

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
Sleep Inn, Minot & Virtual  
November 3 - 4, 2022**

**Call to Order:** Russ Cusack called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. A quorum was present.

**Roll Call:**

**Members Present:** Shannon Cook, Angie Bosch, Leon Dietrich, LaRae Gustafson, Chelsy Sondrol, Brittney Hogan, Russ Cusack, Nancy Ludson, Jan Beddes, Joe Yasenchack, Gillian Plenty Chief

**Members Absent:** Brenda Boehler, Ali Brown, Emma Leigh Miller,

**Non-Council Members Present:** Scott Burlingame, Aimee Volk, Damian Schlinger

**Approval of August 2022 Minutes:** Shannon Cook made a motion to approve the August 2022 SILC minutes as presented, Russ Cusack seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

**Approval of the November 2022 Agenda:** Nancy Ludson made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Shannon Cook seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

**Correspondence – Russ Cusack:**

Correspondence was sent advising that there have been changes to the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) submission. The SPIL instrument and instructions, as well as developing a portal to allow grantees to submit their SPILs through the Q90 Portal. To allow enough time to complete both, and to provide additional guidance to grantees the 3-year SPIL submissions are being delayed. They are asking states to do a similar process that we did in 2020 and that is to do a one-year technical amendment to our current SPIL or a substantive amendment to the SPIL by June 30, 2023, which would be a one-year SPIL.

**Nancy made a motion to do a one-year technical amendment with the understanding that we continue to work on the 3-year SPIL throughout the next year and Leon Dietrich seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision 10 Yes and 0 No.**

There was correspondence about training and explained the technical needs assessment.

**Treasurer's Report – Shannon Cook:** Reviewed the Treasurer's Report.

**Leon Dietrich made a motion to accept the Treasure's Report as presented, LaRae Gustafson seconded the motion to approve. Motion passed by unanimous decision.**

**Vote for New Council Roles**

**Chair**

Brittney Hogan nominated for the role of Chair. Brittney accepted the nomination.

**Angie Bosch made a motion to close voting and to appoint Brittney Hogan as the Chair of the SILC and Nancy Lundon seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.**

#### **Vice Chair**

Gillian Plenty Chief nominated for the role of Vice Chair. Gillian accepted the nomination.

**Shannon Cook made a motion to close voting and appoint Gillian Plenty Chief as the Vice Chair of the SILC. Motion was seconded by Nancy Lundon. Motion passed by unanimous decision.**

#### **Secretary**

Russ Cusack nominated as the secretary. Russ accepted the nomination.

**Nancy made a motion to appoint Russ Cusack as the Secretary of the SILC. Motion was seconded by Jan Beddes. Motion passed by unanimous decision.**

#### **How we Talk about People we Serve – Scott Burlingame**

Scott shared a PowerPoint on Disability Etiquette and how to talk to the people that we serve. He discussed people first language versus identity first language. He had the liaison forward his PowerPoint to the SILC.

#### **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Update – Damian Schlinger**

Damian talked about how VR rebounded and 2022 was a record setting year. They made every one of their goals and met seven of the nine stretch goals that were established. He talked about their challenges such as retention, developing a statewide mindset (have all the offices talk about what is working well in each office), as well as looking at the language that is used.

Damian shared statistics from the 2021 Disability Statistics Compendium and how they are projecting goals for next year. North Dakota was one of three states in the United States that got more applications than last year which was recognized nationally.

Some of the accomplishments for VR this year: Streamlining the VR process – looked at the eligibility process, updated the client financial assistance form, etc. Increasing awareness – looked at the VR process and worked on the website, 34 policies/procedures were initiated or updated, increased tuition assistance, expanding the department of corrections and justice program and we are in two corrections currently in a pilot program, ADA specialist, and officially came off of order of selection.

