**Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

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

**June 9, 2021**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Coles-Johnson, Allison

Dixon, Alexandra

Kilgore, Jocelyn

Korte, Molly

Mann, Eric

Nunnally, Madeline

Olson, Katherine

Rayman, Vasantha

Shapiro, Matthew

Turner, Ed

Vincent, Frederique

Zimmerman, Nikki

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Banks, Diana

**VBPD STAFF PRESENT:**

Jarvela, Benjamin

Morgan, Teri

Sweetenburg-Lee, Penni

Weems, Megan

Wilson, Ronita

Wingfield-Woodley, Evette

**CALL TO ORDER:** The Chair, Ms. Allison Cole-Johnson, called the meeting to order at 10:50 a.m.

The Chair called for a review and approve the committee meeting agenda, and March committee meeting minutes. Ms. Jocelyn Kilgore noted that under Other Business section from March meeting minutes, she is a psychiatrist not a psychologist. Mr. Eric Mann made a **MOTION**, Mr. Ed Turner **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** carried unanimously with a note from Ms. Jocelyn Kilgore to update her professional title as listed in minutes. The March committee meeting minutes and June committee meeting agenda were approved as written.

**Executive Committee Update:** The Chair gave an overview of the information covered in the Executive Committee meeting. The Chair mentioned that Board member attendance had been corrected and that there are no outstanding issues. The Chair continued by discussing the Executive Director’s update which reviewed the Board staff’s work from the past quarter, including comments on HCBS Access, and MARCUS Alert. The Executive Director’s update covered the Communication department’s busy production schedule of graphic design projects, the Grant Review team meeting, and noted that the end of the public health state emergency was expected in July. The Chair emphasized that the end of the public health emergency would mean that upcoming Board meetings would require in-person attendance. The Chair mentioned that the fiscal year is coming to an end and a fiscal report was given by Mr. Henry Street, Director of Administration, and noted that a discussion ensued on the requirement of spending the COVID relief funds and how they can be used to improve access to vaccines for Virginians with disabilities. The Chair concluded by mentioning that proposed budget for FY2022, included a five percent pay increase to state employees.

**Partners in Policymaking (PIP) Update:** Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee, Director of Training and Alumni Development gave an update on the Partners in Policymaking (PIP) program activity from the past quarter. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee thanked and acknowledged her staff and the work to develop two programs virtually/hybrid. She noted that the 2021-22 PIP program currently had 26 approved Partners for the program that include a wide range of diverse demographics. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee highlighted the first session date, September 10-11, 2021; and commented that an update of the program’s kickoff will be discussed at the September 15, 2021 Board meeting. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee discussed the program logistics that Training Programs staff are managing including meeting and coordinating with vendors and speakers to provide an engaging program. She called attention to additional dates that are important to the PIP program; November 6, 2021 is the PIP Capitol Day include a legislative panel with several senators and delegates. April 2, 2022 will be the PIP Graduation Ceremony and Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee invited committee members to attend. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee concluded her report by mentioning that there is a possibility that the March 2022 PIP session could be in-person and invited Board members to attend and listen to the Partners’ final project presentations.

Mr. Mann asked for additional reminders of the PIP dates leading up to the events and reflected that he looked forward to seeing the large diverse PIP class. Additionally, Mr. Mann asked if Board members could reach out and engage with the PIP participants to get them excited to continue their advocacy work after their program ends. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee agreed that was a good idea and requested volunteers from the committee. Ms. Kilgore, Mr. Turner, Mr. Mann, Ms. Madeline Nunnally, and Ms. Molly Korte volunteered to engage with PIP Partners. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee thanked the committee members and expected to be in contact with them in August 2021.

**Training Alumni Association (TAA) Update:** Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee gave a report on the Training Alumni Association’s activity from the past quarter. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee reviewed the presentation made by TAA members at the March committee meeting and covered the growth of the program throughout the past five years. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee commented that the TAA has expanded its partnership with organizations, agencies and communities throughout the Commonwealth. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee discussed the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion event series and commented that they were widely successful and engaged a larger number of constituents. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee commented that the DEI events brought a level of credibility and positive reputation to the TAA and thanked the Communications staff for their promotion and marketing efforts. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee called attention to the date of the TAA Annual Retreat that will include 30-40 alumni members, August 7, 2021. This event will help shape the priorities of the TAA for the next year. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee discussed the goal of the Retreat is to set the strategic plan that will include all activities and events that the alumni will present from September 2021 to June 2022.

