**Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

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

***Sept. 11, 2019***

**Committee Members Present:**

Allison Coles-Johnson (Chair)   
Diana Banks

Alexandra Dixon

Jocelyn Kilgore

Molly Korte

Eric Mann

Madeline Nunnally

Kate Olson

Ethel Parris Gainer

Vasantha Rayman

Jamie Snead

Frederique Vincent

**Committee Members Absent:**

Matthew Shapiro

**VBPD Staff:**

Heidi Lawyer

Benjamin Jarvela

Penni Sweetenburg-Lee

Megan Weems

Ronita Wilson

Evette Wingfield-Woodley

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Chair, Ms. Allison Coles-Johnson, called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

The Chair called for a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the June committee meeting. Mr. Eric Mann made a **MOTION** to approve. Ms. Jocelyn Kilgore **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** carried unanimously and the March meeting minutes were approved as written. New members including Ms. Vasantha Rayman, Ms. Molly McMunn Korte, Ms. Madeline Nunnally, and Ms. Dianna Banks, as well as Ms. Alexandra Dixon, **ABSTAINED** as they were not present for the meeting.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE:**

The Chair gave an overview of the Executive Committee meeting, including Board member attendance, the Executive Director’s update, fiscal update, an update on grant recipients and upcoming LOI for the grant review team, the Executive Committee’s recommendations on potential committee structure, as well as, the committee agendas. Mr. Benjamin Jarvela, Director of Communications, briefly explained the pending recommendations for changes to the AOT committee discussed during the July 2019 Executive Committee meeting. Ms. Frederique Vincent mentioned she felt the suggestions were a helpful improvement to committee responsibilities.

**Partners In Policymaking Program (PIP) Updates:**

Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee, Director of Training & Alumni Development, introduced herself and made introductions of her staff, Ms. Ronita Wilson, Training & Alumni Development Coordinator, and Ms. Evette Wingfield-Woodley, Training Programs Coordinator. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee briefly explained the function of the Training Programs within the agency for the new Board members. She discussed the upcoming Partners In Policymaking Program (PIP) scheduled to begin on Friday, September 12, 2019. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that as of Monday, September 9, 2019, four Partners had withdrawn due to various life circumstances, bringing the total count to twenty-six; but that wait-listed applicants would be contacted to potentially be added to the class roster before the program begins. She also noted for new members that the PIP Program runs for seven months, through April 2020.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee commented that the program booklet had all information related to the program and that there were two PIP event dates note for Board members. First, that on November 2-3, 2019, at 9 a.m., there will be the PIP Capitol Day at the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond, VA. The Partners will give testimony presentations at the State Capitol. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the significance of the event to the program and that this year the staff will facilitate the Partners’ transition to the Alumni Development Program. Ms. Dixon questioned again the time and date, and what role the staff would like the Board members to have in the event. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the goal is to have the Board members encourage Partners and participate as audience members during the legislative presentations. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the second date of importance and invited all Board members to the graduation ceremony which is Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 10 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Holiday Inn City Center in Newport News, VA. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee emphasized that all Board members are invited and encouraged to attend the event. Ms. Alexandra Dixon inquired about Board members being compensated for their travel or lodging. Mr. Benjamin Jarvela stated he believed it would be a covered expense but would check with the Board administrative staff to be sure and let her know before the end of that day.

