

Statewide Independent Living Council
Full Council – Quarterly meeting
Minutes of March 19, 2009

Council Members Present

Edward L. Myers, III, Chair
Randy Collins, Vice Chair
Gene Heppard, Treasurer
E. Mari Herrera-Daniels, V. Treasurer
Rudy Buchanan, Secretary
Shannon Bergman for Wendy Dewey
Fernando Cruz
Ken Edwards
Ted Garland

Ken Jacuzzi
Suzanne Malson
Georgia McLaughlin
Bob Michaels
Alan Strauss
Jenn-Yun Tein
Gail Wilt
Alfred Zulli Jr
Katharine Levandowsky, Ex-Officio

Council Members Absent

Sherri Collins
Ashleigh Turner
Joe Lee Yazzie

Staff

Tony DiRienzi-Executive Director, Sharon Engelhardt-Executive Assistant and Donna Powers-Program Coordinator.

Guests

Chris Deere, Maya Asher, Ken Briefer, Helen McLaughlin and Mary Garland.

Welcome/ Introductions:

- Randy Collins, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM at the Disability Empowerment Center (DEC) Classroom B at 5025 E. Washington, Phoenix, AZ 85034.

Approval of Minutes: *Suzanne Malson motioned to approve the minutes of December 18, 2008. Seconded by Al Zulli. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.*

Approval of Consent List: *Ken Jacuzzi motioned to approve the Consent List for March 19, 2009. Seconded by Suzanne Malson. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.*

Treasurer's Report:

Financials

- Gene Heppard reviewed the financial statements for the month ending February 28, 2009. The statements were distributed by email prior to the meeting. (See financial statements). The statements presented included; 1) the monthly balance sheet, 2) the monthly financial statement of activities, and 3) a comprehensive YTD statement.
- Gene reported that SILC is on target with expenses. He noted that any line items over budget (such as the \$1306. for council member training) are off set with under spending of other line items in the same budget category. Careful attention is maintained to ensure that expenses do not exceed revenues.
- Tony DiRienzi added that SILC does not incur any expenses unless and until income associated with specific expenses is guaranteed or received. As an example SILC projected a grant income of \$30,000 for FY 2009 and to date has not been successful with getting any of that amount. Correspondingly, SILC has not incurred any expenses that are directly related to grant funding.
- Tony DiRienzi reported that an inactive account with a \$38 balance was recently closed. That balance was transferred to the SILC RSA Contract checking account. That account will no longer be indicated on future financial statements.

Ken Jacuzzi motioned to approve the financial report for month ending February 28, 2009 as presented. Seconded by Ken Edwards. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Audit

- The SILC audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 was recently completed. The audit report was distributed to council members along with the financial statements prior to the meeting. (See handouts – Audit reports).
- SILC has an independent third party auditor conduct an annual audit and prepare our income tax returns (form 990). The auditor's management letter to the council members reported that SILC is operating in compliance with the various rules, regulations, and standards that it must adhere to (e.g., GAAP, OMB-122). Tony DiRienzi stated that subsequent to the council's approval of the audit documents the auditor will complete and the SILC tax returns
- The Council reviewed the audit report. It was pointed out that there were two typographical errors in the last sentence of the paragraph on

Significant Accounting Policies. The draft reads...I **are** required to inform you, **or** transactions for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. The editorial recommendation was to revise it so that it reads...I **am** required to inform you, **of** transactions for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus.

Ken Jacuzzi motioned to approve the audit report contingent upon the revisions of the grammatical errors noted. Seconded by Al Zulli. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT:

National Council on Independent Living (NCIL):

- Edward Myers reported that the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) will hold its annual conference in June. Bob Michaels, our new council member has agreed to represent AZ SILC at the conference. Tony DiRienzi noted he is not able to attend because the staff category of the budget cannot support sending the executive director to two NCIL conferences occurring within the same fiscal year (July of '08 and June of '09). Tony said that Bob is an excellent person to represent SILC at the national forum. Bob has a long history as an active member of NCIL and is also trainer with Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU). Tony added that if any other council member is interesting in attending the conference to contact the SILC office.

National Council on Disabilities (NCD)

- AZ SILC assisted the U.S. President's National Council on Disability (NCD) with local logistical support for their January quarterly full council meeting that they held in Scottsdale.
- At the NCD meeting, Tony DiRienzi and Randy Collins both were on a panel addressing Emerging Trends in the Southwest. It was also noted that other SILC staff and council members attended the meeting.
- A discussion followed about how SILC might assist with enhancing the diversity of the NCD. The focus of the discussion was on Fernando Cruz – a SILC member. He was approached and agreed accept a recommendation for appointment. Fernando is a Native American with an expertise on helping people with disabilities transition from nursing homes into the community.

SILC Membership:

- It was mentioned earlier in the meeting that Bob Michaels is a new member. Bob introduced himself.

- Tony DiRienzi reported that SILC is currently at full membership. However, he noted that the terms for several members will expire on June 30, 2009. Tony, acting on behalf and at the bequest of the executive committee, will be contacting them individually and asking them if they want to be considered as candidates for reappointment.