Ms. Alexandra Dixon asked about the format of the TAA Retreat. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that it will be a virtual event from 8:30 AM-4:00 PM; and also noted that there is a possibility that the DD Advocacy Days in January 2022 will be in-person attendance. This was based on the feedback from alumni. Ms. Kilgore asked whether the March PIP session would be in-person, when and where it would occur. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that all of the logistics would need to be clarified, but noted that most of the Partners were excited about the virtual format of the program, as well as, the presenters. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee repeated the PIP program dates, September 10-11, 2021, October 1-2, 2021, November 5-6, 2021, January 7-8, 2022, February 4-5, 2022, March 4-5, 2022, and April 1-2, 2022.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee returned to her report of the TAA, and discussed the success of the Train the Trainer event that was held on April 24, 2021. There were 24 active participants that all registered using the TAA webpage designed by the Communications department. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee credited this webpage for the higher level of engagement of the TAA events, as well as partnerships with other advocacy organizations. The Chair commented how excited she was about the all of the work and activities of the Training Programs.

**Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) Update:** Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee gave a report on the Youth Leadership Academy’s activity from the past quarter. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the goal of the Training Programs to be as engaging as possible in a virtual format for the 2021 YLA program. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee commented that there was an issue with the number of the accepted Delegates, 6 out of 25 accepted YLA class members, decided that they did not want to continue based on their graduations, jobs, and other priorities. Another reason noted by the participants, was exhaustion of online instruction, and they did not want to continue learning through virtual formats. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that there are only 14 Delegates for this year’s YLA program, 11 males and 3 females; and that 12 YLA staffers have been hired, who are mostly YLA alumni. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the effort to engage alumni, specifically the YLA alumni in the program. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee called attention to important dates related to YLA including: Tuesday, July 13, 2021 at 10:00 AM for the YLA Capitol Day event with a Legislative Mock Testimony Panel. Virginia Delegate McQuinn will be moderating, while Senator Hashmi, Senator Peake, Delegate Heretick, and Delegate Lucas will be participating in the legislative panel.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee emphasized the effort put into creating and acquiring the YLA materials and elements of the program to make it as engaging for the youth delegates as it would have been for an in-person event. There are several products and resources that are being mailed to Delegates and the program agenda included elements of social engagement as well as educational. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee called attention to the YLA Graduation date, July 15, 2021 at 11:30 AM and the event would be followed with a post-graduation celebration which included a group viewing of the film, *Crip Camp*. Ms. Dixon expressed her excitement on the group viewing of *Crip Camp*. Ms. Olson also discussed the number of positive comments from self-advocates that she has heard about the film. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee thanked the AOT members for their commitment and dedication to the Training Programs and the funding provided. The Chair appreciated the thanks and complimented the staff’s efforts to develop the programs and provide excellent products, programs and outcomes.

**Communications Update:** Mr. Benjamin Jarvela, Director of Communications, provided an update on the work of the Communications department. Mr. Jarvela discussed the work to develop materials for all of the Training Programs as covered in Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee’s reports. Mr. Jarvela reported that the Board’s social media platforms are tracking and growing nicely. Mr. Jarvela explained that Project Living Well (PLW) is developing a plain language trend report variant. This is due to concerns raised by the Partnership for People with Disabilities about the accessibility of the information in the PLW trend reports. This plain language variant will be designed as a comic strip style document. Mr. Jarvela emphasized the July 1, 2021 state deadline for the assessments of disability services in Virginia. He noted there are some format changes being made based on the deadline timeline, and the decision to dedicate design time for the infographic variants of the assessments based on read and download views.

Mr. Jarvela discussed the acquisition of a contract with a media monitoring service called Meltwater. The Communications staff are using Meltwater to source content and news related to topic, category, and geographic region to be shared with constituent networks on social media. Mr. Jarvela commented that as the Board moves towards the cultural and linguistic competency element of the next State Plan, staff can also use Meltwater to directly target news sources and media contacts to help decimate marketing and information. Mr. Jarvela explained the goal to use Meltwater to target a more personalized approach to connect and push information to wider and more direct audiences. Mr. Jarvela concluded his report and discussed the annual PPR Highlights, noting that production was moved much later into the year than normal due to pandemic-related delays and subsequent changes in federal reporting. He noted the goal to have the final version published in the next few weeks.

**Other Business:** The Chair called for any other business or comments. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted one more event of importance during the 2021 YLA program, Thursday, July 15, 2021, which will have a self-advocate panel discussion. The Chair called for any additional questions or comments.

**Adjournment:** The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:57 PM.