**Alumni Development Program (ADP) Updates:**

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee discussed the Strategic Planning Retreat for the Alumni Development Program (ADP) that occurred in August 2019. She noted the materials handed out by Training, including the Chapter Operations Manuals, PPR Highlights report, and the Assessment Infographics, the Alumni Chapter Operations Manual that was developed with the Communications team and its important role in redefining the goal of the program. She explained that alumni in attendance would like to see more training opportunities and requested that the staff plan an event in November associated with policy work/legislative advocacy. Board staff will coordinate major training or event activities from September 2019 to May 2020 based on feedback from the alumni.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained another point that was heavily discussed at the retreat was the overall branding and image of the ADP, noting the title of “Alumni Development Program” doesn’t fully describe or explain the mission of the program. She added that another issues expressed by the alumni was that they had a hard time explaining the program when they were able to meet with legislators. Discussion ensued. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that staff are identifying an advisory panel of alumni to assist in recommendations and suggestions for future program improvement. Representatives to the panel could also serve as regional liaisons to assist with activity recruitment. Mr. Jarvela added the Communications team is working to redesign the program logo based on alumni feedback and brainstorming from the retreat. Mr. Mann commented how much he enjoyed and appreciated the effort and thorough work behind the ADP Chapter Operations Manual and asked if there was more of a role for the Board members to engage with the Training Programs participants. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained it would help to have Board members attend upcoming advocacy events. Ms. Dixon asked what the Strategic Planning Retreat advocacy training curriculum covered. Ms. Lawyer explained that a thorough training on legislative advocacy efforts that are taught in the ADP and both Training Programs. Ms. Dixon mentioned the “27-9-3” (27 words, 9 sec, 3 concepts) technique for an advocacy pitch and suggested developing something like it for the alumni and Board staff agreed that merited further research. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that the alumni program is still functioning based on region (NOVA, CVA, SWA, TARC) and Training staff would work to engage members, and have taken control over more of an administrative role for the ADP. Ms. Lawyer emphasized how much she appreciated the hard work of the staff to coordinate these programs.

**Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) Update:**  
Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee had no update because the recruitment process for the upcoming July 2020 Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) Program would not begin until December 2019. She noted that staff were working to identify the applicant pool and planning for a social media campaign for recruitment. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted the program would be held at Virginia State University, explaining the program to ~~the~~ new committee members, stated that applicants must be students who are a rising high school sophomores to seniors in high school (ages 16-22) and the program is an all-expense paid four-day advocacy training program that includes several core subjects like personal development, professional environment, and career development.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee asked the Board members to begin recommending and recruiting applicants. Ms. Vincent asked if the application quota has been met the last few years of the program and Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee answered that, yes, the applicant list has been full, but the goal of the program is to always approach new possible applicants of various backgrounds and well as topics and discussions. She encouraged the Board members to become more involved in ~~the~~ program recruitment. Discussion ensued.

**EVENT SUPPORT REPORTS:**

Dr. Ethel Parris Gainer, the Board Chair, and Ms. Jamie Snead gave a report on the Centra Person-Centered Thinking Workshop which took place on July 30-31, 2019. Ms. Snead noted that most attendees (roughly twenty) were people who work directly with persons with disabilities, rather than persons with disabilities. The Board Chair mentioned that as a self-advocate she felt there was a focus on persons with disabilities learning self-empowerment, and recommended a repeat of the presentations from the event for the full Board. Ms. Snead agreed and noted it was a well-organized event, with a wealth of information, and said it was important to her to see the number of Centra staff members involved. The Board Chair believed the Board’s investment in the event was worthwhile and Ms. Snead concurred. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee asked whether this event was marketed to providers. Neither Ms. Snead nor the Board Chair were sure whom the event was marketed to, but thought it should have been marketed to persons with disabilities.

Ms. Megan Weems, Communications Assistant, gave a report of the VAULT ADA Pride Day Event which took place on August 3, 2019, at the Mobility Super Center in Richmond, VA. Ms. Weems explained that the VAULT (Virginia Advocates United Leading Together) organized their event to be a community gathering to celebrate the anniversary of the ADA, as well as a small resource fair that featured local and statewide organizations and agencies. The agenda of activities included community speakers who were connected to local community resources, round table discussions of common issues (social-, service-, or accessibility-based) facing the disability community, a musical performance, food, and event surveys. Overall, the goal of the event appeared to have been met. There were roughly 20-25 community attendees, who were able to ask specific questions and receiveanswers or were directed to specific resources to help. Ms. Weems noted there was a limited amount of marketing for the event which might have impacted attendance. Ms. Weems stated she believed the event was a worthwhile investment for the Board.

**Communications UPDATE:**

Mr. Jarvela gave a brief update of the Communications Department activities including: the printing and mailing of the 2018 Assessments (Early Intervention and Community Living) to legislators in July 2019, the multiple Training Program documents discussed by Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee previously, the ADP Retreat, Executive Committee and New Board member orientations, the Arc State Conference program ad space, a website expansion and current ongoing projects. These projects included: the Board Packet redesign for accessibility and the Project Living Well grant as well as a project document which is set to be released in several stages over the next few months.

**Adjournment:**  
Hearing no new business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:14 am.