



WASHINGTON

State Independent Living Council

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www.wasilc.org

Washington State Independent Living Council
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2009 (Day One)
Mt. Hood Room, OB-2
Olympia, WA

SILC members present: Linda McClain, Sandra Carr, Al Neely, Jana Finkbonner, Gilbert Garza, Debbie Cook, Trina Forest, Devin Beach

Members absent: Romel Mackelprang, Lynnae Ruttledge, and Diane Hansen

SILC Staff: Rob Honan (Executive Director) and Barbara Hathaway (Executive Assistant)

Guests: Jim Bakers (DARSW Executive Director), Charley Lane (dRC Executive Director), Robert Blumenfeld (The Alliance of People with Disabilities, Branch Manager East King County office), Eric Raff (ODHH Executive Director and guest speaker)

CART: Tim Bellisario

Interpreters: Verna Siegel and Sarah Rasmussen

In the absence of chair Romel Mackelprang, vice chair Linda McClain called the meeting to order at 12:10 PM. Introductions were made around the room (including guests). There was special mention of Trina Forest, who was attending her first meeting as an official SILC member. Forest has been the executive director of the Center for Independence in Lakewood for almost two years.

Several housekeeping announcements, such as location of restrooms, information about the hotel and accommodations and the evening's legislative reception were made.

The first item of business was to approve the minutes from the October 23-24, 2008 meeting held in Yakima. Sandra Carr moved that the minutes be approved with no corrections. This motion was seconded by Al Neely. The motion carried unanimously.

The next item was to approve the agenda for the two-day meeting. Forest made a motion to (1) move the chair's report to the following day since Mackelprang was unable to attend today, (2) change the time of meeting adjournment on the 29th to 2 PM (from 3 PM), (3) and to add a "Legislative Discussion" at the 2:30 PM time slot on the 28th. The motion was seconded by Jana Finkbonner and it carried unanimously.

While waiting for the scheduled speaker Eric Raff to arrive, Honan spoke briefly about some of the issues at the January 8th meeting with the Governor's office. He stated that Mackelprang would expand on these thoughts tomorrow, but in the interest of filling time, the following were the topics discussed at the meeting with Kari Burrell and Stacy Tichenor of the Governor's office. Honan, Mackelprang, McClain and Ruttledge attended on behalf of the SILC.

- Status of SILC out of state travel
- Exploring logistics and possibility of SILC transitioning to a 501 c3 agency. Looking at legalities of this process as well as soliciting support from Governor's office.
- The issue of WSRC serving on SILC and vice versa. Comparing the Rehabilitation Act language versus state Executive Order language. In addition, the SILC inquired of the Governor's office on the status of keeping Diane Hansen as our representative to the Rehabilitation Council of the Blind and vice versa. Ruttledge was to work with the Governor's office on this issue.
- Baker spoke to the Governor's staff about state funding for the CILs. She presented a packet of information to Burrell and Tichenor.

Eric Raff, Executive Director the Washington Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) was the scheduled speaker for January 28th. Here are the main points of his 30-minutes presentation:

- ODHH is state statute required (versus federally mandated)
- ODHH programs are largely funded by a portion of the land-line phone bill (approximately \$.12 per bill). The funding is used to manage Relay services and the Equipment Distribution Program. Raff stated that with more and more people going to cell phones, this could impact ODHH funding.
- Most states have a Public Utility Commission that manages the state relay services, but in Washington the Relay Services are operated by ODHH.

- The Equipment Distribution Program offers a variety of devices for Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens, including TTYs, amplified phones, phones with large key and number boards, assistive listening devices, etc.
- Another program operated by ODHH is the Communication Access Network. The Video Relay Service is operated under this program.
- There was a discussion on role of FCC in the video relay process: state versus federal responsibility in regulation and funding. This is an evolving and unsettled issue, particularly in how the Obama administration will interpret existing law.
- Another program or service offered by ODHH is a list of state contracted sign-language interpreters. The statewide list of available state-contracted interpreters is available through the Washington State Cooperative.
- ODHH also offers extensive referral services to those who need information or equipment not offered by ODHH.
- Raff also talked about the various Deaf Service Centers throughout the state. There are four contracts that offer services in seven different locations (some are branch locations of a main office). The Centers provide a variety of services, including training to Deaf & Hard of Hearing, to community organizations (such as local DSHS offices), access to assistive listening devices, video relay access, and other services and resources.
- The speaker also discussed collaboration between ODHH and the SILC in the Deaf Blind, Deaf, and Hard of Hearing IL Group. Eric is hopeful the collaboration between ODHH and IL will continue to grow. An additional example of the ODHH- IL collaboration in this state is a future ODHH Advisory Committee meeting at dRC in November 2009.

