

Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD)

Fall 2024 Council Meeting Minutes

October 24-25, 2024

Thursday, October 24, 2024

Attendees: GCDD Staff: Charlie Miller, Charlotte Densmore, D’Arcy Robb, Eric Foss, Fanta Mitchell, Felicia Dillon, Harry Nelson, Lisa Eaves, Maria Pinkelton, Tianna Faulkner, Tonya Fair

Council Members: Ben Dell, Brook Kubik, Crystal St. Pierre-Stackpole, Dave Ward, Dayna Holbel, Dorothy Harris, Evan Nodvin, Jennifer Snyder, Jessica Cowell, Leslie Thornton, Lori Campbell, Mark Crenshaw, Martha Haythorn, Melissa Barwick, Nalini Isaac (Nandi’s Support), Nandi Isaac, Neal Davis (Evan’s Support), Rena Harris, Sharia (Stripling) James, Sharifa Peart, Shaun Owen, Stacy Castelli (Leslie’s Support), Taesha Ward, Tais Keyser, Zolinda Stoneman

Guests: Brooke Baumgardner, Celio Best (Interpreter), Cindy Baumgardner

Welcome & Announcements

Lisa Newbern begins the meeting, welcomes everyone, and introduces new council members. Maria Pinkelton reads GCDD statement of place. Lisa Newbern explains although it is a public meeting, all discussions are limited only to the council members.

Leslie Kate Thornton is sworn in as new council member by Lisa Newbern since she was unable to attend the swearing-in in September with the other council members and Governor Kemp.

Lisa Newbern opens the floor for anyone who wants to share an announcement.

- D’Arcy Robb talks about a project that DBHDD is doing that she and Rena Harris have been a part of that work. D’Arcy shares that she has had to step down from working on the project and opens the floor to see if any council members are interested in serving on the project (main committees or subcommittees). Rena Harris is also a contact for those who may be interested.

- Martha Haythorn will be in North Carolina at Chapel Hill to get an advocacy award on October 30th for her work in advocacy.

Lisa Newbern goes over the meeting agenda for the next two days and opens the floor for questions.

Executive Committee Update

Lisa Newbern shared Executive Committee updates and general information about the Executive Committee.

- The Executive Committee meets to discuss the budget, committee updates, council meeting items, accessibility of council meetings, timely topics that come up between council meetings and the public policy agenda.
- The meetings aren't open to the public but minutes are shared once voted on by the committee.
- The committee does have the authority to make decisions on behalf of Council depending on the situation.

Council Business

D'Arcy Robb, Charlotte Densmore, Maria Pinkelton and Lisa Newbern review council business. Their presentation covers a membership update, proposed policy, bylaw, and procedure change, staffing update, upcoming meetings, public policy agenda review and a website update.

- Over 100 people applied to join the Council. There were 9 new members to join and expect 3 more to join before the end of the year.
- D'Arcy discussed a proposed bylaw change that was introduced to Council at the July council meeting. This change would allow a council meeting to convene without quorum being met but hold off on voting until 51% of members are present.
- D'Arcy discussed 3 possible changes to GCDD's policy and procedures. All changes are related to member attendance procedures. These changes are presented to Council but will be voted on by Executive Committee.
- Open Staffing Position: Project and Policy Manager

- The next council meeting will be virtual on January 16th and 17th. The April council meeting will be in person on April 24th and 25th.
- Charlotte discusses the approved public policy agenda for the 2025 legislative session. She reviews their main categories and focus areas.
- Advocacy Days are scheduled for January 29th with a focus on Employment, February 12th with a focus on Waivers, and February 26th with a focus on I/DD Commission
- Leah Soller is announced as the new Public Policy Fellow for the upcoming legislative session.
- Stephen is announced as the IPSE Data Analyst. He will work on a report that discusses how GCDD can better collect data on IPSE programs.
- Maria provides an update on GCDD's new website. She reviews the new layout of the website and accessibility features.

The meeting is running ahead of schedule, so it's decided to move forward with the Discussion of Items for Voting. D'Arcy reviews the bylaw change in more detail.

BREAK

Membership Icebreaker

The meeting continues with Fanta Mitchell's Jeopardy Style game for council members. Attendees are put in groups to play the game.

LUNCH

State Agency Updates

Sharifa Peart, Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) gave the first update.

