

State Independent Living Council

Meeting Minutes

Department of Services for the Blind

3411 S. Alaska Seattle, WA

April 25, 2008

Members Present:

Romel Mackelprang (Chair)
Jana Finkbonner
Lynnae Ruttledge (ex-officio)
Debbie Cook (ex-officio)
Gilbert Garza

Bob Roberts (WSRC rep to SILC)
Al Neely
Sandra Carr
Linda McClain
Rob Honan (Executive Director)

Members Absent:

Devin Beach

Guests:

Andrés Aguirre
Betty Schwieterman
Jim Baker
Robert Blumenfeld
Mike Kosanovich (interpreter)

Frances Pennell
David Lord
Jeanette Murphy
Noemi Ortega
Sarah Rasmussen (interpreter)

Romel Mackelprang, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m, and entertained a motion to approve the meetings from the January 16, 2008 meeting.

Linda McClain made a motion to accept the meeting minutes with three corrections (listed below). Al Neely seconded this motion. The January 16, 2008 Minutes were approved unanimously—with changes.

Corrections to January 16, 2008 meeting minutes:

1. Add Lynnae Ruttledge as “present”
2. Correct the spelling of Linda McClain’s name
3. Add Bob Roberts as “present”

Mackelprang announced that Council member Libby Winzer has resigned from the SILC.

The Agenda was approved unanimously.

**Presentation from Disability Rights Washington (DRW):
David Lord and Betty Schwieterman**

Betty Schweiterman and David Lord were invited to provide information on DRW and on state legislation from the 2008 short session.

The two are also very interested in hearing what issues are important to Centers for Independent Living. They both asserted that the advocacy from this past session was very, very good; legislators are hearing directly from people and from agencies.

Legislative update from DRW:

1. David Lord stated that Washington passed new legislation to create a State Access Coordinator position in the administrative office of the courts (HB 2903). The goal is for the state courts to respond more effectively when people with disabilities (PWDs) request accommodations.

Lord would like to see an advisory committee to work with this Access Coordinator, but he stated that this is a key piece in a larger effort.

There were several comments from audience members regarding this piece of legislation. Romel Mackelprang suggested that principles of universal access be implemented in this process in order to minimize the need for reasonable accommodation. In addition, Council member Al Neely stated that he checked out Yakima courts out and found that accommodations were not readily available.

2. Schwieterman reported that SB 6313, creating the third week of October as the celebration of Disability Awareness week in schools, passed during the session and was signed into law by Governor Gregoire. The bill creates disability history recognition in the public schools across the state.

Discussion on Disability Awareness curriculum in the schools ensued. Mackelprang suggested that his text would be a good resource for students. Schwieterman talked about centralization of a potential curriculum.

3. Schwieterman reported on another bill- educational and training requirements for long-term care workers (SB 2693). This bill did not pass. The goal of this legislation was to enable more home workers to get more training and certification to provide quality care in long-term care settings.

4. Future Legislative Initiative for CIL Funding. A discussion took place regarding strategizing for state funding for Washington CILs.

Additional discussion on legislation

- David Lord: On the subject of voting: We are in a state where we select nominees in caucuses. There are problems with disability access in the presidential caucus system.
- Rob Honan inquired about potential legislation in the 2009 session.
- David Lord:
 - 1. Independent Living Centers are going to ask for funding and that is a big one.
 - 2. Another bill would have used an increase in the amount of money that was used in disabled parking violations. The advisory committees would be charged with making their communities more accessible with that money.
- Romel Mackelprang suggested having the two come back in the fall for additional updates suggestions regarding the 2009 legislative session.

Washington Assistance Technology Foundation (WATF):

Frances Pennell, executive director, provided an overview of the WATF program. She stressed that it is basically a “bank” or a loan program for individuals with disabilities needing assistive technology for furthering their

independence. In accordance with the State Plan for Independent Living, Assistive Technology is a tool used for individuals to achieve goals in life.

Additional comments and discussion:

- The Individualized Development Account. WATF administers the only assistive technology IDA in the state. They work with King County United Way. The assistance we provide must be related to work or lead to work activities.
- WATF also collaborates with a variety of agencies to provide In-service and training.
- Sandra Carr asked if WATF has a list of vendors. Pennell stated they do, and they are listed on their website.
- Romel Mackelprang inquired whether individuals actually own the equipment. Pennell let audience members know that the individual indeed own the equipment, and that WATF loans individuals the money to make these purchases.
- Sandra Carr asked whether WATF provides loans for self-employment outside the home. Pennell said that WATF is not doing this at this time.
- Linda McCain wondered if loans are forgiven. Ms. Pennell stated that only in unusual circumstances does WATF allow this. The repay percentage is very high (98%).

A break was taken at 11:15 a.m.

Mackelprang proposed shifting the some things around to catch up on the agenda. In addition, he suggested that committees do in-depth work on two position papers over lunch.

