

Vermont Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing/DeafBlind Council Meeting Notes

January 20, 2022

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

January 20, 2020
9:30AM to 11:25 PM
Remote Meeting

Welcome/Housekeeping/Announcements

Welcome and Happy New Year to everyone. Apologies regarding the time change for this meeting to 9:30am to 11:00am

The legislative report went out this week to the respective committees. Thank you for everyone's help.

Program/Organizational updates

VCIL Update- Will Pendlebury

VCIL has been very proactive with the legislative discussions around hearing aids and that bill. Val Hughes was hired as the new Deaf PAC and joining the HEAR HEAR Coalition. She will be the liaison between VCIL and the VCDR. She shared the [link](#) to their Disability Awareness Day via the chatroom. It will be held on February 16, 2022.

VANCRO – **Jessica Hutchins**

Deaf-Blind training we got the grant and start training later in the year. Pilot Mentorship program has 6 participants and hope to start another Cohort soon. VANCRO is working with HHS to have interpreters at COVID vaccination clinics

VTAD – **Elena Shapiro (former president of VTAD) and David Krueger (new president of VTAD)**

Introduce David Krueger the new president of Vermont association for the Deaf. VTAD has been doing outreach to council members and the community. We are addressing; make information accessible, resources for senior citizens that are D/HH/DB, Deaf-young adults transitioning to post-secondary education.

HAAA – **Deb Baker**

Working on and promoting H266, our membership, media outreach, awareness, and resources for hearing loss. Focusing on ADA education, ongoing guest speakers attend chapter meetings and sharing that educational format. Newsletter coming out soon, Facebook page has pertinent articles of hearing loss and technological developments. Sharing postings from the National Bulletin Board. The National Convention is in Tampa, Florida June 23, 24, and 25th.

EHDI/PIP – Linda Hazard

EDHI website and resources are in process of being updated. Involved with the CARE Project with the University out of North Carolina. The Vermont Early Hearing Detection and Intervention National hearing is coming up in March (virtually). We sponsor a virtual site on Facebook for families called Facebook Live.

UVM CDCI – Margaret Overman

Connecting with student teams, establishing services, and currently serving about 375 students enrolled in the program. Advisory group created to share program-specific information with various stakeholders and ensure opportunity to help guide other stakeholders. Spenser forwarded Barbara's email with more detail.

Commissioner's Report

Nothing at this time.

Break

D/HH/DB Director's Report – Laura Siegel

VR: Met with National Deaf Center to collaborate our work effort with data collection. In process of creating a state team.

Dept of Wildlife and Fish: Completed training by recording. Will be upload on a website for 250 volunteer instructors to access. Future Goal: Connect with ANR.

State Employee Training Accessibility: Will launch LINC training tomorrow (Friday).

Vermont Dept of Health:

- A) Form a group to meet in February. In process of setting up training to medical clinicians. I had the opportunity to share public comment of my work effort in healthcare with GMCB. Dr. John Brumsted recommended I get in touch with Dr. Jackie Hunter.
- B) Create policy template to share/distribute to 14 hospitals.
- C) Add more ASL videos pertaining COVID by Vermont Language Justice Project.
 - a. 6 videos, 622 views.
- D) Host private COVID vaccination clinic for DHHDB on Saturday January 22nd at the Doubletree Hotel.

Interpreters:

Vermont Interpreting Access Task Force formalized their mission.

Public Education/Training:

Lindsey Owens who is Ed Paquin's replacement from DRVT presented to my Educational Outreach group on Monday. Everyone was happy to have that opportunity to learn and understand their organization. So, they can help their clients better. We have another coming up next week. Our presenters will Tracy Evans-Luiselli from NEC and Stephanie Bissonette from VABVI. I am hoping to have future presentations about the E&D/MyRide programs as well as HRC. I feel my group is lacking pieces of information that could be crucial for them to know to better serve the signing Deaf community.

Upcoming presentations:

- 1) Will participate on a panel for Howard Center in two weeks.

Website:

- 1) New document has been added to the website. If there's any changes you want me to make to the website, please email me what you would like for me to modify.