- Every 5 years, they conduct a needs assessment. They've distributed a survey to families who have children with special healthcare needs. There have been 600 families to receive the survey.
- They've worked with Emory to set up focus groups as well as other community partners as they work on their needs assessment like Parent2Parent and FOCUS. They want to work with GCDD and CLD moving forward to determine what matters most to families they serve.

- Started family advisory engagement committee. This will work to provide professional development, advising others on agency policy and procedures.
- Started a youth advisory council in October 2024. GSU and UGA are included as members.

Shaun Owens, Georgia Department of Education DOE:

- Reviews how they're funded, who they serve and what they assist with.
- Discusses the GAA (Georgia Alternative Assessment) which is for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- Discusses how agencies like GCDD can support them to build relationships.
- Reviewed how the US Dept of Education connects with state DOEs.
- Discussed the importance of districts, families, and students working together.
- They are looking into outcomes for children with disabilities as well as planning for next year.

Melissa Barwick, Department of Human Services (DHS):

- Reviewed what DHS does.
- Their Chief of Staff, Craig Foster, passed away last month, which lead to leadership changes. Chris Apsey is new deputy Chief of Staff.
- Medicare open enrollment started on October 15th
- Affordable Care Act Open Enrollment begins on November 1st
- November is National Adoption Month
- Older Americans Act program provides for a wide range of resources for Americans age 60+
- Working on response to the recent hurricanes. Many counties are receiving support through DHS.

Taasha Ward, Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH):

- This is Taasha's first council meeting. She is the Director of Medicaid Waiver programs, working closely with DBHDD.
- She would like to create a form for individuals and families that allow them to apply for waivers prior to leaving school.
- If you have waiver related questions, comments, or concerns you can follow up with Taasha at taasha.ward3@dch.ga.gov.

Lori Campbell, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD):

- Discussed her role within DBHDD and shares that she's available for questions.
- Lori shares that she's pleased that a department in behavioral health has had a role in creating certified community behavioral health centers (CCBHC). Lori discussed more about these centers, pilot projects, and their training modules.
- Discussed the rate study – the rate increase has happened but the system hasn't embraced the change.
- They're working on a variety of multi-state projects.
- Shared that there are over 7,600 on the Medicaid waitlist, 200 coming on but only 100 going off.

Ben Dell, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA):

- Ben is filling in for Brian Dowd but was recently brought on as GVRA's IDD and Project Search Coordinator.
- Announced that Bonnie Seery is retiring.
- Project Search has 26 active sites, 22 student sites. Serves 22 counties, working with Bonnie to get closed sites back active.
- 53 out of the 113 students who graduated are employed

Rena Harris, Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO):

- Rena is representing the council on a DBHDD workgroup to make recommendations on the 988/Crisis response system. They're working on a survey to distribute to the public on their experiences with the crisis system to gather feedback.
- Discussed GAO's hallmark program, Supported Decision Making. They currently have Zoom calls where the public is encouraged to join in to ask questions or discuss concerns.

BREAK

Zolinda Stoneman, Institute on Human Development and Disability, (IHDD):

- Updates everyone on the Disability Symposium, shares their planned guest speakers

- Discussed their activity in the agricultural program and the importance of the agricultural industry in Georgia.
- Working with Advancing Employment for their NDEAM Event at the Carter Center
- Discussed IHDD's Out of Hand Theater event happening in Athens
- Destination Dawgs (UGA's IPSE program) will be honored at the National Down Syndrome Congress tonight at the College Football Hall of Fame. They are one of 4 IPSE programs being honored.
- UGA received funds in the state budget for the new David Ralston Center on Behavioral Health and Development Disabilities. An initial focus for the center will be getting folks through behavioral health programs and becoming practitioners in the community. This was the work of the Behavioral Health Commission.

Mark Crenshaw, Center for Leadership in Disability (CLD):

- Mark shared leadership changes within CLD. Molly Tucker has been named assistant director. She's worked with the early intervention system and with Darien Todd regarding advocacy training.
- For the past three years, they've been working to build relationships around mental health.
- Discussed LEND (Leadership Education and Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities). Many people who have participated ended up on the Council. If you're interested in joining for 2025-2026, reach out to Mark.
- Discussed the Leadership Academy scheduled for first week of June 2025. It allows for training opportunities for people from across the country.