#### **The Value of Independent Living and Legislative Report – Panel**

Representative John Nelson came and talked about the gaps they see in the current service system. He talked about transportation and getting to work, brain injury and where do people fit in the system, workforce issues (lack of professionals versus demand), etc.

When getting in touch with your local representative most of them have their email and phone number posted on the legislative council website. The best way to contact them is by email or text. When bringing up an issue try to state what the need is and if you know of a possible solution define that. Try not to have multiple people send the same thing.

## **Committee Breakout**

**Friday, November 4, 2022**

**Call to Order:** Russ Cusack called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. A quorum was present.

### **Roll Call:**

**Members Present:** Leon Dietrich, Joe Yasenchack, Angie Bosch, Shannon Cook, Gillian Plenty Chief, LaRae Gustafson, Brittney Hogan, Nancy Lundon, Chelsy Sondrol, Jan Beddes

**Members Absent:** Brenda Boehler, Ali Brown, Russ Cusack, Emma Leigh Miller

**Non-Committee Members:** Aimee Volk, Scott Burlingame, Damian Schlinger

### **Community Innovative Transportation – Brian Horinka & Darrell Francis**

Brian, superintendent of the Minot City Transit System talked about the revitalization of the Minot transportation bus system. He talked about the routes, the bus times, and budget. They are funded by state and federal funds, there are also other grants that they have, they sell wraps for advertisements as well. Rider fees come out to about 9% of the fees. They have auditory announcements and public Wi-Fi on all buses. They give about 70,000 rides in the intercity per year.

Darrell is with Souris Basin Transportation and covers ten counties and paratransit. They are a rural transportation system. They have an intercity transit route three days a week from Minot to Bismarck. They do about 90,000 rides a year and have thirty-four (34) employees with thirty (30) vehicles that are all accessible.

### **Quarterly Director's Report:**

**Scott for Independence, Inc.:** See attached.

**Angie for Freedom:** See attached.

**LaRae for Options:** See attached.

**Royce for Dakota Center for Independent Living:** See attached.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Governance Committee – Royce Schultze:** Three openings: Quadrant 1, 3, and a consumer at large. Discussed having a short meeting after the quarterly breakout session meeting to start planning for the next quarterly meeting for presenters and possible topics.

**Internal Affairs – Nancy Lundon:** See Grid

**External Affairs – Angie Bosch:** See Grid

**State Rehabilitation Council – Russ Cusack:** No report.

**Committee on Aging – Royce Schultze:** ND Assistive talked about seeing a need for people requesting home modifications and special equipment in their homes. Requests are coming from HCBS and DD case managers for home monitoring due to lack of QSP's. A member had conversations with local legislators and provided information on HCBS. The legislators shared the importance of providing these services in a person's home community. They also shared that there will be legislative support for these efforts.

**Traumatic Brain Injury Council – Shannon Cook:** Century code is unclear for traumatic brain injury so there are a couple of committee members that will look at the language to make it clearer. They are looking at a "Tool Kit" for (videos and handouts) for traumatic brain injury.

They are looking at the “Individual Justice Plan” in which they can identify individuals in the justice system to reduce crimes.

**Olmstead Commission – Scott Burlingame:** They talked about children in need of services including finding housing. They talked about their strategic plan.

**NASILC – Brenda Boehler:** No report

Public Comment: No comment

The next SILC meeting will be February 2-3, 2023, in Bismarck, ND and will have the virtual option.

**Shannon Cook made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Leon Dietrich seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:21 a.m.**

## **Options RCIL SILC Report November 3, 2022**

### **Accessibility/Home Modification Evaluations:**

- Assisted two consumers with designs for a ramp, potential funding resources, and contractors and vendors.
- Assisted four consumers with designs for bathroom remodels, potential funding resources, and contractors and vendors.
- Options collaborated with the other Centers and ND Protection and Advocacy to assess a sample of polling places throughout Options service area. Options assessed 25 locations within our service area.
- Provided Mayville, ND with a USDA requested ADA accessibility evaluation of their public buildings.