Mental Health:

We have a meeting on January 11th. My goal is to have Steve Hamerdinger who is the Director for the office of Deaf Services within the state of Alabama as well as Holly Rioux who is the program manager for the DHH unit at Greater Nashua of Mental Health Center. The goal is to educate my group on what they have done. But what I find really unfortunate is that both programs were initiated because of lawsuits. My hope is for our state to be more proactive and not sit back and wait for a lawsuit in order for them to be more proactive.

DMV:

I was recently told the DMV is exploring options to offer VRI for walk-ins two days out of the month for those who relies on ASL. UbiDUos (11 of them) are only good for people who can read/understand English.

Next step is I want to do the same thing with the field offices for welfare. So will Eberle connected me with Sarah Truckle. I am just waiting to hear back.

Agency of Education (AOE)

Jacqui Kelleher, State Director of Special Education will be replacing Alex Langevin- Jacqui was introduced and then sent the following via email due to time constraints for this meeting. Greetings! Here are some quick AOE Updates relevant to current topics:

- The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) is the federally required and state mandated body that advises the AOE on unmet needs of students with disabilities in special education. There is an opportunity at each meeting for Public Comment. Additionally, there is room for membership for parents of children with disabilities, teachers/related service providers, and individuals with disabilities. Information on meetings or for the Chair regarding membership can be found [here](#).
- Special Education program rules are changing effective July 1, 2022. It is important that families are informed about these upcoming changes. Families are encouraged to review the webinars and materials we have on our [website](#) and/or plan to attend a Family Information session on Feb. 28, 2022 from 9:30-11 OR 6-7:30 PM to learn more about what they are and how it might impact them. Family information sessions are located on the [website](#).
- For families who believe their child is being denied a FAPE in the LRE (violations concerning programs, services, staffing, etc.), they can access our Administrative State Complaint [form](#). They also have available to them an AOE staff member who can consult on their unique situation prior to filing an ASC form by [email](#).
- The Council is encouraged to share links to Resources with brief descriptions to share via our Special Education website as part of Resources for Teachers/Administrators and/or Resources for Families. Please send this information to [Sabine](#).

- IDEA Part B ARP supplemental dollars have been received. The Agency did not receive any additional dollars. All funds went to districts. Districts have been submitting their applications for these funds. A majority of applications made included strategies for addressing SEL needs, strengthening MTSS systems, professional development, purchasing equipment, and assistive technology.
- Major issue in the Field: Critical staff shortage areas in special education – currently overwhelming vacancies for teachers and paraprofessionals with a forecast of administrators in the coming months. AOE has staff working on addressing staff shortages and is part of a statewide committee facilitated by a national TA center called [CEEDAR](#).
- Update on D/HH Grant: AOE staff continues to seek clarification around the allocation from the General Assembly and allowable uses/flexibility with dissemination. This has proven to be a complex issue and everyone from staff attorneys to the Deputy CFO has been seeking an answer. In the absence of stringent parameters, it is conceivable we can analyze current and alternative ways to disseminate funds. AOE will continue to investigate and intends to consult with the Council on the D/HH grant program.
- Future Need: The AOE would like to consult with either a small group or Council as a whole on appropriate accommodations and modifications for eligible students classified as HI or D/DB regarding statewide assessments and the alternative assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities. For more information, contact [Linda Moreno](#).

Agenda topic

9:30 – Welcome/Meeting Structure Overview/Reminder- Spenser Weppler/Will Pendlebury

9:35 - Updates:

- a. VCIL – Will Pendlebury
- b. VANCRO – Will Pendlebury
- c. VTAD – Elena Shapiro
- d. HLAA – Deb Baker
- e. EHDI/PIP – Linda Hazard
- f. CDCI/CARES – Margaret Overman

10:05 –D/HH/DB Director Update – Laura Siegel

10:30 – Legislative Update – All

- a. Department of Financial Regulation Stakeholder Group Update
- b. Hearing Aid Coverage – EHB Package Review
- c. FMAP Update

10:45 – Future topics

10:55 – Public Comment

11:00 – Adjourn

Public Comment

People are just struggling just how to get access to resources. We need a central place that is easy for people to find, something that resembles DHH or Vermont Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing again. Committee asked for an email with more detail of services that cannot be found

Other Business/Closing

Sharon Henry initiated the request and discussion around re-constituting the “School Age Sub-committee” as part of the council’s statutory responsibilities, to focus on assessing the impact of the AOE grant over the past year given the changes that occurred and the closing of Nine East Network.