A question and answer question ensued after Raff's presentation. Several of the questions, comments, concerns included:

- Several of the CIL directors inquired about interpreter rates around the state and whether there was any funding available to provide such services. In addition, there were questions about state-contracted and non-state-contracted interpreters.
- There was a request from Linda McClain to obtain a poster that details information about ODHH and Deaf services. Raff indicated that he would attempt to get these posters out.
- There were some comments about the barriers to collaboration and real partnerships between the Centers for Independent Living and the Deaf Service Centers. Raff made several suggestions to address this concern.
- Several Centers for Independent Living have the Sorenson Video Relay machine in their offices and there was a concern that the machines were not adequately being used. It was suggested to Raff to help "advertise" these machines to the general Deaf population.

Raff also discussed the potential impact of House Bill 1497, which would possibly suspend the ODHH Advisory Council until 2011.

A short break took place

SILC Logo Contest. After the break, there was a discussion regarding the SILC Logo Contest. The contest had only drawn six entries, and none were deemed suitable by the Ad-Hoc Logo Committee, so it was decided after a great deal of discussion to extend the contest to June 12, 2009. The contest was also opened up to all citizens (not just students) with disabilities. However, students would still be given preference in the contest. The \$500 Visa Gift card is still intact as the award for the winning entry.

At the end of the discussion, Devin Beach made a motion to extend the Logo Contest to June 12, 2009 and to open the contest up to all individuals with disabilities, but with a preference to students. The motion was seconded by Forest. The motion carried unanimously.

Legislative Reception. A discussion regarding the logistics of the Legislative Reception took place. This included the location, the time, and transportation opportunities. There were several bills discussed. No action was taken on the bills, however.

- SB 5203: Insurance coverage for autism
- ASL and Foreign Language Translation in the Courts (bill number was unknown)
- SB 5150: Capping payday loans at 36% interest per year.
- SB 5547: Concerning Respite Care
- SB 5902 and HB 1739: Accessible Communities

The January 28th portion of the two-day meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Day Two- SILC meeting
January 29, 2009
#SLO3 Room, OB-2

Attendance: Romel Mackelprang (Chair), Lynnae Ruttledge and everyone else from January 28, 2009

Guests: Joelle Brouner (Executive Director of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council) and Jerry Johnsen (Executive Director Washington Client Assistance Program)

In lieu of going straight to SILC business, Chair Mackelprang turned the floor over to Joelle Brouner to talk about the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC). Here are some highlights of her presentation.

- Brouner first thanked the SILC for the invitation and then asked each member to introduce themselves.
- Brouner began the substantive part of her presentation by providing basic information on the duties and structure of the WSRC. Joelle also spoke of the new executive team of the WSRC and is excited to be working with them to continue their progress. The committee structure was also briefly discussed in the latter part of her presentation.
- She stated that economic independence is extremely important for persons with disabilities, and this is one of the goals of DVR services and is a passion for her. DVR is an extremely important partner, and the relationship is a mutually beneficial one, reported Brouner.
- Brouner also took the time during her talk to encourage SILC members to engage with her Council. For instance, the WSRC is looking add younger members to the Council and asked SILC members for their input on this issue.
- One of the things that is required of the WSRC is to produce an annual report every year and Brouner talked a bit about this process (Brouner provided a CD-ROM copy of the 2008 for all in the audience).
- The importance of the Customer Forums and its format was discussed.
- Mackelprang asked Brouner about the potential for collaboration on certain issues, and Joelle was delighted about this possibility. Some potential examples of collaboration include:
 1. Cross referencing services, surveys, and funding (Ruttledge clarified how the SILC and WSRC are funded for audience members),
 2. Comparing notes on how SRCs and SILCs are set up around the country,
 3. Sharing the Position Papers (and even having the WSRC sign off and develop some of their own papers that the SILC could then sign off on),
 4. Meeting in a joint location,
 5. Coordination and planning around the SPIL- along with the DSB (Ruttledge made this suggestion)