### **Annual Deer Hunt:**

Options held its annual deer hunt at Rydell National Wildlife Refuge located southeast of Mentor MN. The Hunt provided eleven hunters from two states the ability to hunt deer. During the hunt four deer were taken which included one doe, two button bucks, and one mature buck. All but two hunters saw deer.

### **Relocations/Diversions:**

Fiscal year ending 9-30-22, total of 54 relocations and 50 diversions occurred (record number).

### **New Staff:**

In the last four months, Options has hired six new staff (two MFP, one in Roseau and Crookston, an equipment technician, part-time receptionist) of which five have disabilities.

### **Community Education Training:**

Options presented at the ND Foundation for the Blind Conference in Grand Forks. There were about six various agencies in attendance as well as 20 participants. They do plan on having this conference again next year. This conference was planned by one of our consumers who recently moved to East Grand Forks from Texas.

### **Emergency Planning:**

Options met with Grand Forks Emergency Manager to start work on the Mitigation plan that is due in 2025 as they need to include federal requirements for individuals with disabilities into the plan. They have reached out to Options to be part of the project as well other agencies who work with p/w/d. This will be an ongoing project for a while.

## Freedom ND SILC Director's Report – Nov 2022

- Transitions:
  - 10 **MFP** transitions in our service area (Lisbon, Wahpeton, Jamestown, and Fargo) since the last meeting. Working with 21 active referrals.
  - 9 **ADRL** transitions combined since the end of July. Working with 40 referrals across our service area. The majority of these folks are currently in domestic violence shelters or substance use treatment programs. The ADRL program gives an opportunity for a fresh start for a lot of individuals in our community. It also acts as a “safety net” for those in a nursing facility or basic care that don't qualify for MFP. We're able to provide brief case management services and assist them getting back to their community of choice.
- Representatives from the Department of Justice visited with our transition coordinators and consumers that have participated in MFP looking for feedback on how the settlement agreement is going. We were happy to share mostly success stories and grateful for the opportunity to discuss ways to overcome some barriers in the transition process.
- Our ND Transition staff attended the ND Aging Conference in Fargo, we sent seven staff and had a booth which was well attended.
- The Transition staff also attended the HCBS Symposium in Bismarck at the end of October. It was wonderful to put faces to names and have an opportunity to network with people we work closely with, but rarely get to see in person!

### **Fargo MFP *Consumer Story Spotlight***

From Molly, Independent Living Advocate

I moved the nicest gentleman home from the Meadows. He was so excited to get into his new apartment and could not believe the items that he received through MFP! He had been at 3 different nursing homes and throughout that time had lost some of his clothing. I picked out some clothing items for him! He is a big football fan, so I got him a MN Vikings shirt and a Bison shirt. He called me and said he was wearing his Vikings shirt on Monday, and it fit PERFECT 😊. He is so grateful!

### **Fargo *Consumer Story Spotlight***

From Merri, Independent Living Advocate

I worked with a student from West Fargo Transition Academy on preparing for the permit. We met weekly over Zoom during school hours. He's such a cool kid. He was living in an apartment with his cousin and going to school while also working at Walmart. He had tried getting his permit numerous times prior to coming to FRC and failed. After practicing with us, he passed on his first try!

### **IL Classes/FIA**

- Living Well IL Skills Class are going well hybrid style. We have several consumers attending in person and have students from Fargo and West Fargo High Schools in attendance.
- We had a conference room full of people for pumpkin painting. It truly is wonderful to see people in person socializing and having fun.
- Several of our offices participated in Halloween festivities around the community. It's a great way to reach our young people and get involved in new activities.
- Young Adult Gatherings took place in October for a second time. Staff planned to hang out and spend time together the week before Halloween.

- We visited the Fargo Ronald McDonald house for a tour of their home and discussed how to include volunteers with varying disabilities.