She and Sheri Sousa who previously chaired the sub-committee are proposing that the sub-committee will:

- a. track/gather information on the impact on school age children who are being served by the new arrangements with UVM CDCI Cares and UVMMC ESP/EDHI.
- b. Determine the gaps in this new arrangement
- c. Assess the effectiveness of the new arrangement
- d. And possibly gather information on the impact of the new arrangement on the service providers.

They would like to populate the committee with appropriate stakeholders; Suggested a TOD, Jacqui (who replaced Alex) as the council representative from AOE, Laura, Amelia Briggs as a parent representative and other stakeholders that may need to be included that are not affiliated with either of the organizations providing the services. The goal is to start reviewing and collecting information with the hopes of trying to submit a report back to the council before the next Grant period process begins later this spring. Because there was no captioning present general discussion was tabled and would continue at the first meeting of the sub-committee. It was noted that other sub-groups could re-constitute themselves if they felt specific areas needed to be focused on, in the upcoming year, and this could be likely when more information on FMAP is provided and focusing on the “adult workgroup” around workforce with regards to training and retention etc.

The council members that have an interest in working with Sharon and Sheri on the school aged children work group please email Sharon at Sharon.henry@uvm.edu, myself, and Will.

The Chair requested that council members email him, Will and Laura for future agenda topics to plan for the upcoming meetings.

David Krueger from VTAD, asked a general question around data, and whether the council had an inventory of different data sources. It was noted that there is plenty of information on Birth and School aged children and that the data is much more concrete in that regards, where it starts to lack is in the adult and older/elderly population. Laura is working with the Department of labor to see if and how data might be collected around D/HH/DB in the workforce. David wondered if possibly some sort of survey assessment could be done to try and get a better of demographics and numbers for the adult and older Vermonters population. The chair noted this might be a good action item the council could support to launch a short survey utilizing the organizations on the council ability to disseminate information broadly through connections with multiple stakeholders. This could be done in a similar fashion in the way VTAD, HLAA (VT) and Laura spearheaded the Hearing Aid Coverage petition. It was noted even with older Vermonters even though they may wear hearing aids, or have been diagnosed with onset late hearing loss, they won’t always acknowledge it or self-identify in those cases, so the data could still be incomplete.

Kelly asked if the previous minutes needed to be approved. They do and I said I would send with this email (Please see attached the previous council's minutes). Please review and let Me, Will, Laura knows if any edits need to be made or if you approve. We will finalize and post the finalized version of the minutes from November.

- Parking lot for next meeting?
- Next Meeting- March 17, 2022

Council Attendance

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spenser Weppler (Chair) | <input type="checkbox"/> Julie Porter | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elena Shapiro |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Will Pendlebury (Co-Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kate Parish | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Lalanne |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bill Hudson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jacqui Kelleher | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Hinck |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ralph Gallo | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Megan Tierney-Ward | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Chalmers | <input type="checkbox"/> Danielle Howes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sharon Henry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Linda Hazard | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amelia Briggs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deb Charlea Baker | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kelley Decker | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sherry Sousa | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Guest Attendance

| Name | Organization |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Laura Siegel | DAIL |
| Sabine Perry - Council Admin. | AOE |
| Whitecoat Captioning | |
| Interpreter - Lianne Moccia | Vancro |
| Interpreter - Kristal Hier | Vancro |
| Jessica St. Arnauld (Hutchins) | VANCRO |
| Michelle John | VTH&V |
| David Krueger | VTAD |
| John Pirone | UVM |