

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

**SELF-ADVOCACY AND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE  
(SA&L)**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Videoconference Host:**

Governor's Council  
550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1220  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**Videoconference**

**Meeting Date**

Wednesday, August 30, 2023  
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**Council Members:**

Jena Crafton, Chair  
Anna Attla  
Margaret Evans  
Corey Gilmore  
Elizabeth Joseph  
Nona Safra

**Guests:**

Christine Bohan  
Carl Brady  
Wesley Witherspoon

**GCDSE Staff:**

Jamie Kokoszka  
Robert Tasso  
Rich Saville  
Michael Stevenson  
Samantha Vetter  
Lanny Mommsen

**CALL TO ORDER – 11:02 a.m.**  
**ROLL CALL – Quorum established**

### **WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR**

Jena Crafton welcomed attendees to the meeting.

### **Introductions, Announcements and/or Good News**

Jena Crafton led the committee in a mindfulness moment.

Council staff shared the following announcements:

- The Microenterprise grant application deadline is August 30, 2023.
- The BEST Job Fair/Employment Symposium will be held on October 13, 2023 at the Fairview Recreation Center.
- The Medicare renewal reminder: Please check that your contact information is current.
- The Aging & Disability Summit will be held October 11 – 12, 2023. Attendance is free and registration will be open next week. There will be a Family Forum on the evening of October 10, 2023 where Special Olympics Chief Inspiration Officer Loretta Clairborne will speak.
- FASD Awareness Day is September 9, 2023. The Council asked for a Governor's proclamation. The 8 Keys to Success movie premiere will be held at Bear's Tooth on Friday, September 8, 2023 at 2:30 p.m. Donations are accepted.
- The Reducing Recidivism Conference will be held November 30 – December 1, 2023.
- The Direct Support Professional Week is planned for September 6, 2023. The Council contacted Senator Murkowski requesting that she support a resolution in Congress acknowledging Direct Support Professional Week.
- Senator Murkowski has reintroduced the FASD Respect Act of 2023.
- The Council's Five-Year Plan (FY 21 – FY 26) is complete and ready for publication.
- Jena Crafton, Patrick Reinhart, and Robert Tasso presented to the Alaska Mental Health Trust's board to update them on Council activities.

Samantha Vetter shared that Council members who want to attend the Council meeting and other events that week can contact the Council staff for travel arrangements.

Jena Crafton shared that she is now employed at the Center for Human Development (CHD).

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

## **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES and AGENDA**

Nona Safra **MOVED** to approve the meeting agenda, **SECONDED** by Anna Attla. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

Nona Safra **MOVED** to approve the May 18, 2023 meeting minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by Margaret Evans. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

## **REPORTS**

### **Chair Report**

Jena Crafton reported that she attended the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Conference in Florida in July. Jena and others presented I Have Rights/I Have Dreams, which was well received. Jena commented that she enjoyed many of the presentations at the conference.

Jena Crafton, Patrick Reinhart, and other Council staff attended the signing of SB 57, the Adult Home Care bill.

Jena Crafton shared that she was involved in the Council's presentation to the Trust regarding the Council's activities.

Jena Crafton shared that she has to step down as chair of the SA&L Committee. She noted that if a committee member is interested in the chair position, they can contact the Council.

### **GCDSE Staff Report**

Jamie Kokoszka reported that Peer Power's Empower Hour takes place monthly. Peer Power is looking for facilitators for monthly meetings. If interested, please get in touch with Ric Nelson at Peer Power.

Jamie Kokoszka reported that DEED applied for a grant with the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration that will help support Project SEARCH and the Alaska Traditional Transition Skills curriculum, among other things. They are awaiting a response to the application.

Jamie Kokoszka reported that the Council awaits news on the Living Well Grant one-year no-cost extension.

Jamie Kokoszka requested personal stories from Council members and other people with disabilities related to self-advocacy.

Samantha Vetter shared a story from the NACDD Conference in which a woman she met and invited to the I Have Dreams presentation told her that the presentation

inspired her to assert independence in her own life. Robert Tasso shared that the presentation by Tatyana McFadden, a paralympic athlete, was incredibly motivational and demonstrated the power of self-advocacy.

## **BUSINESS**

### **Alaska Advocacy and Leadership Opportunities Guide (AALO)**

Samantha Vetter directed the members' attention to the *Alaska Advocacy and Leadership Opportunities Guide*. She reported that the Council has been tasked with updating resources and guides by the end of October. Samantha led the committee through a review of the AALO Guide, and the following recommendations were made:

- Remove the Governor's Council as one of the first groups listed and move Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) onto the first page
- The Shared Vision Collaborative will be reconvening
- Check to find out if the Fairbanks People First is active
- Remove the Disability Pride Facebook link and add the Disability Pride Planning Committee
- Remove Rainbow Club (not active)
- Update photos and links
- Add a section for annual events (Disability Pride, Peer Power Summit, Disability Policy Seminar, Full Lives Conference).

### **Discussion – Individual Advocacy Involvement Updates from Committee Members and Guests**

Jamie Kokoszka opened the floor for members to share individual advocacy.

- Christine Bohan shared that she is a parent of a child with special needs and is involved in advocating for her child at school.
- Carl Brady shared that his role at the Alaska Center for the Blind involves advocacy. On a personal level, he advocates and educates about non-vehicular transportation. He is a huge proponent of maintaining sidewalks and public use right of ways for travel. He is also on the Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee of the Public Transit Advisory Board.
- Corey Gilmore shared that he is involved with the Shining Abilities Craft Fair as an artist and small business owner.

### **Review and Discuss Updated SA&L Workplan for Year 3**

Tabled.

### **Peer Advocacy Guide Review**

Tabled

## **Special Guest, Wesley Witherspoon – California State Council on Developmental Disabilities**

Wesley Witherspoon, with the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities, joined the meeting and shared his journey as a self-advocate. Wesley serves as a representative of self-advocates and their networks and the programs and activities of the USC Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).

### **RESOURCES**

#### **Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)**

Jamie Kokoszka provided a link to SABE as follows:

- <https://www.sabeusa.org/meet-sabe/>

#### **Self-Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC)**

Jamie Kokoszka provided a link to the Self-Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) as follows:

- <https://www.selfadvocacyinfo.org/resources/current-issues-resources/>

### **PARTNER UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements were made.

### **TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Self-Advocacy and Leadership Committee meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2023 from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER AND ADJOURNMENT**

Margaret Evans **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Anna Attla. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**. The meeting ended at approximately 12:30 p.m.