



## WASHINGTON

### State Independent Living Council

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**Meeting Minutes**  
**July 10, 2009**  
**Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center (HSDC)**  
**1625 19th Avenue, Seattle, Washington**

Chair Romel Mackelprang called the State Independent Living Council (SILC) meeting to order at 8:43 am.

All Council members present and visitors then introduced themselves.

- **Members present:** Romel Mackelprang , Linda McClain, Trina Forest, Lynnae Ruttledge, Diane Hansen , Gilbert Garza, Jana Finkbonner
- **SILC Staff present:** Rob Honan, Executive Director and Barbara Hathaway, Executive Assistant
- **Members Absent:** Council Member: Al Neely, Devin Beach, Debbie Cook, Sandra Carr and Robert Roberts (WSRC representative to the SILC).
- **Visitors present:** Andrés Aguirre, Charley Lane, Jim Baker, Lucille Walls
- **Presenters present:** Dorothy Walt, representative from Northwest Helen Keller National Center; Nancy Sommers, Independent Living Specialist at Lighthouse for the Blind; Kelly Ballard, Administrative Assistant at Deaf-Blind Service Center.
- **Interpreters and CART providers present:** Verna Siegel, ASL interpreter; Polly MacLean, ASL interpreter; Darlene Pickard, CART provider; four (4) interpreters for the Deaf-Blind presenters.

Mackelprang suggested that the speakers go first since they were already available. He then turned the program over to Honan who introduced the three speakers.

Robert Honan introduced Dorothy Walt, Nancy Sommers, and Kelly Ballard (presenting for Jelica Nuccio, who could not attend). Each of the presenters took several minutes to provide information about their

agencies as well as how their activities interconnect with the State Plan for Independent Living.

Dorothy Walt (Seattle) Northwest Helen Keller National Center (HKNC)

- HKNC's mission is to provide comprehensive evaluation and independent living training programs to Deaf-Blind individuals.
- Helen Keller National Center national headquarters are located in Long Island, New York. The agency receives most its funds from the federal government. There are 11 regional offices in the United States. Walt is the director for the Northwest region, located in Seattle, which includes the states of WA, ID, OR and AK.
- The Seattle office focuses mainly on one-on-one advocacy, consultations, counseling, in-service training, and short-term training for Deaf-Blind individuals.
- Building capacity is the main goal when collaborating with businesses, agencies consumers, and families.
- Walt stated that there are an estimated 20,000 individuals with hearing loss and vision loss are living in State of Washington. NWHKNC does not reach all of them.
- NWHKNC has been in the process of making suggestions to advise SILC and the Centers for Independent Living on how to improve or decrease the barriers, especially with communication. The training to dRC on June 1, 2009 is an example of putting these suggestions to practice. The evaluations from this training indicated that it was a positive experience.
- .Jim Baker had asked Dorothy where Federal Government funds came from. The funds are from the Department of Education through RSA. There's has been a plan to move it over to Department of Labor sometime in the future. HKNC (nationally) averages about \$8M per year in grants.

Nancy Sommers Lighthouse for the Blind, (Seattle)

- Lighthouse for the Blind is a non-profit organization which receives government grants (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation) and private funds to cover the expenses of its Independent Living skills program.
- The Lighthouse staff teaches to their own employees how to use Braille, implement cooking skills into their lives, learn to deal with diabetes issues, and other types of independent living services.
- The Training and Technical Center (TTC) is another program which provides information to Blind and Deaf-Blind individuals on how to use various computer applications such as Braille and zoom text (magnifies fonts to be able to Excel, Microsoft Office, and learn to use E-mail system), and others. They have received \$360,000 to cover the expenses on-site.
- Orientation and mobility training (O&M Training) is yet another service provided at the Lighthouse for the Blind. This program works with Blind and Deaf-Blind individuals to help them to learn how to travel and get around on their own in the community using a variety of transportation modes
- Lighthouse for the Blind very much recognizes the Deaf-Blind community as a cultural minority

and provides them access in a respectful manner.

- Sommers shared information about new technology which aids in mobility. Called a “mini guide,” this is small device is used when approaching people or objects. The device goes off (vibrates) when one is approaching an object/ person, and the purpose of the device is to warn someone that such as object is in the way.
- Diane Hansen asked if there were other ways to communicate with Deaf-Blind other than tactile communication. Sommers said that some people use a “close vision” interpreter or style of signing where the signer or interpreter would sign within “box” (small area) in front of their chest to allow a Deaf-Blind/ Visually Impaired person to see the signs. There are others that might need a larger space to see signing as well. Another method of communication is to use a Perkins Braille that a person can type out on a device for another Blind or Deaf-Blind people to read.

