royce Schultze

Royce talked about advocating for additional IL funds and it did not go through.

Accessibility of Outdoor Areas – Randy Sorensen

Saw different leisure ideas to keep individuals involved in activities (adaptive wheelchairs, fishing poles, skis, cards, bikes, etc.).

Friday, May 5, 2023

Call to Order: Brittney Hogan called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was not present.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Chelsy Sondrol, Hope Wolbert, Jerry Christiansen, Nancy Lundon, Royce Schultze, Shannon Cook, Brittney Hogan, Ali Brown, Scott Burlingame, Joe Yasenchack

Members Absent: Angie Bosch, Russ Cusack, Pete Yung, Robyn Soiseth, Jan Beddes, Leon Dietrich, Emma-Leigh Miller, Gillian Plenty Chief

Non-Committee Members: Randy Sorensen, Damian Schlinger, Aimee Volk, LaRae Gustafson, Jana Johnson

Recreation and Leisure – Randy Sorensen with Options

Randy talked and educated about funds that are available for outdoor recreation areas in North Dakota. Most areas are inaccessible. They want to go to the granting providers and educate them on the findings related to inaccessibility with ADA.

Randy shared the Options Outdoors website at www.optionsoutdoors.org which shows informational information about accessible recreation by activity (deer hunting, fishing, bird watching, nature watching, hiking, etc.). It will also show pictures, amenities, as well as lodging.

Options has recently obtained a High-Efficiency Trail Assessment Process (HETAP) to measure a trails slope, cross-slope, with distances covered utilizing GPS. They also got the Rotational Penetrometer which will measure whether the surface being measured is firm and stable. The outcome of these measures will help trail owners know if the trail is accessible.

Quarterly Director's Report:

Angie for Freedom: See attached.

Royce for Dakota Center for Independent Living: See attached.

Independence, Inc. – Scott Burlingame: See attached.

Randy for Options: See attached.

Committee Reports:

Governance Committee – Royce Schultze: Full council right now with 17 members.

Internal Affairs – Nancy Lundon: See Grid

External Affairs – Angie Bosch: See Grid

State Rehabilitation Council – Damian Schlinger: Looking at a structure change to look into the future for goals.

Traumatic Brain Injury Council – Shannon Cook: Meeting in February and they may have a structural change to the council. There are new videos for providers and caregivers. For survivors there is a monthly group (they are discussing who they would like to be part of the group). ND Brain Injury Network (NDBIN) celebrated their 10-year anniversary. NDBIN is also working on their state plan and will be sent out in the near future for public comment.

Committee on Aging – Royce Schultze: Senior centers are having problems getting seniors to come back to the centers and on a national level. They discussed the issues going before the legislative session. One issue is the 'Team Structure' and the need for additional full-time employees. There are three guardianship bills, including emergency conservatorships and asking for extensions on emergency guardianships. A second bill addresses forced medications. These bills mostly address language changes and add protections for individuals. A third bill is requesting a guardianship task force.

They discussed the progress of the Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement, specifically discussing the transition services and that we have a low rate of individuals who have transitioned back home needing to go back into the facility. They are putting together a

committee to discuss what reasons sent those individuals back and if there was something that could have done differently to keep individuals at home once they have returned home. Olmstead Commission – Scott Burlingame: The coordinator resigned, and Jana Johnson took over that role. Housing came in and gave an update on the ND housing fund. Executive Director of housing in Grand Forks gave examples of their efforts. They also talked about transportation.

NASILC: Need a new NDSILC member to serve.

Monthly Region 8 Conference Call: No report.

Public Comment: N/A

The next SILC meeting will be August 3-4, 2023, in Fargo, ND and will have the virtual option.

Jerry Christiansen made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Hope Wolbert seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

1. Individual Services

Goals Met

Our nursing home relocation services continue to be very busy. The process has been very time consuming and has forced us to do many things we are not comfortable with. However, we are again on pace for a record number of transitions and preventions this year.

Our Independent Living Advocate Katie Schestler is working with a woman who is dreaming of moving home from a nursing home. Unfortunately, she is living with a type of cancer that affects the central nervous system. She has difficulties communicating other than yes or no questions. Katie created a communication board in hopes she can better communicate and express herself with her loved ones and caregivers.



Our team of Nina, Laura, and Leigha were presented with the challenge of getting a couch into an elevator. It was not easy, but they figured it out and helped another person move into a home of their own.



Peer Support Group

Our Peer Support Specialist Kenzie Larson has started at peer support group. The group does different activities each meeting and it serves as safe space. The group meets every other Wednesday from 3-4 at our office. The group is a place for people to work on improving themselves. Each meeting includes an activity to spur conversations and starts with the questions:

- What is one thing you are struggling with?
- What is one thing you are grateful for?