- Other questions for Brouner were asked: Jim Baker inquired on how to get more information about the WSRC. Brouner suggested getting on the mailing list for their quarterly newsletter.
- Baker asked about the IL Contracts and how the WSRC might be able to assist in with these since they are “pre-employment” in nature. Brouner is very interested in the process but also discussed some of the limitations of overextending herself and the WSRC’s role.
- The WSRC, Brouner reports, was lucky to land a representative from the Washington Association of Businesses (Kris Teft) and Jerry Johnsen of the Client Assistance Program (CAP).
- SILC member Trina Forest is also interested in working with Brouner and the WSRC in the exchange of information and resources.
- Devin Beach suggested that DVR needs to do more outreach to younger individuals because in her experience many youth have not heard about DVR and the services they offer. Brouner was thankful for this comment.

A short break was taken

Committee Reports

Debbie Cook- DSB.

- Reported a change in service delivery in its Independent Living Program. It is now more home-based (services offered at home) where services used to offered at an office.
- DSB has completely revised its process and relationship with providers. (reporting, how to engage in contracts, etc.)
- There was a brief discussion on eligibility of IL contracts and whether CILs could apply. According to Cook, the key is that providers must have some expertise in rehabilitation, orientation and mobility and those relevant skills that assist individuals with blindness and low vision.

Lynnae Ruttledge- DVR

- Budget: DVR absorbed a \$4.2 M reduction between now and June 30, 2009. Going into next biennium, DVR’s budget will be reduced by \$5.2M (current overall budget is \$57M)
- Client Services will not be reduced and there has been little discussion in the legislature surrounding staffing levels. There are currently 310 FTE statewide working for DVR.
- Funding for DVR services are presently being discussed as part of the proposed stimulus package on the federal level
- Ruttledge believes that DVR has the resources to handle large case loads in various parts of the state (i.e. Olympic Peninsula, Vancouver), but will need to watch how the resources are allocated.

- The issue of reduction, elimination and suspension Boards and Commission was discussed (SB 5994 and HB 2151). The SILC and WSRC are not part of this discussion because they were not developed by statute (through the legislative process), but rather by Executive Order (and they are both federally mandated)

Sandra Carr- WSRC Report

- Carr first thanked Joelle and Lynnae because the information they provided made her report all that much easier
- Carr stated that the Council has a new Section 121 Representative (Native American DVR Program), Sharey Cleveland who replaced Linda Pratt.
- The impact of budget cuts was briefly discussed
- At the last meeting very good presentations were provided by Lynnae (SRC concept) and by Beth Calvo (mental health issues in the DVR process)

Rob Honan-Budget and Expense Report

- Honan passed out an Excel Spread Sheet of the expenses to date.
- Honan gave a general overview of the SILC funding situation:
 - # Fiscal year: October 1- September 30
 - # Source of funding: Section 102, Expansion and Innovation funding. The funds are derived from 80 % federal and 20 % state.
- To Date, the SILC has spent approximately 16% of its \$207,998 budget. Honan reported that the SILC has under spent for a couple of reasons. One is that out of state travel has been restricted. There was no APRIL or SILC Congress trip in 2008-2009. Further, there is anticipated to be larger expenditures reported for the next meeting because ACIL-WA training will have taken place by then.
- Several of the “big ticket” items include expenses on interpreters and real time captioning, staff salaries and benefits, and in-state travel.

Linda McClain- ACIL-WA Report

- McClain reports that ACIL-WA is now an official 501 c3 organization
- The Alliance of People with Disabilities has hired Lucille Walls as their new Executive Director. She starts on March 2nd.
- CIL directors met with the Governor’s office yesterday to discuss state funding for CILs. The meeting was deemed productive.
- McClain also (as did Ruttledge) talked about funding from the stimulus bill, and encouraged those at the table to talk to their federal legislators about this important issue. Honan later gave out the telephone numbers for Senators Murray and Cantwell.

