**Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

**Advocacy, Outreach and Committee (AOT) Meeting Minutes**

***June 15, 2016***

**Committee Members Present:**

Randy Burak (Chair)

Ethel Paris-Gainer

Marissa Laios

Ron Lanier

Donna Lockwood

Rachel Loughlin

Matthew Shapiro

Rose Williams

Charles Meacham *Ex Officio*

**Committee Members Absent:**

Carina Elgin

Sari Leinonen-Farrell

Korinda Rusinyak

Travis Webb

**VBPD Staff Present:**

Heidi Lawyer

Megan Campbell

Benjamin Jarvela  
Penni Sweetenburg-Lee

Kara White

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Randy Burak, Committee Chair, called meeting to order at 9:17 a.m.

The Chair called for a MOTION to approve the March committee minutes. Ms. Marisa Laios made the MOTION; Dr. Ethel Paris Gainer seconded the MOTION. The MOTION carried and the March meeting minutes were approved as written.

**REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING:**

The Chair reviewed the Executive Committee March Meeting Minutes (approved), Executive Director’s Report, FY’17 Budget (State starts July 1, Fed starts October), Grants update, and the newly-proposed Request for Proposal process.

**REVIEW OF THE OTHER COMMITTEE AGENDAS**:

Mr. Benjamin Jarvela, Director of Communications, discussed the ISP Committee Agenda, including the Grants proposal process, updated to progress on the Board’s 5 Year State Plan, the Grant review team, and the PRE Committee Agenda, including general policy work and the restructured disability assessment (2016-17).

**COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY UPDATE:**

Mr. Jarvela explained that in regards to the call for story collection and distribution, the Board has only nine left to meet the goal by the end of the summer. Mr. Jarvela further explained that the staff is in need of the Board’s help to find more stories of advocacy, community, and inclusion. The new PIP/YLF logos have debuted and are in use. There were also new updates on the Alumni Development Plan. The overhaul of Constant Contact data has proceeded as planned and a timeline was established. The unit also completed the new 2-Year Communications Plan and has worked on a new Board Member SharePoint website. So far, staff have met with DARS and are looking at establishing a landing page (with log-in) that will archive and hold all documents for Board Members to access. No timeline for completion has been established. Ms. Laios asked for further updates on Facebook and commended the work there to date.

**TRAINING PROGRAMS UPDATE:**

Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee, Training Programs Manager, provided an update of PIP 2016, noting that 26 partners graduated. This year, the staff enhanced the graduation ceremonies to include a baccalaureate program. Ms. Lawyer provided compliments to the staff on this year’s work. YLF 2016 is scheduled to be hosted at VSU beginning July 25. Staff will be coming in on Saturday June 18, 2016 for training and orientation. There will be 22 YLF delegates participating this year; recruitment and marketing was heavily pushed, but the competition with other youth programs made it difficult to find delegates. Ms. Lawyer and the staff agreed that the Board will need to consider how it conducts youth training in the future to be sure it was fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities for prudent use of taxpayer dollars. Mr. Jarvela made the point that when YLF was initially organized, it was the only program of its kind and it now faces heightened competition from numerous sources around the Commonwealth. Ms. Lawyer suggests the possibility of finding other programs and various outside groups to find what would be the most appropriate and long-term opportunities. Mr. Burak notes he participated in PIP in 1997, and said that the new potential grant opportunity with the NICU would be a good option for providing education and training for other families. Ms. Laios explained the difficulty in navigating the differences in these choices. Mr. Lanier discussed the difficulty based on the competition between the various programs. Dr. Paris-Gainer asked about the additional YLF staff. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the need for PCAs, interpreters, small group facilitators and others. She also noted that a parent session on graduation day has been added.

**COMMUNICATIONS PLAN:**

Mr. Jarvela explained that the biggest change is that the plan is for two years, rather than five, so that the Board can more readily assess the state and condition of long-term projects as they develop. Mr. Jarvela provided a breakdown of the metrics discussed in the Communications Plan, including noting that the current online audience for Board materials consists primarily women aged 35-55 in the Virginia’s three major metro regions. Mr. Jarvela explained that this shows the Board and the staff need to look at the best way to attract a larger and more diverse audience in more distinct geographical regions when and where possible. Mr. Jarvela then provided a point-by-point synopsis of the communications plan, including the mandated activities required by the state plan in the timeframe covered.

Ms. Lawyer noted that State Plan Objective 1.5 has changed based on feedback from AIDD and that the new focus will be on early intervention in education. Ms. Lawyer added that the activities will stay very similar. The Committee made a request to see an update as it pertains to the Communications Plan in the September meeting

Mr. Jarvela explained that from a technological standpoint, the art and assets of the current agency brand are outdated and this created significant difficulties in developing new marketing materials. Mr. Jarvela noted that with an agency rebranding, the staff will boost agency awareness, create room for a bigger social media footprint, and increase the visibility of the agency in the western part of the state. Mr. Jarvela also explained that work has begun on a relaunch of the agency website, in conjunction with the rebranding, and that there will be complete overhaul of the site to give it a modern style. Regarding the E-news overhaul, Mr. Jarvela said a modern aesthetic and mobile friendly style would assist greatly, as anywhere from 40-70% of web traffic is on a mobile device. Mr. Jarvela also explained that since 2013, Facebook has begun walling off content from its users unless organizations pay for the content advertising space. Mr. Jarvela noted that he will be assessing payment for promotion of critical content, especially legislative and policy content and updates. In terms of an audio/visual overhaul, Mr. Jarvela outlined the pending update of hardware and software to enhance the Board’s multimedia capability. The staff hopes to update the *Place Matters* documentary with stories on “Where are they now?” for those individuals the Board can re-contact.

