**Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

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

**Dec. 9, 2020**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Coles-Johnson, Allison

Dixon, Alexandra

Kilgore, Jocelyn

Mann, Eric

Nunnally, Madeline

Olson, Katherine

Rayman, Vashantha

Turner, Ed

Vincent, Frederique

Zimmerman, Nikki

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Korte, Molly

Banks, Diana

**VBPD STAFF PRESENT:**

Jarvela, Benjamin

Morgan, Teri

Sweetenburg-Lee, Penni

Weems, Megan

Wilson, Ronita

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Ms. Allison Coles-Johnson, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:39 a.m. Ms. Kate Olsen made a **MOTION** to approve. Mr. Ed Turner **SECONDED** the **MOTION**.

The Chair welcomed new Board Members to the committee.

**Appointment of AOT Vice Chair:**

The Chair called for nominations of the committee Vice Chair. Mr. Turner volunteered as Vice Chair. The nomination was unanimously approved.

**Partners in Policymaking (PIP) Program Quarterly Report:**

Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee, Director of Training and Alumni Development Programs, thanked the Training Programs staff for all of their work throughout the quarter. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that Ms. Evette Wingfield-Woodley, Training Programs Coordinator, has been out on hiatus until Jan 2021. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee provided an update on the PIP 2019-2020 session which ended in April 2020, and due to COVID-19 the April PIP session was canceled. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee confirmed that there were 24 graduates that completed the program. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that the upcoming 2021-2022 PIP session is being planned as a virtual/in-person hybrid program. Program recruitment has begun and will run through the application deadline on March 19, 2021.

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (YLA) Program Quarterly Report:**

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee provided an update on the YLA 2020 session which was set to run from July, 12-16, 2020, and was canceled due to COVID-19. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that the 18 applicants/confirmed participants for the 2020 session, will be given priority application status for 2021 program. The 2021 program will be held either July 12-16 or July 19-23, 2021. This will also will be a hybrid virtual/in-person program. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that the recruitment for the 2021 session will launch in February 2021 and that applications, deadlines and session dates will be provided to the Board in the future.

**TRAINING ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (TAA) Program Quarterly Report:**

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee provided an update on the TAA activities of the quarter. She reminded committee members of the three fold advocacy efforts of the TAA which are achieved through trainings, information sessions and grassroots advocacy efforts. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that between June-December 2020 there have been 25 meetings with 93 (duplicated) alumni participants. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that the development of a new website dedicated to the TAA efforts was developed to house all event information and has been highly successful.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee discussed the advocacy events held in January of 2020, and that there were threeDevelopmental Disability Advocacy Days. These events were held for alumni and PIP 2020 participants to engage directly with their legislators and impact legislation in the Virginia General Assembly. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted the upcoming Developmental Disability Advocacy Day dates in 2021, held from January 25-29, 2021 and February 8-12, 2021. This year’s events will have three different experience options based on the COVID-19 pandemic: phone campaigns, emailing campaigns, and Zoom meetings with legislators. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee emphasized that there are a number of alumni impacting legislation by having direct meetings with their delegates and senators.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee discussed the TAA Retreat Workshop that was held in March 2020. This event was designed to receive input from Training program alumni on what their goals for the organization are and what changes they would like to see made. Board staff collaborated with the Arc of Virginia to work on setting legislative agenda goals that the TAA focused on throughout the rest of the 2020. One of the goals set by alumni was to organize an event that highlighted the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and its impact. The TAA formed a subcommittee and several keynote speakers were organized to present on the impact of the ADA during a weeklong virtual event that concluded with a “Day of Action” regarding Accessibility in Transportation. This was coordinated with Senator Marsden and Delegate McQuinn. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that 12 self-advocate alumni shared their stories through videos that were further shared on social media platforms (Zoom, Facebook). A returning Board member and Committee member, Mr. Turner was honored with a Lifetime Achievement award during this event.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee discussed another of the advocacy goals set by the TAA, which was a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Panel Discussion series. Three discussion events have been organized and two have been held, one on August 21, 2020, and one November 13, 2020. The third panel discussion will be held in February 2021. The TAA formed a subcommittee and several panelists were organized to bring a variety of backgrounds and experiences dealing with diversity, equity, and inclusion. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that these events have been held virtually on Zoom and included both alumni and public attendees.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee discussed another event series, the TAA Election Town Hall Forums. These events were organized with the Arc 0f Northern Virginia to provide a platform for various local, state, and federal election campaigns to present their plans for disability inclusion and accessibility. Over three hundred participants were able to engage in these virtual events with candidates and ask direct questions and voice concerns regarding disability inclusion and accessibility.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that the TAA held an Election Event regarding voter engagement and accessibility, coordinated with Disability Law Center of Virginia (dLCV) and Virginia Department of Elections. This event provided information about accessible voting and led to a change in the language on the Department of Elections website description on curbside voting. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that the dLCV is pursuing legislation in collaboration with Delegate Price to focus on the challenges related to curbside voting in Virginia.

In closing, Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the TAA Annual Survey results, which were completed in coordination with Ms. Nia Harrison, Director of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. There were 79 Alumni respondents, 36 of which are active TAA.

**Communications REPORT:**

Mr. Benjamin Jarvela, Director of Communications, explained that the PIP 2021-2022 recruitment campaign launched on December 9, 2020 and will run through March 19, 2021 application deadline. Mr. Jarvela encouraged committee members to share the PIP application information. Mr. Jarvela continued and noted that several documents related to Project Living Well have been publicly released and are available to view on the Board’s website as well as Facebook page. Mr. Jarvela noted the launch of the TAA website for management of event content, and that it has been very well received and had significant web traffic. Mr. Jarvela discussed the Board’s social media platforms and noted that the Disability History and Awareness Month campaign, which ended in October 2020, but unfortunately due to COVID-19, the Board did not receive a Governor Proclamation as in past years. The MeWe social network has been closed because of the change in community members and engagement. Facebook has been producing a significant number of viewers and traffic. Mr. Jarvela noted that all new Board members have completed their orientation.

**Other Business:**

The Chair called for any calls to action for advocacy efforts, and Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee asked again that committee members share the PIP 2021-2022 application and information as well as try to engage with TAA virtual event dates. Mr. Eric Mann requested more direct information sharing to the committee members when it comes to outreach and advocacy. Ms. Alexandra Dixon agreed with Mr. Mann and repeated this request, suggesting possible reminders a week before events directly to AOT members. Discussion ensued.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.