

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Legislative Committee
MINUTES**

Videoconference Host

Governor's Council
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1220
Anchorage, Alaska

Meeting Date

November 10, 2022
3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Committee Members:

Art Delaune, Chair
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus
Corey Gilmore
Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich
Jena Crafton

Absent:

Director Duane Mayes
Charles (Mack) McAnally
Sen. Peter Micciche

Guests:

Heidi Lieb-Williams
Margaret Evans

Staff:

Patrick Reinhart
Jamie Kokoszka
Lanny Mommsen
Rich Saville
Michael Stevenson

Prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 3:00 p.m.
ROLL CALL – Quorum established

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Art Delaune welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Introductions, Announcements, or Good News

Shelly Vendetti-Vuchovich shared the good news that her family has returned from Japan, where they've been for three years.

Many committee members agreed that the election being over is good news.

Declarations of Conflict

No conflicts of interest were declared.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES

Shelly Vendetti-Vuchovich **MOVED** to approve the September 29, 2022 meeting minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by Jena Crafton. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Shelly Vendetti-Vuchovich **MOVED** to approve the meeting agenda as presented, **SECONDED** by Jena Crafton. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

REPORTS

Chair's Report

Council Chair Heidi Lieb-Williams encouraged the Legislative Committee members to make preparations for travel to Juneau to advocate for the disability community in the little time left before the session begins. To do that, the committee must develop legislative priorities and concrete talking points. She noted that the deadline for legislators to propose bills and amendments is February 15th, 2023. Based on her research, there are a significant number of new legislators, and it is the Council's job to educate

new lawmakers on what the Council is and who they advocate for and begin to build a rapport with them.

Art Delaune had no news to report. He said they have been focusing on elections over the last month and getting people to vote. He noted that they know who some of the new lawmakers will be. There are quite a few races that are too close to call and will likely go through the ranking process, which will occur on November 23rd.

Staff Report

Patrick Reinhart assured the committee that the Council would have a legislative agenda and package ready for the legislative session. Some difficulty will come with deciding what is regulatory and what is statutory. In the past, the Council has brought inspirational legislation before the legislature, for example, the DD Vision. He encouraged Council members to be patient as many organizations are meeting and discussing issues important to the disability community, and there is often overlap with the Council's priorities.

Patrick Reinhart reported that the upcoming legislative session is the first year of a two-year session. The expectation is that something submitted this year will take two years to work through the process. He noted that there are issues that come up that have an urgency, and that is when pressure may need to be applied. Patrick stated that staff will work with the committee, and documents created by the Legislative Committee will not be finalized until late January, which is still plenty of time. He said it will take the legislators some time to organize once the session begins.

Art Delaune reassured the committee that other than the last session, which had aggravating factors, the Council has always been prepared before going to Juneau to do advocacy. He stated that the Council has a reputation for being the best-prepared and most effective organization he's been a part of, and he has no concerns at all.

Art Delaune reported that in the CISS Committee there was a discussion about introducing the Council to new legislators through a brief letter introducing the Council and a refresher for returning lawmakers. Additionally, a Zoom could subsequently be scheduled to invite legislators to attend to receive an overview of the Council to keep it fresh in their

minds. Patrick Reinhart noted the Council has done introductory letters in the past and stated it could not happen until January. Shelly Vendetti-Vuchovich agreed it is a good idea and suggested attaching the list of the Council's accomplishments.

BUSINESS

Preliminary Election Results Discussion

Patrick Reinhart reported that the Dunleavy administration is likely to stay in office. Other legislative seats have not been decided. He suspects it will take some time for the new legislature to organize.

Continued Discussion and Prioritization of 2023 State Legislative Issues

Art Delaune reported that the issues the committee has to consider include the following:

- Workforce issues:
 - Rate rebasing
 - Looking at creative ways to change DSP staffing needs, exploring new in-home technology
- Self-directed services
- Day habilitation limits
- Grant funding to fill in gaps in services
- Community and public transportation
- SDS plan for eliminating the DD waitlist
- Job accommodation fund within state government for people with disabilities.

Patrick Reinhart noted that SDS's recommendations for eliminating the waitlist, once finalized, may likely be the number one priority for the Council. Shelly Vendetti-Vuchovich questioned that if the workforce issues are not addressed, where will people get services, and who will provide those services? She said there has been talk that the funding intended to support a DSP wage increase has not been actualized. Not only is it not attracting new DSPs, but the field is losing workers. Art Delaune agreed that the workforce is his biggest concern.

Patrick Reinhart reported that any recommendations to eliminate the waitlist would have to come with the workforce issues being addressed and most of the other things on the list of Council priorities. The recommendations would have to be comprehensive. Patrick remarked that there would be serious blowback if the funding is not reaching the intended DSP workforce. Shelly Vendetti-Vuchovich suggested the Council put together a position paper to ask for accountability from the providers on where the support for the DSP workforce is.

Heidi Lieb-Williams expressed her frustration with the lack of progress in implementing the DD Vision.

Art Delaune suggested listing the priorities in the following order:

1. Waitlist elimination – reports will be available at the end of November.
2. Workforce – need the workforce to accomplish most other goals
3. Public transportation

Patrick Reinhart remarked on flexible services in conjunction with budget authority, which would reduce/eliminate the administrative costs of waiver services for the State and agencies.

Margaret Evans commented that PCA-directed care as part of the plan of care was used years ago and was flexible for the individual. SDS made changes to the programs that left it much more restrictive.

Update on Federal Items

No federal update was given.

Personal Stories Request

Patrick Reinhart stated that the Council has a Program Performance Report due to the federal government in December, and staff does an annual report for the legislature. They need personal stories from Council members to include in the reports. Members who are interested in sharing stories can contact Lanny Mommsen.

TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2022 from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. The Legislative Committee will meet with the CISS Committee to discuss the legislative agenda.

GOOD OF THE ORDER AND ADJOURNMENT

Patrick Reinhart shared that a Council meeting has been scheduled for November 14, 2022 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. A public testimony time will be offered at the meeting.

Patrick Reinhart noted that the SILC plans to travel to Juneau in the same timeframe as the Council. There will be a discussion at the November 14th meeting to see if the Council wants to do joint legislative presentations, particularly around self-directed or flexible waivers.

Shelly Vendetti-Vuchovich **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.