AZRSA (Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration) REPORT

- Katharine Levandowsky reported that a forum was held last week to address the AZ RSA Order of Selection process and respond to questions from the disability community. AZ RSA conducted several forums around the state.
- Because of the huge budget cuts to AZ RSA they closed all priority categories on March 15th. There maybe approximately 2,000 people on the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) waiting list and 300 on the Independent Living Rehabilitation Services (ILRS) waiting list.
- AZ RSA is exploring a plan to create a priority list that may include 5 categories instead of the current 3. The rationale is that they might be able to open smaller categories sooner and at least serve some new consumers. It was noted that consumers are still encouraged to apply so they will be in place when the waiting lists are opened. There are currently approximately 10,000 clients in VR that have signed Individual Employment Plans (IEP's). Approximately 700 applicants come in each month. The waiting list continues to grow.
- Katharine also reported that no vendor contracts have been cut.
- There was a long discussion about the waiting lists, the AZ RSA staff workload and morale, and how the budget cut impact those concerns.
- Katharine stated that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds (the U.S. Government economic stimulus package) are scheduled to be allocated to the states soon. The Department of Economic Security is uncertain about how their budget might be revised in accordance with the stimulus package.

ILRS (Independent Living Rehabilitation Services) REPORT:

- Chris Deere commented that the Order of Selection does not impact the ILRS caseload but, is specific to VR.
- Chris clarified the Order of Selection process. He explained that to serve anyone on a wait list, a category has to be opened and before going on to people on a wait list in another category every individual on the preceeding

category must be served. He stated that establishing 5 categories instead of the current 3 will help shorten the respective wait lists.

- AZ RSA has eligibility requirements that determine which category consumers' will be placed in and consequently which wait list they will be assigned. A person can appeal their category placement.
- Consumers on the wait list will be sent letters from AZ RSA every 6 months to make sure they want to stay on a wait list.
- He noted that ILRS is very short staffed right now.

SRC (State Rehabilitation Council) Report:

- Suzanne Malson completed an application for appointment to State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Tony DiRienzi wrote a letter of recommendation for her application.
- Once she is appointed to the SRC she will serve as the SILC liaison the that council.

121 PROJECT REPORT:

- Suzanne Malson submitted a written 121 report that was distributed prior to the meeting (See 121 Project Report).
- Suzanne reported that she is trying to get the Arizona 121 Program Directors together for a meeting in June. They are busy writing grants and with outreach efforts.
- She expressed a desire for SILC do conduct more outreach presentations on the reservations.
- Suzanne noted that the economic stimulus package could potentially hurt tribes rather than helping them due to constraints and reporting requirements.
- Tony DiRienzi reported that at the Consortium of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR) conference in January there were discussions about allocating IL dollars to 121 projects. The controversy surrounding the distribution federal appropriations for IL dollars and directing them to the 121 projects needs further exploration.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION COMMITTEE:

- Al Zulli reported that the Committee has not been able to establish quorum and consequently has not met since the last quarterly meeting. The Committee is exploring meeting by teleconference.
- Alan Strauss, the deputy director of the Disability Resource Center at the University of Arizona is now on the Committee.

- Donna Powers reported that she has been actively conducting presentations and distributing materials promoting the Arizona Disability Post, a project of the Committee. The website at www.azdisabilitypost.org has had over 70,000 hits recently. She also reported that she has been working with Gail Wilt and the National Federation of the Blind to ensure that the website is screen reader friendly.
- It was reported that the Assistive Technology (AT) Fashion Show documentary as proposed at past meetings is on temporary hold due to a lack of funding.
- Tony DiRienzi reported he and some members of the community are exploring establishing a Disability Chamber of Commerce.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE:

- Rudy Buchanan stated that the Committee will be meeting today after the Quarterly meeting.
- Rudy reported that the Community Outreach Information and Network (COIN) had a panel presentation yesterday at the 5th Annual Native American Disability Summit.

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE:

- Gail Wilt reported at the Committee's meeting earlier this month they approved contributing to the ADA conference to be held next fall. Ken Jacuzzi added that the conference is set for October 1, 2009. He requested help from collaborating organizations with planning and funding due to the current economic crisis. The crisis particularly restricts travel.
- It was noted that October is National Disability Employment Awareness month.
- Gail reported that SILC and its collaborative partners will coordinate a consumer training about how to use the Arizona Legislative Information System (ALIS). It is scheduled for April 30th.

PROGRAM COORDINATORS REPORT:

- Donna Powers reported that SILC participated in the Chinese New Year event at the Chinese Cultural Center as an outreach effort in the Asian community. Jenn-Yun Tein added there is a yellow page book for the Asian community and SILC may want to be included in the book.
- Jenn-Yun Tien facilitated getting some SILC printed materials translated in Chinese and Vietnamese. There was a follow-up discussion about if SILC should explore having a language line set up.

- Donna reported there will be a women's outreach forum all day on May 14th and she is busy finalizing details for that event.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

- Tony reminded everyone that there will be a Disability Empowerment Center (DEC) mixer event directly after today's meeting. All Council members are invited and encouraged to attend. Tours of the DEC are also planned for this afternoon.
- Tony added that there is a ground breaking scheduled soon for the Disability Empowerment Center Fitness and Sports Center. Probably sometime late spring or earlier summer.
- Tony reported there are ARRA Part B funds available to Arizona. He and Bob Michaels will meet with Kathy Levandowsky to explore how those funds might be used.

PUBLIC ANNOUCEMENTS

- Gail Wilt announced she has Louis Braille book marks available commemorating his 200th Birthday.
- Alan Strauss announced that the National Society for Disability Studies will be having a conference in mid-June and he will send out information about the conference.
- E. Mari Herrera-Daniels has 2009 calendars available from Congressman Ed Pastor's office.

MAY CALL TO THE PUBLIC: None

ADJOURNMENT: *Gail Wilt motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ken Edwards. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 11:07 AM.*

Prepared by: Sharon Engelhardt _____ SILC Staff

Reviewed by: Rudy Buchanan / Tony DiRienzi _____ SILC Secretary / SILC ED