**NC Statewide Independent Living Council**

**Meeting Minutes**

**January 25, 2013**

**Country Inn and Suites, Burlington, NC**

**Welcome/Mission /Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 9:03am by Keith Greenarch, Chair.

Introductions were made by all members.

**Mission** was read by Kay Miley

**Meeting Accessibility Reminders** was read by Keith Greenarch

The agenda was read with additions and changes being called for.

**Action:** the Agenda was approved unanimously.

Changes to the Minutes of the July 2012 meeting were called for. No additions or changes were made.

**Action:** (Commander/McLoud) approval of the minutes was unanimously.

**Chair Report: Keith Greenarch, Chair**

* The meeting date for July conflicted with the NCIL conference. The meeting has been moved to August 16, 2013
* SPIL writing task force worked hard yesterday, great progress has been made. The next step will be to take the draft out to the public. Public input is needed under the activities to help us meet our Objectives.
* Cornell Turner due to family illness is taking a leave of absence
* Brandon Buck’s resignation letter was accepted. Assurances from the Governor’s office that future appointments will be done in a speedy fashion
* Had an opportunity to speak for a few seconds with Gov. McCrory, he is aware of our work
* The Executive Director search is progressing, 18 applications were received, 3 qualified persons, the application process will close officially on January 30. An announcement will be made by February 3.
* Great Conference was a huge success. Thank you to Sandy McMillan, over 200 contacts, information and referrals were made from the information table.
* Membership committee chair has changed. Dorothy will serve on the committee, Sierra will chair.

**SILC Congress Activity Report**

* Oshana Watkins – Education I the key, the congress was very enlightening. I learned not to focus on what you can’t do but on what we can do. I learned how other SILC’s were operating with grant writing and other capacity. A copy of the power point presentation will be sent to the SILC office for any and all to utilize. A copy will be available for uploading to the SILC website.
* Gloria Bellamy – The Building Capacity session was great, we learned why and how to work from beginning. Our SILC is using good practices with our training and mentoring, we came away with more good ideas
* Rene Cummins – The focus on writing state plans at the SILC

Congress gave me an opportunity to discuss with other states the problems they were having in carrying out their current State Plans.

One problem they identified was that the goals in the plans were written without buy-in from the stakeholders who were then responsible for conducting the activities to achieve the objectives and the goals. The plan that the NC SILC State Plan Writing Task Force is now developing has goals, objectives and activities written by each stakeholder who when then be involved as the lead organization for carrying out that particular portion of the outcomes-focused State Plan for Independent Living.

**Committee Reports**

Keith encouraged all members to follow your passion and get on a committee. Committee’s should plan on meeting by teleconference during the course of the quarter. Please leave Thursdays before the full council meeting for trainings.

