

**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

March 5, 2024
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Caitlin Poindexter, Chair
Art Delaune
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus
Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich
Jena Crafton
Corey Gilmore
Margaret Evans
Carl (CB) Brady
Rep. Stanley Wright

Guests:

Sabrina Richmond
Garrett Dominick
Michael Christian
Anna Williams
Margaret Lavalley

Staff:

Patrick Reinhart
Jamie Kokoszka
Rich Saville

Prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 1:03 p.m.
ROLL CALL – Quorum established

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Introductions, Announcements, or Good News

Caitlin Poindexter welcomed attendees to the meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflicts of interest were declared.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA and MINUTES

Art Delaune **MOVED** to approve the March 5, 2024 meeting agenda as presented, **SECONDED** by CB Brady. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Jena Crafton **MOVED** to approve the February 9, 2024 meeting minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

REPORTS

Chair Report

Caitlin Poindexter shared that she attended the Exploring Artificial Intelligence Summit in Anchorage. She said she sees a lot of opportunities for AI.

Caitlin Poindexter shared her observations from legislative visits. She said there was a lot of activity, and in her opinion, it was a good visit. Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich, Jamie Kokoszka, and Caitlin met with Sarah Moreau and Sena Gilbert from Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC), Alaska's Educational Resource Center, and discussed traumatic brain injury and acknowledgment on IEPs. They determined that the issue could be brought to the SEAP and suggested inviting SERRC representatives to present information related to brain injury and IEPs. Caitlin recommended inviting SERRC to the May Council meeting to present information and possibly partner.

Caitlin Poindexter shared that the Stone Soup Group Parent Conference is scheduled for March 21 – 22, 2024 at the Hilton in Anchorage.

GCDSE Staff Report

Rich Saville reported the Disability Policy Seminar is scheduled for April 8 – 10, 2024. The Council's team will include Caitlin Poindexter, Jena Crafton, Rich, and a few people from LEND.

Patrick Reinhart reported that from his perspective, doing legislative visits jointly with the SILC worked fine, and only a few adjustments needed to be made related to timing. He thought the social event went well. He noted that he received good feedback regarding the Lunch & Learn.

Patrick Reinhart reported that all the Governor's Council committees will get a Trust survey related to the Trust's budget. This is an opportunity to have an influence on the 25/26 Trust budget cycle. He noted that the DD system is struggling, and the state may be in a crisis. They will need attention and investment from the Trust to help through a possible situation. The more people who respond to the survey talking about DD issues, home mods, and independent living, the more the Trust will emphasize it in its budget deliberations. Patrick suggested that Council members distribute the survey through their networks.

Jamie Kokoszka reported that the Council attended the first Access Alaska Resource Fair.

Jamie Kokoszka reported that Project SEARCH site visits are underway.

BUSINESS

AKLeg.gov

Caitlin Poindexter reminded the committee that AKLeg.gov is a valuable resource for tracking legislative activity during the session. She noted that a fact sheet with links to the legislative process in Alaska was attached to the meeting agenda. Jamie Kokoszka shared an example of how to navigate the website.

Jamie Kokoszka encouraged committee members to watch for public testimony opportunities on bills the Council tracks. She also reminded the committee that the Trust Joint Advocacy meetings are held every Friday at 12:15 p.m.

2024 State Legislative Updates and Discussion

Caitlin Poindexter opened the floor for thoughts about the legislative visits.

SILC Executive Director Michael Christian remarked that the meetings he was in went well. He noted that SILC will follow up with the lawmakers they met with.

Garrett Dominick shared that he was on legislative visits with Peer Power and Key Coalition. Peer Power met with 17 legislators. He shared that most of the legislators showed support for the issues presented. Garrett noted that a few legislators and state department leadership personnel attended the Key Coalition rally.

Jena Crafton thought everyone did a very good job in Juneau. Jamie Kokoszka shared that some of the team was included on the cover of Must-Read Alaska.

Caitlin Poindexter reminded committee members to share photos taken in Juneau and any outstanding visit reports with the Council staff.

Legislative Updates:

- *HB 355 (State Public & Community Transit Plan)*
 - Request for statute change to add public and community transit into state statute. Representative Mina from Anchorage proposed HB 355.
 - There's been no action on it.
 - Patrick Reinhart noted that he received a call from the commissioner of DOT who stated he would support the bill and discussed the issue of getting \$1M of capital transit money in the budget.
- *HB 111 (Deaf and Hard of Hearing)*
 - The language from HB 111 that moved to SB 140 was pulled back out, and now it is a stand-alone bill.
 - A hearing at House Finance was postponed.
- *Centralized Accommodation Fund (CAF)*
 - No update.
- *SB 104/HB 161 (Civil Legal Services Fund)*
 - Passed in the Senate and moved to the House
 - There was a modification indicating the funds could not be used for landlord/tenant-related issues
 - The Council will support the bill through public comment and letters of support
 - No movement since February 15th.
- *HCBS Efficiencies*
 - EMod:
 - Participant-Directed Services (PDS):
 - It is not a legislative request; it is asking for prioritization
 - For PDS, the Trust has approved a contract to hire a consultant to assist with the efforts.
- *HB 219, Repeal Assistive Technology Loan Program*
 - No movement on HB 219.
- *Budget Bills*
 - No report.
- *Other bills:*
 - HB 310 is a bill that supports children with disabilities in the school system in receiving medication services.

- Representative Carrick asked the Governor's Council for a letter of support.
- SB 250, regarding guardianships, conservatorships, and other protective arrangements
 - Sponsored by Senator Kiehl
 - On the Trust's watch list.

Representative Wright noted that the Council's visit to the Capitol was well received, and many legislators were talking about the Council positively.

Update on Federal Issues

Patrick Reinhart noted the impending federal appropriations bill and the possible government shutdown. He reported that a significant amount of funding for the Council comes from the federal Administration on Community Living.

DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, 2024, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

GOOD OF THE ORDER AND ADJOURNMENT

CB Brady **MOVED** to adjourn. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m.