**UPDATED ALUMNI DEVELOPMENT PLAN**:

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the revised three-year work plan and budget for the Alumni Development Program. The goal of the program will be re-engaging the alumni participants from the Training Programs as a grassroots mobilization effort. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that staff have been updating in an internal database of contacts to help mobilize alumni. Ms. Lawyer explained that an evaluation plan is now included so that staff can track the progress of the program and its effectiveness. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee went through the work plan and discussed activities accomplished through May and then provided a synopsis of pending activities throughout the remainder of the established project schedule. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that there will be another inaugural program for Northern Virginia in August to mirror the earlier effort in Tidewater. Ms. Lawyer explained that, with awareness of the weather concerns that had an impact in the Tidewater pilot, over the next 6-9 months the staff will be monitoring the progress of the development and determine the best methods and approach for connecting with alumni and address the concern of an online presence. The Chair brought a suggestion of a location in the Tidewater region that might help centralize where the meetings might occur. Ms. Laios suggested Northern Virginia Community College as an option for the Northern Virginia Pilot and Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee said she would investigate both of these options.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that the staff will tweak the agenda from the Tidewater meeting to improve results based on the feedback received at that event. In September, staff will evaluate the Northern Virginia event and continue providing support for Tidewater. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee also said that supporting materials, including the Charter and Code of Ethics will be introduced to the Tidewater group over the course of the summer. The Committee raised concerns about participants with limited mobility or travel concerns. Ms. Lawyer explained the possibility of incorporating connective technology (Skype, etc.) to help connect those from more remote parts of the state. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained her hope that by December staff will have completed all four inaugural events and will be able to better evaluate the use of resources. The Chair mentioned the idea of looking at the needs of the majority of the groups in each region. Ms. Lawyer said that the purpose of these groups is to encourage grassroots advocacy to help push forward various policy issues that are of specific concerns to the individual regions. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that in this first meeting they were given the opportunity to begin to determine an advocacy agenda but that this will take more planning. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that budget will be similar of the next three years and that the proposed budgets were an estimate. She added that reason for an increased budget in SFY 2018 is for a statewide conference bringing together all four regions. Ms. Lawyer explained that every year the budgetary needs will be updated based on needs and will be voted on each June.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that Ms. Grace Lambert, Director of Planning, Research and Evaluation, recommended that the Board evaluate the program based on attendance, surveys distributed at each meeting, service utilization (transportation, PCAs, interpreters), marketing pieces, stakeholders reports (person to person interviewing), and chapter reports (representatives of each group will be coming into meetings and report and show the progress of each organization chapter). Ms. Laios suggested more extensive reporting. Ms. Lawyer explains that it has been considered that but that the staff didn’t want to over-burden the chapters, particularly as they were in establishment mode. She noted that if there were problems with reporting, those would be addressed with individual chapters.

The chair called for a MOTION to approve the Alumni Development Plan and recommend its approval to the full board. Ms. Williams made a MOTION. Ms. Laios seconded the MOTION. The MOTION carried.

Mr. Jarvela provided copies of the potential Alumni Development Program logos and titles and explained that there are both full color and monochrome versions of the each. Mr. Jarvela explained that the goal is to combine both the PIP and YLF logos and that certain aspects would be easy to manipulate or change if the Committee desired. Mr. Jarvela noted that the proposed name of the new program was “The VBPD Training Alumni Association (TAA).” The Chair noted he liked the title. Ms. Laios made a MOTION to approve the name as submitted. Dr. Paris-Gainer seconded the MOTION. The MOTION carried.

Dr. Paris-Grainer inquired about the ability to change part of the third logo presented, potentially moving the title to two lines below the icon. The Committee agreed that this was the unanimous choice pending the revision to the title lines. Mr. Jarvela said that the revision would be made and sent to the committee within one week and that, with no further objection, the logo would be made official at that point. The Chair called for a MOTION to approve the logo with described revisions. Ms. Laios made the MOTION. Ms. Loughlin seconded the motion. The MOTION carried.

**ADDITIONAL BUSINESS:**

Ms. Laios noted that the Arc of Virginia conference is August 9-11, 2016 in Williamsburg, VA.

Dr. Paris-Gainer noted that the National Independent Living National Conference is next month in Washington, DC.

A Committee Meeting feedback survey was distributed by Mr. Jarvela.

The Chair called for a MOTION for adjournment. Ms. Loughlin made a MOTION to adjourn. Ms. Williams seconded the MOTION. The MOTION carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:00am.