* **Executive Committee/Keith Greenarch** – this committee has been working closely with the finance committee. One of our big concerns was the progress of the SPIL, good progress was made yesterday (Thursday) toward that end. The search for a new Executive Director was discussed earlier in the Chair’s report. Thank you to all members participating in the search.
* **Membership/Sierra Royster** – New members are doing a great job getting involved. Ex-Officio training is being planned for each quarterly meeting. This is to help all members understand each agencies work to promote independent living. A big thank you to Vicki Smith for her presentation yesterday on Disability Rights. Second interviews are being scheduled for the two applicants on file.
* **Community Based Living/Kay Miley** - training is being planned for more information on transitions from institutions to independent living.
  + Keith encouraged all SILC members to tell their local media outlets about their participation in the SILC so community members would know who to contact. The SILC website should also be cited.
  + Sandy Ogburn asked for a template to be available to the members, Oshana will provide one to the SILC office for all to use as well as a media contact list.
* **Expanding the Network of Centers/Keith Greenarch -** This committee is at a standstill for the time being.
* **Part B Center Report/Helen Pase** – the activity at the center was slow during the holiday season. Systems advocacy with the city has been successful with 29 curb cuts being completed. New staff has been added, one with 36 years experience with Social Security.
* **Promote Civil Rights/Jeff McLoud** – The committee watches legislation. The activity from the new body and Governor will be monitored and reported on by email to the SILC members. The new year is expected to be very active. There are many new legislative members in state and federal positions. There is a lot of work ahead to inform these representatives. Julia Sain shared an experience she had working with Gov. McCrory when he served as mayor of Charlotte. He helped set precedent with 5’ sidewalks. “He will do what he says; he won’t support something he doesn’t believe in. He knows how to get the stakeholders involved”. Keith, Gloria and Holly shared that it is our duty to educate, state the facts and share the story. Sen. Burr recognizes us as experts.
* **Policy & Procedure/Rene Cummins** – This goal has been accomplished with good policies and procedures in place.
* **IL Services and Supports/Sierra Royster** – This committee has not met recently but a meeting is being planned. The evaluation process is the planned discussion for this meeting, one that will work for all involved. Keith shared that Sandi Sinnott had some great ideas.
* **Youth/Sandy McMillan** – Sandy gave the floor to Sierra who reported that he YLF (Youth Leadership Forum) has had their first committee meeting in person in December. The dates and location for YLF have been confirmed, July 8 – 13 at NC State Campus. The process of interviewing speakers is now in progress with choices planned to be done by next week. Sierra encouraged all SILC members to find youth to come deadline for applications is March 29. There are 4 staff positions available, applications for these positions are due March 15. All forms and applications were made available to all members present and are available on the SILC website.
  + Holly Riddle stated that her organization is available for assistance with finances and to contact Kelly Bohlander. The DD council’s next meeting is in Feb. the next one after that is in May.
* **Finance Committee/Sandy McMillan** - All have received the financial reports in your email blast. The annual expense YTD is running under budget due to no salary being paid to an Executive Director. Sandy and Freida, the finance manager of the SILC office, met with the DSU in January to better understand the budgeting and contract process in an effort to ensure that no funds are reverted back to RSA in the future. The current process takes about three months to make contract changes. There is $8,724 that has never been encumbered in a contract, which needs to be done quickly to allow time for the contracts to be amended and the money spent before the end of the fiscal year in September. The Center’s for Independent Living have been asked for input as to how to best use these funds. Sandy asked for a motion, that the executive committee will work with the CILs and our DSU fiscal agent to reallocate our Part B funds to optimize the funds available to serve the citizens of NC with disabilities who desire to live independently.  Our goal is to not revert one dollar to show that the need is great in NC.”

**Action:** (McLoud/Cummins) motion carried unanimously.

* With the extra funds available in the SILC office budget, it would a good time to conduct an external financial audit.

**DSU Reports**

**DSB – Deidre Dockery**  - The Division of Services for the Blind Independent Living Rehabilitation Program provided specialized and individualized services and supports for 283 individuals who have significant visual impairments and were less than 55 years of age during the federal fiscal year.  The primary services provided included assessment, adjustment to vision loss counseling, and independent living skills training.   Services were provided one-on-one with consumers in their homes and in small group settings in community-based learning centers referred to as Mini Centers.

* **VR – Pamela Lloyd Ogoke** – No numbers were given. Mark Steele was named to replace Cynthia Temoshenko. Programs are going well; we are waiting on the other divisions to see what impact will be made.

**CIL Network Report/Jim Whalen**

* All the numbers for the CIL’s are reflected on their 704 Reports. They are available upon request to all interested parties.
* IT was suggested that funds for another Summit should be set aside. A day or two in Raleigh was suggested with an emphasis on legislative education and a legislative day. Holly Riddle said that her group is ready to help financially.
* Chair, Keith Greenarch appointed Jim as Chair of the IL Summit investigating group. Deidre Dockery, John Marens Jennifer Overfield and Jeff McLoud also volunteered to work on an IL Summit.

**Ex-Officio Reports**

* **Disability Rights NC/Vicki Smith** - Disability Rights NC is currently engaged in five cases in federal court that impact the ability of people with disabilities to live independently in the community. Three are related to Medicaid services and two are employment discrimination.