Consumer File Opening Video

We have finally finished a project that has been on the “to do” list for a while. We now have a video to show all new consumers that goes over our file opening process, talks about rights and responsibilities, explains the confidentiality process and more. Our hope is this will ensure everybody gets the same message about these important issues; it gives our staff a chance to not have to repeat the same thing over and over and reduces the chance that they are missing something, and finally, it allows the information to be readily available if anybody has any questions in the future. You can view the video here: <https://youtu.be/KUolgYW8e3c>

Healthy Relationships

We have once again begun to offer our Health Relationships for people with Disabilities training to people we serve. This program was originally part of a grant from the St. Joseph’s Community Health Foundation and the BCBS Community Foundation. It is a great example of how seed money from foundations is used to build sustainable programming.

2. Community Services

Coffee with a Cop

On 3/10 we held Coffee with a Cop in our office. As our recovery-based programs often include people who have not always had the best of relationships with the police, we thought it was a fantastic opportunity to come create a safe space to do so. Overall, we had about 30 people attend, and it was a great event.



Transportation Advocacy

Our Independent Living Ambassadors had a meeting with City of Minot Public Information officer Derek Hackett. At the meeting, we talked about collaborating on three basic items to improve transportation in Minot. The first is to improve awareness and enforcement around sidewalks access. During the summer, too many sidewalks are blocked with automobiles and campers. Next, the bus route is expanding in Minot, and we are going to work together to promote usage of the bus system. Finally, when the snow falls, we are going to work on snow removal on sidewalks.



Mental Health Moment

To launch Mental Health Awareness Month, we are launching a new video series Mental Health Moment. This series is intended to highlight mental health providers in our community and provide you information on how to access services you may need.

Our first moment is John Butgereit. John is the regional director of North Central Human Service Center in Minot. He is also a licensed clinician providing individual, family, and group therapy to individuals with mental health needs. You can see the video here: <https://youtu.be/-8EB0Baun10>

Disability Awareness Month

March was Disability Awareness Month, and we highlighted community members who are thriving as people with disabilities. Here is a list of whom we highlighted and a little about them:



Elizabeth Sund is an entrepreneur and cake designer, owns Sundbake. Elizabeth is dyslexic. Her difficulty comes with translating spoken words or thoughts into writing. Prior to becoming a baker, she worked at Minot State for many years and has a PhD in Philosophy.



Matthew Maldonado is a business owner and digital artist. He lives with anxiety that has caused problems for him in the workforce. He is part owner in Up Your Ax, The Putt District, ND Strong, and The Film Dudes.



Kyle Erickson is a member of our board, a research associate at North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, and a stand up comedian. He lives with cerebral palsy, and I uses a wheelchair to get around. He was born with it (the CP, not the wheelchair).



Liz Larsen is the Executive Director of Project BEE, a Minot area homeless shelter. Liz ADHD, anxiety, and depression. Liz was also our 2022 Advocate of the Year.

3. **Staff Update**

Nina Arias was hired as a Community Relations Specialist on 1/25/23. She is a 2022 Minot State grad in Communications and had been working at an aquarium in California.

We are hiring for an Independent Living Specialist, and we have one staff who is moving to Guam in June, so we are looking to replace her.

Dakota Director's Report - May 5, 2023

Staff Vacancies: MFP TC and Program Director

New Hires: Branch Office Coordinator, IL Advocate, MFP TC, and MFP TC Assistance

MFP Transitions 25

In progress MFP 57 ADRL 42

Community Education

Staff attended and set up a booth at the NDASD Conference. Staff gave information on the 4 CILs and locations because of people attending from all over ND.

We had 93 stop at our booth and give out information.

Staff set up a booth at the Dream Center for their 1st birthday celebration. They talked with attendees about DCIL services. About 120 stopped and tried our activity of putting a vinyl glove on and reached into a bucket of rice and had to guess what they felt. 450 attended the event

Staff presented our cross-disability panel at BSC. We had two panelists with spinal cord injuries and one brain injury. They talked about how they acquired their disability and what their daily life is like. This class of students asked quite a few questions, so we didn't have time for any activities.

Assessments

Staff completed two 504 assessments in Adams and Hettinger counties.

SUCCESS STORIES

A consumer with DCIL for about ten years has been a part time CNA at a nursing home. During the COVID pandemic, she stepped up when her employer needed her, picking up extra shifts for those who could not or would not report to their shifts. The nursing facility, experiencing staff shortages, was forced to close an entire wing. This consumer was given monetary bonuses and hourly wage increases throughout the pandemic and was offered health care benefits for the first time as well. Little by little, she proved to herself and her employer how capable and valuable she was. In March of 2023, SSA determined she was no longer eligible for disability benefits because of her earnings.

