**­Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

**Advocacy and Outreach (A&O) Committee Meeting Minutes**

***March 16, 2016***

**Committee Members Present:**

Randy Burak (chair)

Carina Elgin

Ethel Paris Gainer

Marisa Laios

Ron Lanier

Rachel Loughlin

Donna Lockwood

Charles Meacham *Ex Officio*

Korinda Rusinyak

Travis Webb

**Committee Members Absent:**

Sari Leinonen-Farrell

Matthew Shapiro

Rose William

**VBPD Staff Present:**

Heidi Lawyer

Megan Campbell

Ben Jarvela

Katherine Lawson

Penni Sweetenburg-Lee

Kara White

Ronita Wilson

**CALL TO ORDER:** Randy Burak, Committee Chair, called meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

**Opening Remarks:** The Chair greeted and welcomed Board members and staff.

**Review of the Agenda:** The Chair reviewed the Advocacy, Outreach and Training Committee agenda items. Ms. Donna Lockwood made a **MOTION** to approve revised agenda. Ms. Ethel Paris Gainer seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was approved unanimously.

**REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING:** The Chair reviewed the Director’s Report. The Chair called attention to the new structure of Board Meetings. Details are in the Executive Director’s report. Ms. Marisa Laios called attention to the attendant regulations. The Chair called attention to the Board’s EasyLiving contract ending (ISP 3-2). Ms. Katherine Lawson, Director of Community Outreach and Programs Manager, confirmed that the funding from VBPD will end; she noted their discussion of potential retro-fitting of structures rather than having people move into new structures which may be outside of their price range. The LEAP grant is ending in September; Ms. Lawson discussed the continuation of the project after September through their grant funding.

**DISCUSSION OF STATE PLAN OBJECTIVES:** Mr. Benjamin Jarvela, Director of Communications provided a **Communications Update**. Migration from Blogger to Facebook completed and was a success. In Progress projects included: *Place Matters* documentary revival in progress. It is currently displayed on the front page of the website, rebranding of PIP/YLF Training Programs, migration from new database file system that can be added to/work off of the new system with a website update. PPR highlights are being very well-received and hopefully will become a new trend. He also raised the issue of the federally mandated stories the Board is required tracking and share. 40 stories of families and individuals should be posted and shared each year to encourage advocacy and inclusion. Ms. Marisa Laios recommended an increase in the advertising/calls to action for user-submitted stories on the Board’s Facebook page.

Ms. Lawson provided the **Liaison and Other Activities update**, she discussed the VA Inter-Community Transition Council, and the Child Welfare Advisory Council (CWAC). Ms. Lawson serves as a member of the CWAC and is working with the Continuous Quality Improvement Subcommittee to improve data collection and assessment to better understand the multivariate data analysis related to children with disabilities in foster care. Ms. Lawson noted the potential policy outcome from this council, to ensure children with disabilities are placed in the most community integrated setting.

Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee, Training Programs Manager, noted the Partners in Policymaking 2016 Graduation, handout of the Board Member invitation. There are 26 current graduates who will graduate on April 9, 2016 (Ceremony from 10a-12p, Reception from 12p-2p). Mr. Jarvela presented rebranded logos for the Partners in Policymaking/Youth Leadership Forum programs. The Chair opened discussion of the YLF logos. Discussion concluded with a consensus approval for the second design with a font change in design three. The Committee **APPROVES** YLF logo with modifications. The Chair opened discussion of the PIP logos. Committee **APPROVES** the first design of the PIP logo. The Committee reached a CONSENSUS to move forward.

**REVIEW OF DRAFT ALUMNI DEVELOPMENT PLAN (AOT 3)**: The Chair opened discussion of the draft Alumni Development Plan. Two options were presented to the committee: Option 1 was to approve the full plan as presented; Option two was to approve a pilot program. Mr. Charles Meacham, Board Chair, questioned funding the first forum in May when the budget for the program has not been approved. . Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that there is sufficient funding in the current fiscal year budget to accommodate that event. Ms. Korinda Rusinyak questioned future funding of the Alumni development program in light of future funding of PIP and YLF. Ms. Lawyer explained that the inaugural year will most likely have a higher budget than subsequent budgets. Following discussion, it was agreed that staff would develop a three year work plan and a three year budget which would also present the timing and budgets needed for PIP and YLF during the years in which they will take place.

