**Virginia Board for People with Disabilities  
Advocacy, Outreach, and Training Committee (AOT) Minutes  
*September 20, 2016***

**Committee Members Present:**

Randy Burak (Chair)

Matt Shapiro

Travis Webb

Donna Lockwood

Ethel Paris-Gainer

Rachel Loughlin

Ron Lanier

Rose Williams

Caroline Raker

**Committee Members Absent:**

Carina Elgin

Korinda Rusinyak  
Marisa Laios

**VBPD Staff Present:**

Benjamin Jarvela  
 Heidi Lawyer

Penni Sweetenburg-Lee

Kara White

Ronita Wilson

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Randy Burak, Committee Chair, called meeting to order at 9:15

The Chair called for a **MOTION** to approve the June Committee Minutes. Mr. Matt Shapiro made a **MOTION** to approve June Committee Minutes; Dr. Ethel Paris-Gainer seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** carried and the March meeting minutes were approved as written.

**REVIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING:** The Chair reviewed the Executive Committee Meeting, noting that the June minutes had been approved, followed by a review of Board Member attendance, during which time it was noted that Ms. Sari Leinonen-Farrell has resigned from the Board. The Chair summarized the Executive Director’s report, followed by the fiscal update and revised June budget, which ensures Administration costs are less than 30% of the Board’s total operating budget. The Chair also explained the Request for Proposal process as outlined during the Executive Committee Meeting.  
  
**ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR:** The Chair stated that the AOT Committee needed to elect a Vice-Chair, per direction from the Executive Committee. Mr. Shapiro volunteered to serve as AOT Committee Vice-Chair. The Chair called for a **VOICE VOTE** and Mr. Shapiro was unanimously confirmed as the AOT Vice-Chair.

**COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY UPDATE:** Mr. Benjamin Jarvela, Communications Director, said that the Board had reached its final Story Collection State Plan objective, exceeding the target by one. He also noted that rebranding efforts had continued and that the AOT Committee would need to recommend a logo to the full board out of the options to be presented later in the meeting. Mr. Jarvela stated that the Board’s Constant Contact database overhaul had been completed, a project which required several hundred man-hours to finish. Mr. Jarvela also updated the Committee, as directed during the June meeting, that the Communications plan verbatim regarding State Plan Objective 1-5 had been adjusted to match revisions in the State Plan and that there was no substantive impact to the Communications plan itself. Mr. Jarvela noted that the Board’s SharePoint website was nearing completion and that website redesign efforts have begun interest and will continue over the next quarter. He also explained that the hiring process for a new Communications Assistant had begun and that interviews would begin the following week.

**TRAINING PROGRAMS UPDATE**: Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee, Training Programs Manager, reported that the Partners in Policymaking Evaluation process has been completed, as well as a brief synopsis for committee members on the makeup and content of the training programs. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee said that recruiting for PIP’s next session will begin in late 2016 and that the next session will begin in 2017. She also spoke of the staff efforts to ensure the program remains a productive collaboration. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that 27 Partners started in September and 26 graduated in April. She also noted that under the leadership of Ms. Heidi Lawyer, Executive Director, Partners’ project delivery was changed to a team effort for the first time. Projects were well done and Partners worked on the disability issues that most interested them. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee also noted that that the PIP Graduation was moved to the State Capitol and Commissioner Aaron Bishop was the speaker. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee said Partners Evaluations indicate they loved coming together and loved the team approach; but wanted more working time at the hotel. Partners also wanted to hear more about how people overcame obstacles. Curriculum is based on knowledge, but Partners want more inspiration. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that she was new to the Board staff during the launch of PIP 2016 and that there may have been some communication difficulties with project expectations.  
  
Mr. Shapiro stated that, regarding the Partner Projects, putting projects online would be a unique chance to allow other to see. Projects could be used to disseminate information. Ms. Raker added the next Partners class could expand the projects of the previous class for increased impact. Project expansion could be a good component for Alumni Development Program and big ideas could be generated to help the Commonwealth

Regarding the 2016 Youth Leadership Forum, Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that the Delegate demographics for the class of 2016 were racially diverse (Asian, White, multi-racial, and Hispanic), as expected, and that the YLF was condensed from five days to four days. The new revised focus and format worked well. The focus was on Personal Development, Professional Development, and Career Development.  
  
Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained to the committee that the recruitment goals for YLF were not met and that an analysis of the program suggested that changes to recruitment and structure may be required, noting that Ms. Lawyer would be addressing these issues later in the meeting.  
  
Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee gave an overview of the session topics and listed the session presenters which included Board Members Mr. Shapiro and Ms. Alexis Nichols. According to YLF evaluations, Delegates felt that parents should to be present during testimonials. Additionally, evaluations from returning YLF Staff communicated that an opportunity for them to share their personal stories/testimonies with Delegates was missing from the experience. She further reported that there were some returning YLF Staff who were challenged by the Training Manager’s Leadership style, however, these challenges did not affect the work that the Lead Small Group Facilitator and the Medical/Residence Life Coordinators did to ensure a successful YLF.  
  
Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that the Technology Session was rated highly by Delegates and that the parent session was well received. Ms. Rose Williams stated Capitol Day was great.

Ms. Lawyer expressed concerns to the Committee about the Return on Investment (ROI) related to both Training programs. She shared that the cost of YLF for 19 Students was $140,000 and did not include all of the additional human labor required to put it. Ms. Lawyer reiterated the difficulty in recruiting for both programs, noting that YLF in particular has gained a level of competition from similar programs around the state that did not exist at its inception. Ms. Lawyer noted that more recruiting efforts were undertaken this year than at any point in the past and recruitment fell flat regardless. She also noted that the applications that are received come overwhelming from the three major metropolitan regions and that there is very little representation from the more rural areas.   
  
Ms. Lawyer explained that some very preliminary research had begun in ways to improve the programs, including new delivery methods and collaborative partnerships, including the potential for hybrid online and in-person training for PIP and possible work with WIOA partners on youth training. Ms. Lawyer assured the Committee that no action would be taken without Board approval. The Chair asked for committee consensus on Board staff continuing these research and evaluation efforts and the committee unanimously agreed, with Mr. Shapiro noting that continuing research would be acceptable, but that the Board would need to be informed of any changes to the Training Programs.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that the revised Alumni Development Program was approved in June and that efforts to establish this new program had continued since then, with a gathering in the Tidewater area in May and another in Northern Virginia in August. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee said that while YLF students were more reserved compared to their PIP counterparts in Tidewater, participation and activity levels were more evenly distributed in Northern Virginia. She also explained that while staff have had some difficulty getting program alumni to come to the first meetings for each regions, these are expected growing pains and that the staff are looking for ways to expand their reach and correct these problems and will be reassessing communication methods as needed.   
  
The Chair noted he had not received any of the Tidewater-area recruiting information. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee agreed that the Board does not have as much contact information on Alumni as it should and that efforts were being made to rectify this, particularly concerning phone numbers. Mr. Jarvela stated he would ensure the Chair was on all future Tidewater communications. Ms. Lawyer noted that permission would need to be sought to provide phone numbers to alumni.  
  
Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee then noted that the Northern Virginia alumni activity level is much higher and Ms. Lawyer explained that more personalized approaches to the organizational and communications strategies may be needed on a per-region basis. Ms. Raker asked how the newest alumni are being incorporated into the program and Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that they are enrolled automatically and have been dominant in both regions, representing the most active component of the alumni base. She continued that the upcoming Central Virginia Alumni gathering in November was expected to be the largest to date, with an expected 50-60 attendees.

**EVENT SUPPORT APPLICATION REVIEW:** The Chair explained that Commonwealth Autism submitted an event support request for $500 and Virginia Oral Health Coalition had submitted a request for $4,950. The Chair outlined both organizations and the activities as described in the applications and asked Mr. Jarvela for clarification on the available support budget for the year, which Mr. Jarvela said was $10,000. After discussion, Ms. Raker made a **MOTION** to recommend approval for $500 for the Autism Conference Committee and $2,000 for the Virginia Oral Health Coalition to the full Board. Mr. Shapiro seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** carried.

**AGENCY LOGO REVIEW:** Mr. Jarvela explained that following the revisions to the Partners in Policymaking and Youth Leadership forum branding, as well as the adoption of the Alumni Association branding, that the committee now needed to recommend a new logo for the Board to the Board itself. Mr. Jarvela said that numerous mockups had been created and presented the three finalists to the committee. Ms. Rachel Loughlin noted her own experience in this area and asked Mr. Jarvela for any symbolism or meaning behind the three finalists as they were designed, as well as to the intent behind the simplistic nature of the three options. Mr. Jarvela stated the symbolism ideas behind the three logos and explained that they were also open to interpretation and that official definitions could be drafted if the board desired. After discussion, the Chair called for a **VOTE** on the logo choices. Five Committee members voted for Logo Options #1 and three committee members voted for logo option #3, with one member abstaining. The Chair noted that the results of this **VOTE** would be passed on in the Board meeting.   
  
After requesting for any additional business and receiving none, the Chair called for a **MOTION** for adjournment. Mr. Shapiro made a **MOTION** to adjourn and Dr. Paris-Gainer seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:09 a.m.