## **Wahpeton**

**IL Skills Class** - Decluttering will start Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1:30-3:00pm

## **Jamestown**

- Ashley and Beth attended the University of Jamestown block party on August 24<sup>th</sup>. There were nearly 4,000 in attendance
- Beth and Ashley made the move to their new office! We're excited for more space and to be better situated in the building, providing a more accessible route to our door. We'll also have the ability to have in-person classes now that we have a classroom!

## **ND Ramps**

- 4 ramps have been placed since the last meeting.

## **Interview/Hiring update**

In preparation for Jerry Christiansen's retirement in December, we have interviewed one person for the position. Resumes have been slow to come in for this unique position as we anticipated. We are currently exploring options for the ramp program to continue; however, we do expect it will look different than it has for the past several years.

## **Fall Event Recap & GHD**

Freedom held their "People's Choice Awards" event on October 6<sup>th</sup> in the evening at the Avalon in Fargo. We kicked things off with a plated dinner and awards show showcasing individuals doing incredible work for people with disabilities in our communities. We ended the night out with entertainment by the Front Fenders band and networking. We also included a silent auction and wine pull. The event was a success thanks to all our sponsors, partners, and guests who contributed their time and donations.

Next event we are in the beginning stages of planning for is Giving Hearts Day on February 9<sup>th</sup>. This year's theme will be based on the quote, "Nothing About Us Without Us."

## **Dakota Director's November 2022 Report**

### **Community Education**

Staff set up a booth with DCIL materials for Project Service Connect. Staff handed out 70 DCIL bags with cup of soup, shampoo, hand sanitizer, and other personal care items. 181 people attended

Staff presented at the Sertoma Club Luncheon and talked about DCIL and services. We also set up our assistive technology.

Staff attended the Standing Rock Community Fair at Standing Rock High School. Students and teachers from around the area attended. Staff talked about DCIL services, especially driver's permit and budgeting classes we teach at Standing Rock High School. Staff gave out 150 DCIL bags with soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand sanitizer, cup of soup, shampoo/conditioner, Kleenex, and stress balls. 300+ people visited the DCIL booth. There were 35 vendors

We held our Cross Disability panel at Bismarck State College. We had three panelists, one with a vision disability, a brain injury, and a spinal cord injury. They talked about how they acquired their disability and how it affects their daily life. We did two hands on activities. First, a student made a peanut butter and jelly sandwich blindfolded while another gave directions. The second was a student putting on a shirt with one arm.

### **Technical Assistance**

Staff completed a 504 assessment in New Salem.

Staff completed an accessibility assessment of 25 polling sites in our quadrant, parking was the main issue.

Loaned out a portable ramp

Staff participated in a three-day TTS (Tobacco Treatment Specialist) training to learn how to assist those wanting to quit tobacco products, succeed, and provide educational tools and referrals if needed. Mayo Clinic did the training

Silent Auction raised \$3,400

Staff will be doing Part D enrollments. \$3,000 contract with ND Insurance Department.



## Individual Services

### **A. Individual Services**

On November 1, in collaboration with our Municipal Court, we started a process of "Open Hours" in our office in order to better serve walk in people. These people often need access to housing, employment, transportation, medical treatment, or other individual advocacy services to keep them from going into to jail or prison. Monday-Thursday, we will have one staff who does not have anything else scheduled on their calendar.

Sometimes these folks will be served with a simple information and referral, other times they may require other direct services.

We helped one person get SR22 insurance and get a new driver's license.

We have three consumers participating in the Open Doors Program for monthly walk through. Was able to assist two of the consumers with getting connected with additional programs to remain living independently in their own homes.

Leigha received this email from a consumer she helped her apply for SSI and Housing back in March: "It feels like it's been ages since I got remarkable and kind help from you. I haven't had the time to update you on my new housing situation and my new job."