Mr. Jarvela opened the discussion of the cooperation between the Alumni Development Plan and the Communications Department. Firstly, he explained possibility of Communications updates (eNews) directly through the new website. Secondly, he explained the possible implementation of host platforms where users can be brought into the system and have direct contact with the online forum and network amongst themselves. Noted, this would be a better option to Facebook or other social media to help see the metrics and directives of users. Additionally, the development of a smartphone app that can be integrated with an online portal; this would also be a direct communication platform with users. Mr. Meacham raised the question of the time frame of this potential program and the funding. Mr. Jarvela explained the hopes of having the time frame (4-5 month implementation) work with development of the Alumni Development Plan and that funding would have to be addressed when a decision would be made. Ms. Lawyer explained that once the staff has committee recommendations, then the plan will be updated and include a specific timeline. Ms. Rusinyak raised the question of if the target audience is on smartphones why that will not be implemented into the plan until year two or three. Ms. Lawyer explained that the associated cost may be high and the Board needs to ensure that the program is running smoothly and the alumni are interested in such a program.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the potential phases of the new plan to encourage promotion of the program. Phase one would consist of the coordination and establishment of individual, regional chapter groups. Phase two, would be a revised structure of the regional chapters. The plan will be refined (phase two) once an inaugural period (phase one) has ended and recommendations are made by alumni participants and the Board. Mr. Ron Lanier raised the issue of the numbers of alumni in the Southwest regions and questioned how they will be potentially organized. Mr. Jarvela and Ms. Lawyer explained that sub-regional chapters could be established depending on the need. Phase three would be a continued support of the various regional chapters and their annual meetings with there being a goal of by October 2018 to hold a state-wide gathering of all alumni regional-chapter groups. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the potential budget and funding associated with personnel, establishing chapters, and refinement. Mr. Meacham raised concerns whether there might be very unequal participation in all four regions and regarding the draft budget of $76,000; He recommended implementation of a pilot program for the first year involving two regions rather than four. Mr. Jarvela raised the point that regardless, the funding for various aspects would remain the same in a full implementation of the plan or the implementation of a pilot program. Ms. Laios noted concern that a pilot might not provide a full view of the potential success for all regions. Ms. Rusinyak noted that the Board could start with involving four regions, assess progress, and then make changes based on participation. Ms. Gainer agreed and encouraged the implementation of the grassroots advocacy and the recruitment for the Alumni Development Plan.

Ms. Gainer made a **MOTION** to accept option one and return to the committee for the June 2016 Board Meeting with a work plan and a revised proposal for a three-year budget. Ms. Laios seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

Ms. Rusinyak made the **MOTION** to approve the initial May meeting using the existing FFY 2016 budget for alumni development. Ms. Laios seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

**STATE PLAN, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** Ms. Laios made a **MOTION** that based on the public comment; to the Board not make changes to the State Plan goals and objectives. Ms. Gainer seconded the **MOTION.** The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

**5-YEAR STATE PLAN OBJECTIVE**: Ms. Lawson requested that the committee familiarize themselves with the new committee structure and reporting of metrics related to each state plan objective.

The Chair requested that the Committee provide feedback on the n new committee structure and surveys handed out.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Ms. Rusinyak raised a question for the need for stories and whether or not Board members can participate. Mr. Jarvela confirmed that Board members were welcome to participate. Ms. Rachel Loughlin raised the idea of having participants in the PIP/YLF programs write out their stories and their involvement as advocates. Ms. Laios agreed that alumni of the program have the best idea of how their training is helping them become more active advocates. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee encouraged AOT Committee Members to recommend applicants for the 2016 YLF Program. Ms. Laios and Ms. Lawson explained that the inter-organizational groups and inter-program participation could help encourage applicants. Ms. Lockwood proposed that the Board members potential act as a host of the A.R.P. meetings and establish further networking with participants and alumni.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:18 a.m.