We also continue to monitor the State’s implementation of the settlement agreement between North Carolina and the U.S. Department of Justice. The settlement agreement requires the state to develop community based services that would support people with mental illness who living in Adult Care Homes. Several new service definitions are in the process of being developed – all of which will provide support for independent living.

Disability Rights NC is also following up on voting issues that were raised during the Presidential election. Specifically we are looking challenges raised related to guardians.

We also continue several legally based challenges to accessible movie theatres and the failure of Medicaid approved health care providers to engage sign language interpreters for their deaf patients.

* **Client Assistance Program/John Marens** - NCCAP is a federally mandated and funded advocacy and education program for consumers of the public rehabilitation programs (Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Services for the Blind, their Independent Living Programs, and the Centers for Independent Living).  NCCAP educates persons’ with disabling conditions about their rights and benefits under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended) and Title I of the ADA. We provide alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services and/or advocacy when applicants or consumers of the public rehabilitation programs find themselves in a conflict with the agency. We also inform and educate consumers of their right to due process. NCCAP is here to help educate and guide people through the public rehabilitation system to help them receive appropriate and timely services.

1. An IL consumer in the western part of the State called CAP to ask for assistance regarding a delay in service. This consumer had gone to Appeal with VR/IL early in 2012 regarding the number of hours he was receiving for Personal Assistance Services (PAS). In the Appeal Hearing transcript, the Hearing Officer noted that the consumer had also requested assistance with home modifications. He utilized a wheelchair for mobility and he needed his computer table raised so he could get under it with his wheelchair, and he needed a door installed in the basement, which he now occupied, so that he could leave the home in case of an emergency. CAP became involved in the case when these services were not provided. CAP intervened on the consumer’s behalf to help him get a new counselor as his previous IL counselor was not providing services. CAP followed the case until a rehab engineer came to the home to complete a specifications report on the desk and new door. At this point, the consumer seemed pleased and there was no further contact with CAP. Consumer then contacted CAP again more recently to say that the computer desk was not raised to the correct height and the contractor installed a door that he could not close when he re-entered the home. IL did not appear to be willing to fix the problems. CAP again became involved and contacted the VR/IL Unit manager as well as the State Rehabilitation Engineer Specialist, and with CAP intervention, these problems were corrected.
2. A VR/IL consumer contacted CAP stating that he wanted to go to work, but he needed a hearing aid in order to do so. This hearing problem also made it more difficult for him to conduct his affairs independently in the community. He lives in a rural area and he did not have reliable transportation, so he could not get to the VR/IL office a good distance away. A long delay occurred, an application was not taken, and consumer contacted CAP. Through CAP intervention, a VR/IL counselor came to consumer’s town to complete an application. More intervention was needed when VR refused to sponsor a new hearing evaluation, as his prior one was outdated. CAP intervened. A hearing evaluation was sponsored and subsequently, the consumer was provided a hearing aid. He can now proceed with his plans to return to the workforce.
3. A 23 year old VR client contacted CAP because VR refused to assist him with transportation. He was attending school and his car required repair. VR refused to repair the car and would not assist him with an alternate transportation service to school. Through CAP intervention & advocacy, VR agreed to repair his vehicle and provide a taxi for transportation to & from school during the repair period. Consumer is now able to continue his education and has his own transportation in his community.
4. Consumer initially contacted CAP reporting a conflict with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR). Her counselor would not consider amending her employment plan (IPE) to change her vocational goal to electrologist, nor to include training in this field. Her case with VR had been open for ten years. CAP assisted her in developing a script to present her request to VR, but the VR agency continued to refuse to amend her IPE. Over the next few months, CAP reviewed the case file and determined that the consumer’s job goal appeared to be reasonable. CAP Director, John Marens, contacted the VR/IL Unit Manager and the Regional Director and argued that the case had been open for ten years and that none of the vocations suggested by VR were compatible with the consumer’s choices or abilities. As a result of CAP intervention, the consumer’s plan was amended to reflect her choice of vocational goal, and VR provided training and equipment needed, transportation support to her out-of-state training site and her new home in Austin, Texas. Consumer expressed appreciation with our services and her CAP case was just recently closed.
5. Consumer contacted the Client Assistance Program due to delay in service and conflict with her VR/IL counselor. Physical restoration services were stalled. Consumer’s leg was amputated when she was four years old and she has utilized a prosthesis since that time. She has multiple health issues which include arthritis, PTSD, and dermatological problems associated with the stump of her leg. She required a new prosthesis. VR was able to provide treatment for the arthritis and PTSD; however, getting the new prosthetic leg proved to be a real struggle. VR did authorize the service, but the vendor took more than a year and still did not complete the task. His skills did not appear to match the task and consumer continued to suffer extreme discomfort and damage to the stump. The consumer continued to complain to VR/IL during this time, but the agency was not willing to change vendors. CAP intervened successfully, through discussion with VR personnel and by educating consumer on VR/IL policy, so that she could advocate on her own behalf. Together, we argued to change the vendor to make the new prosthesis for her. Due to CAP intervention and advocacy, VR changed the vendor. This process is currently ongoing and CAP continues to follow the progress.