For a student who does not have a parent in the foster care system, this staff is a surrogate parent to help the student through their school years. As an advocate for a student, I am only there for the best interest of the student's education, not for the teacher, foster parents, or anyone else. If there is a conflict with a person in the IEP meeting, it is the surrogate's right to ask this person to leave. This did happen at one of the IEP meetings attended. This student was within the judicial services at the Dakota Memorial School. This representative came to this meeting not wanting to give any information about this student's previous education or latest IEP. This surrogate parent asked twice if they would share what they must assist this student and teachers with the education, and they stated no. This surrogate asked this representative of the judicial system to leave and asked if they would like to join the next IEP to bring what they have to share with the team. They came to the next meeting and did share this student's past records, they questioned the authority of the surrogate parent, and it was expressed a surrogate parent has the rights of a natural parent and has the best interest of the student/child.

Edward is an 81-year-old male who had been independently living in his apartment for several years and receiving some services through Home and Community Based Services. He was found

unresponsive in his apartment and taken to the ER. He was dehydrated and had pneumonia. After a short hospital stay, his two daughters and son decided that a skilled nursing facility was the best place for their father as they felt that was the safest option for him at his advanced age. Edward and his family gave up his apartment and sold most of his belongings, except for his favorite recliner that went with him to the SNF. Edward and his family were convinced that he would live out his remaining years at the SNF. Edward was visited by a Long-Term Care Counselor from the Aging Services Department of the North Dakota Department of Health. The counselor explained the options for Edward to reenter the community if he wanted to do that. After that, Edward contacted his family and said he wanted to move to an apartment again. His family was against this move but was willing to listen to the options for community living that were presented to him. Edward was assigned a Money Follows the Person Transition Coordinator, a Housing Facilitator and a Home and Community-Based Case Manager. The team explained to Edward and his family the option of moving back to the community with community supports through HCBS. Edward and the family were intrigued by this information and didn't realize all the services he could receive at home. Edward immediately said he wanted to look for an apartment in the same complex he had rented before. The team started working hard on finding Edward an apartment and a community support provider that could provide the services he needed when returning to the community. The team found Edward an apartment in his old apartment complex and secured it with a deposit, and a lease was signed shortly after. Edward's dream of returning to the community was becoming a reality. As soon as his HCBS case manager found him a provider that could provide the services for him, he was ready to move!! Furniture was purchased for Edward along with other household items and housing funding through the Money Follows the Person Program. On April 12, 2023, Edward's wish to return to community living came true as he transitioned from the nursing home to his apartment in Bismarck. Edward had a happy ending and is living out his best life in the setting of his choosing.

Update on Multigenerational Plan on Aging: Michelle Gayette, Adults & Aging Services Assistant Director.

Michelle shared her Multigenerational Plan on Aging (MPA) slide show, which outlines the long term – ten-year document being created to help us transform our infrastructure and help us transfer what we are doing to help adults in our community as they age. This plan will help guide state and local programs, help to give a clear vision on our state's priorities, reflect input from communities and stakeholders, and leverage data and benchmarks to impact change. Michelle discussed the goals and that there is a survey regarding this initiative and invited the members to go out and take the survey.

Freedom - ND SILC Director's Report – May 2023

MFP/ADRL Updates

Fargo

- The ADRL program continues to be very busy. We are receiving referrals for people residing in various shelters as well as in the community that are needing diversion. Most people have moved out of the YWCA, New Life Center, and Centre. They have successfully found apartments or other various living arrangements and the ADRL grant has helped to secure them housing and furnishings for their home. Gibb continues to work with this program, and this is his primary focus. Gibb has completed **18 ADRL** transitions in the past quarter and opened 49 new referrals looking to begin the process of transitioning into their own place in the community.
- MFP referrals in the Fargo office have been picking up. Irina has 6 new consumers on her caseload. Another 20 have completed the transition into the community and we will follow for 365 days. Several of them are in active transition stage, we are in constant communication regarding discharge planning, purchases for household goods and Durable Medical Equipment that will be needed, getting supports in place, securing the apartment, and planning the timeline for transition. Each consumer is different and the things they need to make their transition successful vary from one person to another. The people Irina has transitioned are very happy to be living in their own apartment in the community of their choice!
- Erin Donohue began employment on April 24 as a new Transition Coordinator. Erin is working with **4 MFP** consumers. Two of the consumers just transitioned into the community and two are looking for apartments.

Lisbon

- Jill resigned on April 14, she started a position with the MFP Housing Program. The job opening is posted with Indeed and the Ransom County Gazette, ND Job Service and is on our social media sites. She was working with **5 MFP** consumers and **1 ADRL** consumer in local nursing homes. **One ADRL** consumer transitioned back to her own home. It has been going very well, and very busy in the 4 counties the Lisbon office serves.