Discussion of Out-Of-State Conferences:

1. Recap of SILC Congress.
 - Mackelprang stated that, “We had two presentations at the SILC Congress Evaluation and feedback was very high. What we did was quite good and the materials were good (How to Build a strong SILC.)”

- Rutledge: “I, too, have had follow up contacts from Colorado and it helped to identify that Washington is in a leadership role.”
- Rob Honan: “I also had follow up contacts and was able to share position papers with other SILCs. The presentations were great – we got outstanding grades on everything we did. Romel did a great job on calling us together to write the position papers and getting them approved.”
- Charley Lane (disAbility Resource Connections director and co-presenter of Disability Studies Workshop): “It really helped the State of Washington’s credibility. I keep in touch with several others who are asking questions. This really helps our presence on a national level.”

2. NCIL (National Council on Independent Living and) APRIL (Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living)

- Mackelprang stated that he has been so busy that he might have missed our opportunity to submit a presentation proposal to NCIL, but he does plan to get something submitted to APRIL.
- Rutledge suggested that because the Council is funded through the DVR (Title I funds), she encouraged the SILC members to be presenters as a way to justify out of state conference trips.
- Mackelprang believes that between the SILC and ACIL-WA we could put together one or two presentations for these conferences. It would be very important to talk about the process of coming together to form a state organization, a statewide movement.

Additional Discussion:

- Honan stated that the SILC is sponsoring (along with the Lummi Tribe) a Tribal Public Forum in Bellingham May 22nd from 5:30-7:30 p.m. There is more info on the SILC web site.
- Last night (April 24, 2008), the SILC hosted a Public Forum at the Seattle Public Library, Beacon Hill Branch. It was well attended; over 30 people were there.

ACIL - WA Report: Linda McClain

- The 501 (c) 3 application has been filed and we expect it to be through the process by the end of May or beginning of June. We received a letter from the IRS telling us there is a delay due to high volume.
- ACIL-WA continues to meet monthly by telephone conference call and quarterly in person.
- We are continuing our outreach and education to other organizations to inform them about what we do and with a goal of identifying sharing links.
- Presentations at our quarterly meeting April 24:
 - 1) Meg Evans and Bob Riler talked about ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Centers)
 - 2) Some CIL directors met at DRW to strategize about crafting a bill to pursue state funding.
 - 3) Jim Morris met with us to talk about the GCDE. He is also an ally from Poverty in Action.
- ACIL-WA will meet on May 21st to begin strategizing ways to get state funding. The identified partners in this effort are: Lynnae Ruttledge, Rob Honan and DRW (David Lord and Betty Schwieterman), Jim Morris, and Debbie Cook.
- ACIL-WA is planning a two-day strategic planning meeting in June.
- Also in the works: planning CIL training on best practices and compliance.

A Working Lunch took place: SILC Position Papers

The SILC is in the process of reviewing and updating its position papers. The question is “How do we make sure our positions are current but also are a resource for others to get multiple people to sign up on these.” The existing papers were approved three years ago by the SILC. We need to update them and ask others to sign off on them too.

Members have collaborated on writing two new position papers. One was Gilbert Garza’s draft of resources and access for Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW). Another position paper focused on Veteran’s Services (drafted by Lynnae Ruttledge). A third new position paper, Tribal (section 121) issues, was deferred until after the Tribal Public Forum (May 22nd)

Post Lunch (12:30 p.m.)

Discussion on Position Paper on Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW's):

- Sandra Carr suggested that specific services be mentioned, such as housing, food stamps, and transportation. Romel Mackelprang stated that there is a section in the body of the document that mentions specifics. If we are too specific we move into some political battles
- The question of whether MSFW's are citizens came up.
- Romel Mackelprang stated that with MSFW's, we have a group of people who come here to live and work and contribute a great deal to the economy. We do not need to address the issue of them being citizens or not. That is beyond our scope.
- Bob Roberts: "Not getting into the citizenship issue, since we get federal dollars, should we mention something about helping MSFW's overcome barriers to become citizens. Could we help them assimilate into American culture? A lot more people will sign on to this if we do. Mackelprang state that if we get into that it will become the focus of this paper rather than the human rights issues. There are people living in deplorable conditions. We are just affirming basic human rights."

Linda McClain made a motion to approve the position paper on MSFWs. Gilbert Garza seconded this motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on Veteran's Position Paper:

- Lynnae Rutledge, the primary author of the Veteran's position paper, suggested the position paper be framed as a call to action.
- A discussion ensued on whether to have one position paper or two. Bob Roberts stated that by putting it in two separate papers (one Vet's paper vs. Current conflict/ older veteran's) we would get more focus on each group.

- An Informal poll of where people stand on this took place:
 - Those who wanted two separate position papers : Linda, Gilbert, Al, Bob, Sandra, Lynnae,
 - Those who wanted only one position paper on veteran's issues: Debbie Cook and Jana
- Romel Mackelprang made some edits on the current paper and read it to everyone.