A woman who lives at an apartment contacted Independence Inc. because her apartment building had architectural barriers. Her apartment building did not have a curb cut on the side of the building where the garages were located and there was a concrete lip in front of the entrance of the apartment building that made it difficult for wheelchair users to access the building. She worked with Independence Inc. staff to contact the management company. The management company corrected the problems.

A man contacted Independence Inc. because his apartment lease was not being renewed after he reported accessibility problems and other issues at his apartment building to the management company. He worked with Independence Inc. staff to write and file a complaint with the North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights. The complaint is currently being investigated by the ND Department of Labor and Human Rights and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

A 38-year-old woman works with Independence, Inc. In the last couple of months, she has made strides in her recovery. She has taken on more responsibility at work, resulting in a supervisory role at her job. She has been reunited with her daughter and is looking at getting a home for the two of them. She has shown tremendous growth and is incredibly self-aware due to the tools she has acquired in her recovery journey.

A 40-year-old man works with Independence, Inc. He volunteers his time to a nonprofit organization in his free time. He recently found out that he was approved for SSDI. Since finding this out, a tremendous weight has been lifted. He is currently in the process of getting a vehicle and looking for a house to put a down payment on. He is incredibly grateful for everything that has happened recently and explained that his life has turned around for the better. He looks forward to continuing his meetings with Independence, Inc.

## **Barriers**

Along with the success stories, I wanted to share some of the new barriers we are seeing. We have had a lot of people who are coming to us after being evicted.

The most extreme example was an 81-year-old who was evicted after living in a hoarding situation. He came to us with three days' notice. Even though he was homeless, the homeless agencies could not help him because shelters were full or not accessible. We were told from one homeless provider that they could not help because didn't provide "case Management" and they only provided a few days of hotel rooms.

Our staff ended up spending a significant amount of time trying to help this guy out. He had a medical issue and ended up in a nursing home.

We felt strongly this was mission creep for us. We are not a homeless provider, and we do not help people move into nursing homes. However, because of his disability, we were the only provider willing to help.

A 60-year man was evicted from his apartment, resulting in him being homeless. He tried to get an apartment with multiple management companies in town but was denied for every single one. He was able to provide himself shelter at the warming center temporarily. He was able to get himself a motel room at a motel that is not a very safe place here in town. He has been able to maintain a positive attitude through this all, but it is weighing heavy on his mental health. He continues to reach out to me and try to come up with resolutions, but the barriers continue to reveal themselves.

## **B. Community Services Access Surveys**

In collaboration with Protection and Advocacy, one hundred and one (101) voting sites across North Dakota were surveyed between July 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. This is at least one site in each of North Dakota's fifty-three (53) counties. Not all election sites were surveyed; surveys were only completed on 65% of poll sites.

The nine main areas surveyed at each voting site were:

1. Parking; 2. Passenger drop-off area; 3. Exterior route to accessible entrance; 4. Polling place entrance; 5. Route from entrance into voting area; 6. Voting area; 7. Ramp; 8. Lift; and 9. Elevator

Few sites across the state were found to be fully compliant with all seventy-five (75) requirements. This means that many surveyed voting sites had at least one potential barrier to voting for people with disabilities. The most common potential barriers were door hardware or force, slope of the route, accessible parking, and appropriate signage. Most accessibility issues can be fixed with temporary actions, or remediable measures. Ninety-one (91) sites have non-compliant elements remediable with temp measures. One site had non-compliant elements which could not be remedied by temporary measures. The site in question, would need to relocate its polling location to come into compliance for the upcoming election. The surveyor of this site noted there may not be a better site in the community, so an alternative location in that precinct may need to be found.

**A Building Dreams Event: A Night with Stephanie Land:** We held our Building Dreams Event with our guest speaker, Stephanie Land. We focused on the link between disability and poverty. We had 160 tickets sold for the event.

## **Independent Living Fair**

The Independent Living fair is scheduled for the Clarion on 11.15.