

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Radisson Inn, Bismarck
February 2-3, 2023**

Call to Order: Brittney Hogan called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Brittney Hogan, Ali Brown, LaRae Gustafson, Jan Beddes, Russ Cusack, Joe Yasenchack, Gillian Plenty Chief, Nancy Lunden, Shannon Cook, Angie Bosch

Members Absent: Leon Dietrich, Emma-Leigh Miller

Non-Council Members Present: Aimee Volk, Damian Schlinger, Royce Schultze, Beth-Larson Steckler, Scott Burlingame

Approval of November 2022 Minutes: Nancy Lunden made a motion to approve the November 2022 SILC minutes as presented, LaRae Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Approval of the February 2023 Agenda: Gillian Plenty Chief made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Shannon Cook seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Correspondence – Brittney Hogan: None.

Treasurer’s Report – Shannon Cook: Reviewed the Treasurer’s Report. The APRIL and NASILC dues were paid.

Shannon Cook made a motion to accept the Treasure’s Report as presented, Nancy Lunden seconded the motion to approve. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

ND Department of Transportation – Becky Hanson and Stacy Hanson

They talked about the federal and state transit program. There are 31 transit providers operating in ND. There are 28 rural providers and 3 urban areas (Minot will be included due to the most recent census). They went through their transit programs and funding. At ND DOT they fund buses and facilities. There are 145 minivans (holds up to 7 passengers), 27 vans (holds 8-14 passengers), 121 cutaway bus (holds 8-30 passengers), 62 buses (24-55 passengers), and 1 trolley bus (16-24 passengers).

For the ND Veterans transportation free ride program to highly rural areas. There are 36 counties that are being served but they are not all ADA accessible.

ND Medicaid's Non-Emergency Medical transportation (NEMT) program to help eligible recipients pay for rides to dental and doctor offices, hospitals, and other locations for a medical appointment. They may pay for travel, meals, and lodging. It must be a provider that is enrolled in the program.

Scams – Tonya Hetzler

She talked about common scams and how to avoid scams. An imposter scams are mostly done by phone or the internet. In 2021, 201 ND victims reported losses of \$4.9 million and in 2022, 176 ND victims reported losses of \$4.7 million.

One of the most prevalent scams is called a computer tech scam. Can be sweepstakes, government/IRS/social security, romance, family emergency, etc. Statically, 18–24-year-olds are the highest population of individuals scammed.

Online scamming is another scam. If the price is too good to be true it probably is. Perform a quick online search of the website with the words: “complaints”, “reviews”, and “scam”. Use a credit card versus a debit card so you can dispute the charges.

To sign up for consumer alerts go to www.ftc.gov then click “Sign up for Consumer Alerts”.

Committee Breakout

Friday, February 3, 2023

Call to Order: Brittney Hogan called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call:

Members Present: LaRae Gustafson, Nancy Lundon, Brittney Hogan, Ali Brown, Jan Beddes, Russ Cusack, Chelsy Sondrol, Shannon Cook, Angie Bosch, Joe Yasenchack, Gillian Plenty Chief

Members Absent: Leon Dietrich,

Non-Committee Members: Aimee Volk, Scott Burlingame, Royce Schultze, Kayla Trzpuc,

MFP and ADRL – Kayla Trzpuc

She discussed what Money Follows the Person (MFP) is, transitions, eligibility, contractors, what is covered, etc. Nursing services are available to all MFP persons. For housing supports they are assigned a housing facilitator to help with finding a house, housing assistance applications, requesting a reasonable accommodation, and education on rights and responsibilities.

Aging and Disabilities Resource Link (ADRL) Flexible Transition and Institutional Diversion Services increases transitions from institution to community-based settings (with the exception of correctional institutions). They are not eligible for MFP and ADRL Flexible Transition and Institutional Diversion Services at the same time. Went over the financial eligibility. The services covered are up to \$1500 for moving costs and diversion costs and they assist with the coordination of services.

Quarterly Director's Report:

Scott for Independence, Inc.: See attached.