Sandra Carr made a motion to accept the paper as read
Linda McClain seconded it.

The Motion passed unanimously.

SILC Executive Director Report:

Rob Honan stated that he had to scrap the hiring of grant writer due to RSA's (Rehabilitation Services Administration's) guidance that SILC's cannot "raise funds." Instead, he is working on hiring an executive assistant. The process closed April 21st and will soon be setting up interviews. The target start date for the new Executive Assistant is June 1st.

Libby submitted her resignation from the SILC. Recognition will be given to her for her service to the SILC and to her husband Dick.

There is additional information on his report, and this can be viewed at www.wasilc.org.

Committee reports:

Debbie Cook (Department of Services for the Blind) stated that DSB will be looking at doing business differently. She reported that they have a waiting list and some counties are not being served. DSB is looking at retooling the whole program, and have had held three days of focus groups to help us rethink what we do.

Lynnae Ruttledge suggested that Debbie is identifying is a fundamental shift and the SILC needs to look at our SPIL and think about how this is

captured. There are some parts of Washington that get little or no resources because of lack of funding.

Rob Honan stated that he will work with Cook to examine the possibility of amending the SPIL as it relates to service gaps.

Lynnae Rutledge (DVR Report): She stated that she met with ACIL-WA yesterday to discuss the next round of contracts for Part B funds. The plan is to focus on youth transition for the 14-17 year olds. She asked Sean Barrett of RSA about RSA provisions for serving all counties in the state and he said that we do not have to serve all areas of the state. There was a misperception longstanding that Part B had to provide services statewide and this is not accurate. This is consistent with what Debbie Cook is saying about Department of Services for the Blind.

Sandra Carr (Washington State Rehabilitation Council): Carr reported that Jerry Johnsen was recently appointed to the State Rehabilitation Council. Carr said that he gave a wonderful presentation in Leavenworth in which he talked about the connection between independent living and employment. Carr also stated Lynnae deserves the award that she got from the Governor for leadership.

Budget/ Financial Report

Rob Honan:

Honan passed out the budget report. He stated that the SILC has spent approximately \$ 78,221 of its \$ 219,836 budget. As a percentage, the SILC has spent 36% of the budget to date. (all figures are unofficial)

General Discussion:

- Linda McClain said that ACIL-WA, the SILC and others have been meeting with allies regarding state funding. She indicated that it was recommended that a generic brochure about independent living. She made a motion that the SILC support up to \$1500 for the development of a brochure to use in promoting independent living. (A motion was not necessary, but McClain, members of ACIL-WA and Honan will begin to work on a brochure)

- Romel Mackelprang stated that the SILC now has two holes to fill. Winzer was an “advocate slot” and the other slot is for a private business representative. Mackelprang suggested that the SILC look to fill these slots based on needs, such as private business connections and resource development skills. He urged council members to suggest folks if they can think of good potential members.
- SILC Logo: Sandra Carr stated that the logo is old and we had a committee to do that but the other two people have left. She would like to other people to join that committee.
- Linda McClain suggested that there are a lot of artists with disabilities in our state, and that a contest would be great way to get ideas on a new logo.
- Audience member Noemi Ortega interjected that tuition is a great motivator for youth. Perhaps a scholarship to a technical school or college.
- Gilbert Garza, Linda McClain, and Sandra Carr will work to launch this logo contest. Honan will assist.

Discussion on By-Laws:

- Mackelprang and Honan worked on the by-laws last December (2007) in preparation for the January 2008 meeting. The major changes focused on the committee structure.
- Other changes discussed:
 - Jana Finkbonner: The change I would like to make is under membership on page 2, section 1 B2 – To add one rep from a 121 program (Tribal VR program) and a 304 program (MSFWs). I would like the SILC roster to reflect the SILC by-laws about what the membership looks like.
 - Mackelprang: I think the list has internal comments on who the members are from but it does not have to line up exactly with the by-laws.
 - Ruttledge stated that the by-laws should reflect the law. This includes a representative from CILs, ex-officio members (Lynnae Ruttledge’s and Debbie Cook’s position,) and a representative from one of the Section 121 programs. She

recommend that we add “and one rep from the Section 304 (MSFW.)” We have included someone from the MSFW program and I would not recommend that we start adding additional optional categories. I do not recommend that we eliminate any existing categories from the by-laws.

Linda McClain made a motion to change the wording to “This includes a rep from CILs, ex-officio members (Lynnae’s position and Debbie’s position,) and a representative from one of the Section 121 programs. Linda also recommend that we add “ and one rep from the 304 (MSFW.)”

Motion was seconded by a Council member.

Motion passed.

The next SILC meeting is scheduled for July 11th in Bellingham. Details will be sent out.

Mackelprang adjourned the meeting at 2:35 pm.

Minutes respectfully taken by Trina Forest, Executive Director of Center for Independence