Fargo

- Ashley, from our Jamestown office, is moving to Fargo in July. She is working in both offices until her move is complete.
- A Young Adult gathering was held at the office on April 25, our conference room was full. There was laughter and excitement in the building, it was a great day. Another gathering will be held in May.
- All of our Fargo positions are filled!

Wahpeton

Office Updates:

- Eric Schauer began as an IL Advocate and Transition Coordinator on March 27. After a few days of training in Fargo, Joyce Wolter, IL Advocate assisted in the training process and helped Eric acclimate to the Wahpeton office.

Jamestown

- Keeta Smith, a new IL Advocate and Transition Coordinator begins on Monday, May 8. We are hiring an IL Advocate in the Jamestown office to fill Ashley's position.
- Young Adult Gatherings will be held in Jamestown on May 3 and Valley City on May 4.
- Students at Valley City Transition's program will wrap up their year of IL classes with Freedom on May 5.

Options RCIL SILC Report May 5, 2023

Relocations/Diversions:

- Options has transitioned thirteen individuals out of nursing facilities this fiscal year to include MFP/ADRL. Options staff have diverted thirteen individuals from nursing facilities and remain living independently. These numbers represent Options regular grants also, not just MFP/ADRL programs.

Staff positions open:

- Currently Option's still has the Cavalier IL Specialist position open. We have staff going to Cavalier office when appointments have been scheduled.
- We continue to have an open Transition Coordinator (MFP) position which would give us three MFP positions. This additional position is much needed to keep up with the increasing MFP/ADRL referrals. We have Heidi in Devils Lake office taking ADRL referrals as well as Sarah in EGF handling ADRL referrals also.
- We are advertising early for an IL Specialist in the GF area, since we know Sarah is leaving Options in the fall. We are starting to look for LaRae's full-time position as Program Manager of MN and ND. Options also has the position open in our Roseau office of IL Specialist. So altogether, five positions remain open with a few inquiring as of yet.

Employment Advocacy: Staff met with an individual's employer to help advocate for reduced hours temporarily due to her health and on-going recovery. During our conversation we talked about her recovery, continuous appointments one day a week, starting later in the morning and staying later Monday – Thursday, making up hours on Friday or Saturday. Staff also provided a copy of a letter from the individual's doctor with her permission. The Director and HR personnel agreed with the arrangement of Monday – Thursday, 9 am – 5:30 with a half hour lunch. They will honor this as long as she works 32 hours a week. The director as mentioned that if she works 32 hours a week he will adjust sick time for her since you have to work 40 hours to receive benefits here. Staff did visit with the individual after the meeting so she would understand the requirements and what they are willing to do to accommodate her. She has mentioned that she feels more productive now.

Trainings: In March, staff provided a couple of trainings to the University Park Neighborhood group. The group covers a certain portion of Grand Forks and they would like to see how to improve their neighborhood as well as people getting to know their neighbors. The trainings provided were on "What is Options" and "Homeownership".

- Also, in March, staff provided a training on "What is Options" at the Grand Forks Growth and Support Center. They work with various individuals and they wanted to know more about Options and our services. The center has reached out to have more trainings monthly if possible. They also asked about working with the Self-Advocacy group that they have. (30 individuals in attendance, staff and people they serve).
- **Direct Service scenario:** Staff has been working with a single mom with two daughters. She was living with her boyfriend at the time; however, she has experienced a domestic violence situation with him. He agreed to live with his parents until she finds a place to live. He continues to pay the rent and all utilities so the individual and her daughters have a place to stay. She has applied for housing and will be in her own place by May 1st. In a different town with a fresh start. During this time staff has secured \$550 for the security deposit from local churches. Normally, churches don't do that much but due to the situation they decided to increase the amount given. She is still going to have some hurdles but will

continue working through them. Her girls are excited about this move and a new school for next year.

- **Direct Service Scenario:** Options has worked with an individual to acquire needed work accommodations so she can continue to work within her physical limitations but is no longer able to work at a gainful activity level. Due to the reduced income Options will assist her with an application for Social Security Disability. In addition to assisting her with her employment accommodations Options loaned her some equipment so she is able to get into her car and house. Options also assisted her to obtain weatherization in her home and assisted with the application and appeal for Social Security benefits hopefully to finally be approved. Also, staff is assisting her to obtain an electric wheelchair she can use at her place of employment so she can still work part-time. The individual's goal is to continue working so she is able to supplement her income and socialize with others.
- Options Access specialist has assisted two cities with technical assistance related to parking and a community transition plan. In addition, disability rights information and direct assistance with securing accommodations was provided regarding parking and companion animals related to the Fair Housing Act, and general information regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act. Accessibility technical assistance was provided to individuals on ramps, bathrooms and kitchen assess.
- Options has published its somewhat quarterly newsletter and distributed it to a little over 4200 people in North Dakota and 4000 in Minnesota.