Angie for Freedom: See attached.

Randy for Options: See attached.

Royce for Dakota Center for Independent Living: See attached.

Committee Reports:

Internal Affairs – Nancy Lundon: See Grid

External Affairs – Angie Bosch: See Grid

Governance Committee – Royce Schultze:

Vacancies: 1 in Quadrant 3 (Fargo area)

Peter Yung will be appointed as a Quadrant 1 member

Robyn Soiseth will be appointed as a Quadrant 1 member (Brenda Boehler resigned)

Hope Wolbert will be an at large position (Ben Johnson's position)

LaRae Gustafson is terming out on 3/31/2023 and Scott Burlingame will be appointed

Others that are coming up will be reappointed.

State Rehabilitation Council – Russ Cusack: Presentations from regional administrator in Minot and Dickinson. They are both on track to meet their goals. SRC is looking for two members.

Committee on Aging – Royce Schultze: No report.

Traumatic Brain Injury Council – Shannon Cook: They are working on submitting testimony for increased budget.

Olmstead Commission – Scott Burlingame: No report.

Public Comment: N/A

The next SILC meeting will be May 4-5, 2023, in Grand Forks, ND and will have the virtual option.

Jan Beddes made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Gillian Plenty Chief seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Dakota Director's Report – February 3, 2023

Staff Vacancies

MFP TC
MFP TC Assistant
Peer Mentor Coordinator

Consumer Satisfaction Survey Results:

234 surveys were completed

Community Education

Meet and Greet with Legislators

Representative Michelle Strinden, and Senator Merrill Piepkorn, both from Fargo, Representative Jeremy Olson Arnegard, Representative Kathy Frelich from Devils Lake

Media

KFYR did a story on our Meet and Greet w/Legislators and did an interview on the importance of the event. Through talking with the staff, the reporter learned about our AT booth and did a story on that when staff presented for Parkinson's support group at the St. Benedictine Living Center. We were also asked to do a story on sidewalks not getting cleared off after snowstorms. KXMB came to the office and did a story on the AT booth and an interview about DCIL

Advocacy

SCR 4004 Study on transportation options for pwd

SB 2012 Testified for the centers and asked for \$374,000 inflationary increase going back to 2016
Staff assisted in planning and participated in the Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week was November 14-19. Some events included a showing of the video HOME, featuring the homelessness crisis in ND, a panel with Youthworks, United Way, Ministry on the Margins, and Salvation Army spoke about the resources and services that the community currently offers for the homeless population and talked about the barriers, which is the fact that our shelter only operates for 12 hours per day. Freezin for a Reason, from the hours of 7 am to 7 pm, students and community volunteers assisted in raising money, food, and clothes for the vulnerable population. Donations included coats, scarves, mittens, gloves, socks and blankets.

Options RCIL SILC Report February 3, 2023

Relocations/Diversions:

Options has transitioned seven individuals out of nursing facilities this fiscal year to include MFP/ADRL. Options staff have diverted eight individuals from nursing facilities and remain living independently.

Success Story Home Modifications:

This individual started working with Options in 2010. Her goals included acquiring assistive communication devices and to increase the accessibility of her home. She has a rare genetic, degenerative disease that had slowly turned her limbs into knots and robbed her of the ability to speak. Obtaining the communication device was the simplest of the two goals because we worked with ND Assistive (IPAT at the time) and they helped her get several devices to not only communicate but also devices that simply made her life easier.

The ramp was a lot harder as one of the most difficult aspects of home modifications in Devils Lake is finding licensed contractors willing to do the job. It took FIVE years to locate a licensed contractor to get the ramp built but it did eventually get built. At that point, the individual closed her file as she was happy with the level of accessibility in her home.

Imagine my thoughts when I was contacted by her husband last year as she now needed a fully accessible bathroom (roll-in shower, raised toilet, grab bars, easier to access vanity, etc.). How were we going to find a contractor? I started the search and finally found Luxury Bath out of Fargo. Gina from Luxury Bath came out and talked to us, did measurements, showed the individual and her husband the finishes and hardware that they could choose from and even played with the family's cat! The work started in August, and we were told it will only take TWO DAYS to accomplish.