Council Election & Voting

Fanta Mitchell begins her presentation on Nominations and Elections, reviewing each role and who's been nominated.

- Chair – Lisa Newbern
- Vice Chair – Martha Haythorn, Evan Nodvin
- Executive Committee – Nandi Isaac, Brook Kubik, Rena Harris.

Fanta Mitchell asks if there are any additional nominations from the floor. Dorothy Harris asks to be added to the ballot for the executive committee.

It is later announced that Lisa Newbern will remain the Chair and Martha Haythorn is the new Vice-Chair. Later, Mark Crenshaw announces that Nandi Issac, Brook Kubik, and Rena Harris will make up the Executive Committee.

Discussion of Remaining Items for Voting

Harry Nelson gives his presentation about the GCDD Budget. The deficit in the budget was discussed in the July 2024 meeting and he gives an update today. The deficit should be eliminated in the next three years.

Lisa Newbern explains there will be no updates or changes to the budget or the project dashboard so there will not be a vote on it. The minutes and the bylaws are new.

Consent Agenda Vote

Vote to pass the consent agenda. The consent agenda passes.

Public Comment

There was no one at the meeting who wanted to give public comment.

Five Year Plan Preview

D'Arcy Robb gives the GCDD 5-year plan preview. She reviews what the plan is, why it's done, timeline, roles of council and staff, and the focus.

BREAK

Spirit of Kim Award Presentation

Spirit of Kim Award is presented. Lisa Eaves announces the first ever and first annual Spirit of Kim Award. Derek Heard created the artwork. Kim Person Hudson's family is present. Lisa Eaves talks about Kim Person Hudson and her legacy then goes over the nomination process for the award recipient. She introduces the nomination committee, including Mark Crenshaw, Melissa Barwick, Maria Pinkelton, Fanta Mitchell, and Paulette. Award is given to Cheryl Arno, the first inaugural Spirit of Kim Award.

Meeting ended

Friday, October 25, 2024

Attendees: GCDD Staff: Charlie Miller, Charlotte Densmore, D’Arcy Robb, Eric Foss, Fanta Mitchell, Felicia Dillon, Harry Nelson, Maria Pinkelton, Tianna Faulkner, Tonya Fair

Council Members: Ben Dell, Brook Kubik, Crystal St. Pierre-Stackpole, Dave Ward, Dayna Holbel, Dorothy Harris, Evan Nodvin, Jennifer Snyder, Jessica Cowell, Leslie Thornton, Lori Campbell, Mark Crenshaw, Martha Haythorn, Melissa Barwick, Nalini Isaac (Nandi’s Support), Nandi Isaac, Neal Davis (Evan’s Support), Rena Harris, Sharia (Stripling) James, Sharifa Peart, Shaun Owen, Stacy Castelli (Leslie’s Support), Tais Keyser, Zolinda Stoneman

Guests: Attallah Shabazz (DEI Facilitator), Devika Rao, Eunique Banner (Interpreter), Matt Speigel, Shauna Segler (Interpreter), Tonya Wilson (DEI Facilitator)

The meeting began at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights with a tour of the museum, then a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training.

LUNCH

Committee Meetings

After lunch, the group went into their committee breakout sessions. Following the meetings, each committee gave a brief report:

DEI Committee: Reviewed previous discussions and work. Discussed the importance of inclusion and the variety of language needs that are needed. They also spoke about how interpreters who help the deaf may also need to be culturally inclusive. They discussed resources and how they can be involved to share more best practices and tools, job readiness, etc.

Public Policy Committee: Discussed best ways to reach people since everyone learns differently. They also discussed reports, waivers,

State Plan Committee: Discussed former Unlock grant, new innovation and 2024 priorities. Harry will talk about spending, the budget, the five-year plan and 18-month timeline that D’Arcy, Lisa, and Harry will be working on.

Closing Remarks & Adjourn

It is the time in the meeting for attendees to take the evaluation survey about the council meeting and D’Arcy Robb asks that each table talk about their top

take away from what they learned today during the DEI training. Attendees head upstairs to take group photo.

Closing remarks then Nandi Isaac motioned to end the meeting and Jessica Cowell seconded to end the meeting.

Meeting adjourned