### Kelly Ballard Deaf-Blind Service Center or DBSC, (Seattle)

- Kelly Ballard presented in place of Jelica Nuccio, the Director of the Deaf-Blind Service Center, who was not available.
- The mission of the Deaf-Blind Service Center is to assist individuals with Deaf-Blindness (DB) in reaching and maintaining their highest possible quality of life. The main goal is to make sure that every DB person has the fullest opportunity to maintain their self independence by being able to do food shopping, go to bank, and do different things on their own.
- One of the major programs the DBSC offers is to arrange for a Support Service Provider (SSP). The SSP is a sighted person who will lead a DB person and fill them in on environmental cues, among other thing, in order to live as independently as possible.
- In addition to the SSP program, DBSC has several staff that handles information and referral, case management and advocacy to services.
- Linda McClain asked how CILs could better connect with DB agencies to be more aware or more informed. Ballard stated that DBSC has an annual newsletter and also provides monthly E-news newsletter. She suggested going on to the website and getting more information.
- Other questions included:
  - How does DBSC reach out to rural populations?
  - Are there services for Spanish speaking DB folks? How does interpretation occur for this population?
- ODDH (Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing) provides to the public a directory of services in the State of Washington. This directory has been distributed to the CILs by Honan. Romel and Rob Honan thanked Dorothy Walt, Nancy Sommers, and Kelly Ballard for being here to share their knowledge and skills in working with DeafBlind people.

A short break took place after the presentations.

Diane Hansen moved to approve the April 24, 2009 Minutes. Motion was seconded by Linda McClain.  
**Passed Unanimously.**

**Romel Mackelprang, Chair Report (others made comments throughout the report as well and we tried to include them best as possible)**

- Membership: Mackelprang stated that most Council members are eligible to renew their membership, but they need to re-apply through the Governor's website. Three members (Beach, Cook, and Hansen) terms are not up on 9/30/09 and do not need to reapply. Mackelprang stated that he should be eligible but the Governor's office sees it differently. He is hopeful of working out the extension.
- NCIL conference: Mackelprang reported that he, Robert Honan, Trina Forest, Lucille/ Andrew Walls (and others) , Charley Lane, Jim Baker, Ed Kennedy/ Jill Jordan from CORD in Spokane had the opportunity to go to NCIL in Washington DC at the beginning of June. Trina Forest wanted to emphasize to everybody that she appreciates the Centers for pitching in to pay and send Robert Honan and Romel Mackelprang to NCIL! Mackelprang provided the SILC and audience members information on the advocacy topics discussed, including Project 2020, Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Community Choice Act. Many others that went to the NCIL conference commented on the trip as well.
- Travel Freeze: Mackelprang stated that since the travel freeze within the State had lifted, he was hoping the state will pay for travel next year.
- As a follow up to the presentation from earlier, Mackelprang suggested continued collaboration with the Deaf-Blind, Deaf, and Hard of Hearing group. Further, he asked Diane Hansen if she would be able to take up and put together something around this issue for SILC to look into ( a position paper on blind/ low vision issues and Deafness as well). Honan then countered that Lucille Walls should work with Diane since she has expertise in this area as well.
- Mackelprang briefly discussed the potential of the SILC spinning off as a 501 c3 in the future and asked Honan to continue collecting data.
- The chair also discussed the potential of crafting additional position papers on these topics: Long-Term care (amending the paper), closure of institutions ("schools") such as Yakima Valley, Deaf-Blind, Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- ARRA funds (American Recovery and Reinvestment or "stimulus" funds). Mackelprang took a few minutes to discuss the process of the CILs receiving the Part C ARRA (not regular) funds from RSA. He also discussed some various strategies of how to divide the funding up between the six CILs, possibly using the AIDS funding formula as some kind of a model. Information on the July 1

call with RSA was provided. Some other issues within the ARRA funds discussed by all included official Part C counties, the need for the ARRA funds to reflect the state plan (focusing on underserved ethnic, cultural and disability minorities), and the fact that the ARRA funds are only short-term and are not intended for long-term use.

- (ARRA discussion-cont.). Charley Lane of dRC suggested that a two-year plan be in place where Redmond branch of the Alliance ultimately be spun off as an independent CIL. Lucille Walls disagreed that this should be the case since she was not part of the discussion. There was a great deal of discussion by all in attendance on funding possibilities, but nothing was officially decided at the meeting (In the end, the suggestion that Lane spoke on was not suggested to RSA. In fact, it was decided upon by the CIL directors and their boards that the split would be \$150,000 for the Alliance East and Alliance West (\$350,000 total for the Alliance) and \$293,720 for the other CILs, but these amounts were not discussed at the meeting because this discussion was on some of the ARRA basics)

### **Committee Reports**

- DSB: Debbie Cook was unavailable. Honan stated that he would follow up by emailing her report to the Council
- DVR: Lynnae Ruttledge. Provided her own input on the ARRA discussion that just took place. She indicated that she felt that it was not her place to interject DVR's position in the process. She stressed that it is important to incorporate the SPIL into the ARRA proposal to RSA. Ruttledge also reported on changes within DVR itself; she has a new boss and the organizational structure of DSHS is a bit different than in the past. Ruttledge also talked about the DVR budget cuts and how this impacts the SILC's budget. Lastly, Ruttledge discussed upcoming DVR goals indicating they (DVR) wants to put 1,000 additional people with disabilities back to work in the next two years using ARRA VR funds.
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- Rehabilitation Council for the Blind: Diane Hansen provided the reported even though she is not the official RCB representative to the SILC. Hansen spoke about funding issues and the level of services for DSB clients (less funding means a different approach to service provision). Hansen also stated that the RCB is beginning to explore different ways of having meetings so that travel costs will be saved.
- Washington State Rehabilitation Council. Sandra Carr was not able to make the meeting, and Honan will follow up and email a report from Carr to the Council. Ruttledge, during her report, provided information on WSRC membership process. She stated that they are working on replacing six members of their Council.