Thanks to a contractor willing to drive from Fargo to Devils Lake, we will get the bathroom done in under a year compared to five years from the ramp. We're all very excited!!

Success Story MFP Relocation:

In July 2021, staff started working with an individual who was living in a nursing home in Grand Forks. The individual has a rare disease called Friedreich Ataxia which is an inherited disease that causes progressive nervous system damage and movement problems. He is always dependent on his electric wheelchair. While working with this individual the team had come across many barriers for instance finding a residential rehabilitation provider, an accessible apartment and how the individual is going to use the bathroom during the night as staff would be working with him from 9am-9pm. Options staff had mentioned during a team meeting that the individual could use a Texas catheter and the other providers were appalled that someone would suggest that. We later heard that just the idea of a catheter suggestion went state-wide at an HCBS mtg! Option's staff went and talked with the individual regarding him using a Texas catheter at night. After visiting with the individual and asking him to talk to his doctor about a catheter, this changed the outlook on the number of hours of care the individual needed. He first started out needing 24/7 cares and now it is only 12 hours cares. On June 27th, 2022, the individual is living independently in his own apartment in Grand Forks, ND with 12-hour cares and he is using his Texas Catheter at night while there is no staff around. The individual is beyond happy and he is out and about almost every day roaming around the community.

Medicare D Enrollment: Savings of \$18,379.61 were found for individuals assisted through the Medicare D enrollment period by assisting individuals with research and if they choose to enrollment with a new medication insurer.

Accessibility: Options Accessibility Specialist has been working on Reports for various Cities that had asked our assistance this past summer in evaluating whether their facilities are accessible and to use for the development of Transition Plans as required by the USDA. Options has evaluated a City's buildings and infrastructure except in cases such as a Carnegie Library where we recommend private specialty firms be hired which have more expertise in the area of historical buildings and the ADA requirements. Additionally, Options has been discussing and committed to evaluating multiple apartment buildings to assess whether the Contractor has fulfilled its obligation coming out of a lost Fair Housing Act complaint.

Staff positions open:

Currently Option's still has the Cavalier IL Specialist position open. We have staff going to Cavalier office when appointments have been scheduled.

We continue to have an open Transition Coordinator (MFP) position which would give us three MFP positions. This additional position is much needed to keep up with the increasing MFP/ADRL referrals. We have Heidi in Devils Lake office taking ADRL referrals as well as Sarah in EGF handling ADRL referrals also.

LaRae is retiring September 15th, which we will be hiring ½ supervisor of MFP program and half caseload. Also, her full-time regular Program Manager position will be open.

Options also hired a part-time bookkeeper just to keep up with the MFP/ADRL receipts. With the demand of the MFP/ADRL grant, Options has had to hire different positions to suffice for the workload overall.

North Dakota SILC – 2/2/23
Directors Report-Independence, Inc.
Scott Burlingame, Executive Director

Individual Services: We met with a senior in high school who wants to go to school to become a mechanic after graduation. He said he would need to take some time after graduation to work and make money before he can pay for school. I connected him with Job Service to see if he is eligible for their WIOA Program to help with the cost of school.

We are working with a woman who refused to go back to a nursing home despite some big challenges. She has been very cognizant of her surroundings and working on preventing falls. Our staff helped her get a cane that helps her up and off the couch and has been doing a lot of education on safety around the house.

We helped two High School students pass their drivers test after months of studying.

We had a successful transition from a nursing home with 24/7 home based services. Unfortunately, she became sick and had to go into the hospital for a while. Our staff advocated for funds to be utilized to help fund a 'bed hold' to help with the cost of the caregivers being out of work. This funding means she will not have to start over again.

We were able to apply for and get various funds to make a bathroom more accessible with a walk-in shower and higher toilet. We also helped to move a washer/ dryer from the basement to the main floor of the home. These actions helped to mitigate the risk of falls while she takes a shower, uses the bathroom, and does laundry.

