

**Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy
Richmond, Virginia
Governing Board
September 29, 2009
FINAL MINUTES**

- Members Present:** Pat Meyer, Chair, Charles Cooper, Waja Grimm, Chris Harrison, Maureen Hollowell, Susan Kalanges, Shirley McInnis, Elizabeth Priaux, CW Tillman
- Members Absent:** Bill Fuller, Vice Chair, Rita Kidd, Daaiyah Rashid, Elizabeth Schell
- Staff Present:** Sherry Confer, Colleen Miller, Lisa Shehi
- Jack Brandt, LaToya Blizzard, Becky Currin, Clyde Mathews, Sophia Nelson (for portions)
- Call to Order and Welcome:** Pat Meyer called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and welcomed members and staff.
- Advocacy Strategies Discussion:** Colleen Miller, Executive Director, introduced the discussion of Advocacy Strategies and explained that VOPA recognizes that there are more issues faced by persons with disabilities than staff can address within resources available. VOPA must decide which strategies to use to maximize limited resources. Over the course of several meetings, the Board will hear from staff about various strategies being used in advocacy.
- **Collaboration** Sophia Nelson, Paralegal, Jack Brandt and Becky Currin, Disability Rights Advocates, spoke on collaborations on which VOPA has used collaboration in advocacy efforts.
- Sophia Nelson shared that she has worked on the Early Intervention Task Force. The Task Force is charged with helping with changes in provider requirements in the Medicaid Part C program. The Part C program serves children from birth to three years old. VOPA was asked to participate to represent families.
- Jack Brandt explained the Mental Health Planning Council exists in order for the state to receive mental health block grant funds. The membership must include stakeholders, including consumers, their family members, or parents of children with serious emotional or behavioral disturbances. The Mental Health Planning Council reviews the Federal Block Grant Application, monitors and reviews the implementation of the mental health plan in Virginia, and serves as an environment for stakeholders to ensure quality services are available. VOPA serves as an advocate for persons with disabilities.
- Becky Currin shared that the Commonwealth Preparedness Work Group is charged with developing disaster preparedness routines. VOPA's role is to ensure that plans include contingencies for individuals with disabilities. She added that the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) has entered into an agreement with the

American Red Cross to allow protection and advocacy systems access to disaster shelters.

Board members took the opportunity to discuss the roles VOPA staff fulfill on each of these groups.

Colleen Miller summarized her observation of Board members questions and comments as follows:

- It would be useful to determine what the enforcement of any recommendations will be.
- It is important to identify the goal of the task force, when the end date of the task force is, and for VOPA to resist expansion of the task force.
- VOPA should make efforts to ensure feedback from persons with disabilities is included in all of our work and identify ways we can get that feedback and report it back if we are unable to have someone show up in person
- Colleen Miller acknowledged the Board's comments to embrace new technologies such as teleconferencing and social networking sites to advance advocacy strategies and receive feedback from persons with disabilities.
- Find ways to push discussions to a lower level because the discussions occurring at the higher levels do not translate well.

Mission Statement: Chris Harrison read the Mission Statement.

Adopt Agenda: Colleen Miller recommended moving the report from the Finance and Resource Development Committee, making it the final report. With no other changes noted, the agenda was unanimously adopted as amended.

Approval of July 28, 2009 Minutes: Pat Meyer asked for any discussion of the minutes from the July 28, 2009 Board meeting. There being none, Charles Cooper made a MOTION to approve the minutes as presented. Elizabeth Prialux SECONDED the MOTION and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comment: No public comment was offered.

Executive Director's Report: Colleen Miller provided Board members with an update since the distribution of the written Executive Director's Report, including updates on VOPA's telephone and IT services, the Representative Payee Program, and a request for assistance from Rehabilitation Services Administration in developing an agenda for an upcoming monitoring review of the Department of Blind and Vision Impaired and the Department of Rehabilitative Services. Elizabeth Prialux requested an update on the rebuilding of Southeastern Virginia Training Center. Colleen Miller explained that VOPA requested the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Governor's office, but that request was declined. Litigation seems very likely.

Executive Committee:

Pat Meyer gave the report from the Executive Committee. She shared that the Executive Committee discussed the combined Board-Council meeting proposal. Colleen Miller shared that she has reviewed cost estimates and logistical scenarios for the scheduling of Council and Board meetings. The Committee feels that it is possible to hold Council meetings immediately prior to the Board meetings. However, she stated that it will require logistical plans including adequate staffing and meeting space, so the first attempt will be in July 2010.

Pat Meyer reminded the Board that the Governor had not provided for staff salary increases for state employees in his budget and shared that the Executive Committee recommends that any commitment on allocating funds for staff salary increases be deferred until the January Board meeting.

Pat Meyer announced that Board minutes, beginning in September 2009, will reflect the use of first and last names and will not include title. Regarding state budget cuts, she noted that monies VOPA receives from the state will be reduced by 10% or approximately \$24,700.