- Executive Committee: No report
- ACIL-WA Report: Provided by Linda McClain
  - Reported that CILs met the day before (July 9<sup>th</sup>). There was consensus on many issues:
    1. Serving Underserved and Unserved (focusing on ethnic, cultural, and disability minorities)
    2. Figuring out which counties to include in the proposal to RSA
    3. And she reiterated what Mackelprang stated earlier that the exact division of funding was not yet decided, but it was close.
  - Five of six centers were awarded \$6,000 from DVR for the Summer youth in transition workshop to 504 kids. The CILs centers are working on the planning and construction of the workshop. Some of the CILs have hired a part time staff to handle to do the job. McClain provided information about what each CIL was proposing to do.
  - ACIL-WA wants to thank to several agencies and people like SILC, Jim Morris, David Lord, DRW, poverty in action, Governor's committee for supporting ACIL-WA.
- Budget Report. Honan provided the budget and expense report. He stated that the SILC has spent just about 82 % of the yearly budget with not quite three months left. He handed out an Excel spread providing information on spending, which stated that the SILC had spend \$170,943 of its \$207, 998 budget (82 %). He reported that the expenses are running a little bit higher due to increases in interpreter and CART services at a variety of meetings. In addition, the March rally was also a high dollar expense. Honan also stated that he provided Lorie Christoferson, DVR Fiscal manager, and Lynnae Ruttledge an estimate of costs for the remaining three months of the fiscal year.

Honan stated that one of the things for next year is a bigger expenses is the Public Forums for the SPIL since it is going to be a "SPIL year."

Honan reported that the FY 2010 budget, there will be approximately an 18% cut. Honan handed out the budget for the next year. Along with the FY 2010 budget were comparisons from FYs 2008 and 2009. The total FY 2010 budget will be: \$179,679 (ACIL-WA support of \$30,000 and training/ education of \$10,000 removed). By comparison the FY 2009 budget is: 207,998 and FY 2008 budget was: 219,836. The main reason for the cuts were due to weak revenue forecasts and the large budget cut that all state agencies took.

The SILC will be examining ways to cut costs, including possibly reducing the number of meetings, figuring out ways to redo business, but it is important that the SILC continue to reach out to the public, so public forums will still be a vehicle for receiving information for the SPIL.

#### Executive Director Report, Robert Honan

- Honan handed out the Director's Report. This can be found in its entirety on the SILC website: <http://www.wasilc.org>
- Several brief highlights:

- Von Elison was recognized as the Region X advocate of the year by NCIL
- The Deaf- Blind, Deaf, and Hard or Hearing IL group continues to meet and discuss plans for greater CIL outreach
- Per Lynnae Ruttledge's request from the April meeting on many folks had been transitioned out of nursing homes by the CILs, Honan stated that approximately 18 individuals have been transitioned to the community (or are in the process of being transitioned) by the CILs in the SPIL period

The Logo contest. Linda McClain. The Logo committee (Garza, Carr and McLain) received 14 submissions through e-mail and by phone. There were some pretty interesting pieces of art, but none rose to the level that they could be used as the official SILC logo. At this time the committee agreed to put the logo contest off until further notice.

Location for the October meeting.

- Back in April, 2009, the SILC decided to move Vancouver meeting to 2010 and have the October meeting held (again) in Spokane because of region X IL conference that was going to take place. Due to a variety of circumstances, the Region X IL conference will not take place in October of this year so it was decided to move the meeting back to the original site (Vancouver). It will now be held on October 30<sup>th</sup> due to conflicts with the April conference on October 9<sup>th</sup> and the WSRC meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The public forum will take place on October 29<sup>th</sup>.
- **The SILC agreed by consensus that the Public Forum and SILC meeting will be in Vancouver on October 30, 2009.**
- Romel Mackelprang suggested to have a:
  - training from 4 to 6pm
  - Public Forum from 6:30pm for an hour and half in evening.
  - Linda suggests having training and Public Forum combined.
- Future alternative meeting plans and locations.
  - Ruttledge asked the Council to reconsider on finding ways to be more judicious with the budget. The SILC needs to find different resources to do it.
    - Forest suggested for next year
      - Two in-person quarterly meetings
      - Two teleconference quarterly meetings
    - Mackelprang suggested that the SILC examine some alternatives at our next meeting. A couple of meetings, face to face with everyone there particularly in January, February, the legislative session are important.
    - Another idea briefly discussed was looking at dividing members up and having three or four members to go to a specific public forums (rather than the entire Council) as a way to do data collection..

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25pm by Romel Mackelprang.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Hathaway and Rob Honan