Alternative formats of this report are available.

* **Developmental Disability Council/Holly Riddle** – This is no written report due to short staff in the office. The new administration is being watched closely as to dealings with Medicaid expansions.

The structure of DHHS is in a time of fluxuation. New leadership will be in place. This is a good reason to another IL Summit.

The DD Council needs, in regards to Persons in homes and other facilities, technology to help consumers be more independent. Shared living strategies are also being looked into.

Funding being discussed for:

* + Emergency preparedness for those with disabilities is also. This would be good to get the ADA network involved.
  + Victim counseling for persons with disabilities
  + Care coordination, competency curriculum that hopefully the state will adopt

The DD Council is working big time in the area of employment, 4 initiatives in this area and picking up Project SEARCH

John Marens asked if there may be a more global way to look into the mental health issue as it affects everything, a much larger picture especially when presenting to legislators.

**Old Business**: none

**New Business**: none

**Public Comment:** Gratitude was expressed by many for the training offered on Thursday. This is great for new members who expressed they were greatly impacted by the videos and discussion.

**Adjourn:** Keith Greenarch adjourned the meeting at 11:07, with instruction made for members to get lunch and travel safe. If any travel problems are experienced, please stay the night in safety, the SILC will cover your expenses.

**Next meeting is April 26, 2013**

**Attendees:**

P = Present / T= attending by Teleconference / A = Absent

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Members** |  |  |  | **CIL Directors** |  |
| Greenarch, Keith | P | Kaufman, Joshua | P |  |  |
| Bellamy, Gloria | P | Watkins, Oshana | P | Helen Pace | P |
| Cummins, Rene | P | McMillan, Sandy | P | Julia Sain | P |
| Turner, Cornell | A |  |  | Jim Whalen | P |
| Lambert, Kimlyn | A |  |  | Benita Williams | P |
| Sinnot, Sandi | P | **Ex. Officio** |  |  |  |
| Miley, Kay | P | Riddle, Holly | P |  |  |
| McLoud, Jeff | P | Smith, Vicki | A | **Gallery** |  |
| Staley, Teresa | P | Dockery, Deidre | P | Ginny King | P |
| Royster, Sierra | T | Marens, John | P | Joe Gentry | P |
| Frye, Dorothy | P |  |  | Patricia Sites | P |
| Commander, Zach | P |  |  | Mike Ogburn | P |
| Foster, Monica | A | **Support** |  | Pamela Lloyd-Ogoke | T |
| Overfield, Jennifer | P | Debbie Hippler | P |  |  |
| Ogburn, Sandy | P | Cath Kiwitt | P |  |  |
| Holt, Clare “Ping” | A | Mark Lineberger | P |  |  |