Internal Policy Committee:

- **Policy 2.5 – Conflicts of Interest**

Chris Harrison, Committee Chair, stated that the Internal Policy met September 28, 2009 and discussed Policy 2.5 – Conflicts of Interest. This policy statement was presented for first reading at the July Board meeting. On behalf of the committee, Chris Harrison recommended adoption of the policy. No SECOND of the MOTION was required and the policy was adopted unanimously as shown below:

Policy 2.5 – Conflicts of Interest

It is the policy of the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA) to prohibit the personal interests of individuals from interfering with the performance of their duties to VOPA or resulting in personal financial, professional, or political gain to the detriment of VOPA's clients or the Office. VOPA employees, interns, and volunteers are subject to this policy and procedures.

- **New Policy**

He shared that the committee is working on a policy regarding Staff Development and will present that to the Board at a future meeting.

Public Awareness and Goals Committee:

- **FY2010 Objectives**

Elizabeth Priaulx, Committee Chair, noted that the Public Awareness and Goals Committee met in early September to review the proposed Objectives that were provided in the Board package. The committee met again on September 29, 2009 to finalize the recommendation, but no quorum was present. Colleen Miller reminded the Board that when the Objectives are posted on the VOPA website, a cover page will be added explaining why VOPA

develops the Goals, Focus Areas, and Objectives and the criteria used in determining whether a case will be open or not. Colleen Miller stated that she will add a narrative to that page summarizing the steps VOPA and the Board takes to develop these guidelines. The Board discussed the Objectives. Elizabeth Prialux made a MOTION to adopt the objectives. Susan Kalanges SECONDED the MOTION and the Objectives were adopted by unanimous vote of the Board.

**Council Development
and Public Policy
Committee:**

The Committee met September 28, 2009. CW Tillman, Committee Chair, shared that the committee worked on a member description for advisory council members. The description will be tested in the PAIMI Council. Once finalized for the PAIMI Council, the description will be modified for the Disabilities Advisory Council. This tool will be used to help potential members better understand the typical duties and expectations (benefits, reimbursement, meeting preparation, meeting attendance) of Council members. CW Tillman confirmed this tool will also include information about participation on Board committees.

CW Tillman shared that the committee continues to review recommendations made at the April 2008 Board retreat. He also stated that the committee reviewed procedures of the councils and recommend that the councils coordinate work with the committee. As councils review bylaws, they will submit them to the committee for review. The committee will return them to the council for further work or refer them to the Board.

The next two meetings of the committee will be held at 5:30 p.m. the evening before Board meetings.

Reports:

- **Litigation**

Colleen Miller answered questions from Board members and provided updates to the Litigation Report.

- **PAIMI Council**

C W Tillman, Chair, noted that the Council met on August 13. The Council worked on Objectives with Clyde Mathews (Managing Attorney) and heard a presentation from Jenny Heilborn (Disability Rights Advocate). The Council took nominations for officers that will be voted on in November. The slate includes CW Tillman as Chair, Mike Newcomb as Vice Chair, and Van Johnson as Secretary. The next meeting of the PAIMI Council is November 12 in Richmond. Items on the agenda include preparation of the PAIMI Annual Report and a discussion regarding council bylaws.

- **Disabilities Advisory
Council**

The Disabilities Advisory Council met on September 11, 2009 in Richmond. Shirley McInnis, Council Chair, shared that the Council had a public comment in which a moment of silence was recognized on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. Mark Stevens (Disability Rights Advocate) provided the Council an overview of the types of advocacy provides at state-operated ICFs/MR. Clyde Mathews led a discussion on Objectives. Charles Cooper provided the report from the Board.

- **Progress on Objectives**

Colleen Miller referred Board members to the Progress on Objectives Report. She explained that the report provided in the Board package was a comprehensive report for the fiscal year. This report is used in the development of annual Program Performance Reports (PPR). She provided updates on projects and answered questions. The Board discussed the report.

Lunch:

The Board observed a working lunch from 12:14 p.m. to 12:40 p.m.

Finance and Resource Development Committee:

- **Financial Report**

Charles Cooper, Committee Chair, stated that the committee met on September 28, 2009 for a review of financial status since the beginning of the fiscal year. On behalf of the committee, Charles Cooper distributed a certification stating no exceptions were noted in the financial report and recommended that the Board accept this report. The Board accepted the report with unanimous approval.

- **Resource Development Task Force**

Charles Cooper explained that the committee recommends the creation of a four member task force to research the viability of creating a non-profit organization for the purpose of fundraising. He shared that this is a first step and identified three areas of focus for the task force:

- Evaluate the programmatic options for the development and to ensure maximum participation by the Board,
- Develop a plan for seeking support, and
- Identify resources to implement the plan.

During the meeting of the Resource Development Task Force, Bill Fuller offered to head this group. After discussion, the Board agreed to the development of the task force. Waja Grimm agreed to sit on the task force. Pat Meyer asked CW Tillman and Shirley McInnis to solicit participation from the advisory councils. If no advisory council member expresses interest in participating on the task force, other members of the Board may participate.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Pat Meyer adjourned the meeting at 1:01 p.m.

The next meeting of the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy Governing Board will be Saturday, January 30, 2010 in Richmond.

FINAL MINUTES

February 20, 2010