- McClain talked a bit about the proposed Yakima Valley School closure, and stated that ACIL-WA supports the closure along with Disability Rights Washington, the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, and other groups. Linda expressed hope that the SILC would also support the closure of Yakima Valley School

- A wide-ranging discussion on the pros and cons of closing down institutions took place. *Romel Mackelprang* alluded to a study that morbidity rates rise when an individual is released from an institution. *Jim Baker* talked about his experiences in New Mexico. *Al Neely* jumped in and talked about the potential risks of returning individuals into the community. *Rob Honan* spoke about experiences in Missouri at the Bellefontaine Habilitation Center where many of the state were abusing the residents as well as a generational divide between the younger and older parents of the residents. *Devin Beach* shared an experience in Ellensburg regarding someone transitioning back to the community. *Lynnae Ruttledge* suggested using a values-based approach in a motion for the support of the closure of Yakima Valley School. Ruttledge also talked about the fiscal impact of closing the school, suggesting that there is potentially \$2.9M in state funds that would be saved. There were many points of view discussed.

Al Neely made a motion that Rob Honan draft a letter on behalf of the SILC expressing support of the Governor's proposal to close down Yakima Valley School. Honan is to devise a letter with this intent. The letter will be very clear that adequate community supports be in place in order for the closure to take place. Linda McClain seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Jim Baker brought up two very important issues and this engendered some discussion.

1. The CIL folks who visited the Governor's office discussed with her staff that there are funds for the ADRCs (Aging and Disability Resource Centers) in the Governor's proposed budget. The CILs suggested to the Governor's office that they already provide a great deal of the services that the ADRC does, and it might be duplicative to fund the ADRCs.
2. Baker indicated that his Center has already received several requests about participants looking at the option of assisted suicide. Baker stated that they are working with these people to explore better alternatives. Baker was very surprised that his CIL already had a phone call requesting this drastic type of service.

A break was taken

Romel Mackelprang gave the Chair's report

- Mackelprang discussed the potential SILC transition to 501 c3 status. Rutledge and the Governor's office appear supportive of this. This is a long term goal (two or three years down the road)
- Out of state travel restrictions have been an issue because of the nature of the work the SILC does. It is imperative that SILC members attend national conferences in order to network, further out knowledge base, make presentations, and so on.
- Rutledge then jumped in and state that Kari Burrell from the Governor's office was very supportive and that other ideas such as partnering under the umbrella of other agencies might be worth checking into.
- Pros and cons of 501C3 SILC discussed. Autonomy vs. DVR support is the primary issue.

Rob Honan provided the Executive Director's report. Listed below are a few of the highlights.

- The Deaf-Blind, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Group is still going strong. A meeting was held in September and one will be held tomorrow (January 30th)
- Honan is very active in assistive technology with WATF- Washington Assistive Technology Foundation.
- Most of Honan's report uses the State Plan for Independent Living as an outline.
- Honan also provided some information about IL in the federal economic stimulus package.
- As always, the full Executive Director report can be found on the SILC website (www.wasilc.org).

Jerry Johnsen of the Client Assistance Program (and WSRC member) made a few remarks

- Johnsen wanted to re-introduce himself and the Client Assistance Program to the Centers for Independent Living and the advocacy role they play with many programs funded under the Rehabilitation Act.
- Johnsen discussed some of the potential partnerships and important collaboration between a variety of agencies

Future Meetings.

- The date of the April meeting in Spokane was set for Friday April 24th and the Public Forum on Thursday April 23rd.
- The date of the July meeting in Seattle was set for July 9th and 10th with the 9th being the Public Forum and the 10th being the meeting itself. The location has yet to be determined.
- The October meeting will be in Vancouver. Jim Baker suggested that the meeting be in conjunction with a conference he is organizing. Baker also requested some

funding assistance from the SILC for this conference. October 12th was selected as the tentative date for the October meeting.

Other:

Linda McClain announced that CORD and others were co-sponsoring an Emergency Preparedness workshop on March 18th in Spokane.

There was some discussion on the Legislative Reception from the evening before. There were concerns about the location, the facility itself in terms of space and auditory acoustics, and the actual visits with legislators. Baker also stated that he believes that fewer and fewer legislators are attending the forums.

Linda McClain spoke briefly about the CORD's administering of the upcoming HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS) project in Spokane County. Kudos was provided by all to McClain and her staff.

The Meeting was adjourned by Chair Romel Mackelprang at 2:50 PM

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Hathaway and Rob Honan