We have been able to assist two individuals with getting needed furniture and equipment to remain in their own homes. An adjustable shower head, lift chair, and stove is helping one individual; and a bed, table/chairs, and shower chair are helping another individual. Without this assistance Nursing Home placement was likely for these individuals.

We assisted 11 individuals with reviews of their Med Part D plans. Medicare in general is not easy to navigate. Many seniors have difficulty understanding and may not even have technology to access programs and information. We helped them to conduct a review and show them comparisons for cheaper options.

One person was long distance while visiting in Arizona. If he would have not reviewed options for 2023 plans and stayed on his current plan, he would have been paying over \$1000 monthly. In general, most were able to select plans to reduce monthly premiums and get their medications for reduced prices or sometimes at no cost.

We served a young adult shortly after he was released from prison with no services or employment in place. We helped him find ways to get support to stay away from problems with law enforcement and to meet his basic needs. We are now working on him on finding work.

We worked with a middle-aged woman with a history of addiction and other mental health issues. Our staff assisted her with finding safe housing and finding mental health providers. We worked with her to set up a budget, and she was then able to save up money to travel and visit with her family for the first time in years.

We worked with a senior citizen who was living on a fixed income and maintaining spending. We helped him to apply for community-based services and to get a QSP. This support prevented him from losing the house and lives in.

We worked with a 40-year-old who has a history of addiction and other mental health struggles but is now thriving in sobriety. We are helping her to complete the paperwork to return to college and pursue a four-year degree program. She has been looking at different Universities for Business Administration with an emphasis in entrepreneurship. With our help, she has been able to turn her life around and is hopeful for what the future holds.

Community Services: Nonprofit Award

Independence, Inc. was named the 2022 Nonprofit of the Year by the Minot Alliance of Nonprofits. This award is especially important, as it is voted on by our peers in the nonprofit sector.

Snow Removal

With all the storms in December, snow removal became an issue again. We attended a meeting with the City Manager, the Public Works Director, the Police Chief, City Planners, and two members of City Council. It was decided at this meeting that the city snow removal plan needs to be adjusted to better prioritize sidewalks.

Independent Living Fair

We held our 13th Annual Independent Living Fair on 11/15/22. We had 62 booths and 250 people. First District Health was able to set up a vaccine clinic for both COVID and Influenza shots.

Community Groups

I believe there is no advocacy without relationships, and decisions are made by those who show up. Therefore, all our staff are encouraged to be active within our community. Some groups are mostly for collaboration and networking, some are advocacy, and some are collaborations among other service providers. We are in more than 20 groups, but some of them are The Minot Optimist Club, the Magic City Lions, Safe Communities Collaboration, the Community Collaboration Meeting, the Downtown Minot Business and Professionals Association, the Region II Transition Community of Practice, the Upham 55+ Club, Advocates Living their Lives, and many more.

IL Ambassadors

The IL Ambassadors is our community advocacy group. The group decided to focus on transportation issues for the next year.

ND SILC Director's Report – Freedom - Feb 2023

MFP/ADRL Updates

- Transitions:
 - 12 **MFP** transitions in our service area (Lisbon, Wahpeton, Jamestown, and Fargo) since the last meeting. Working with **21** active referrals. Our Lisbon office has been receiving the most referrals out of all our coverage areas; however, with limited resources for accessible/affordable housing and QSP services, people are having to decide whether they want to leave their community to get the services they need or stay in the nursing home.
 - 17 **ADRL** transitions in our service area since November 2022. Working with **39** referrals total. These numbers include both transition *and* diversion referrals. We're getting an increase in diversion requests, allowing us to assist individuals in staying out of the nursing home and in their own homes. Sometimes it's as simple as purchasing durable medical equipment or assisting in a reasonable accommodation/modification request.
- Next Day Access (<https://www.nextdayaccess.com/>) in Fargo is now officially a QSP, after 9 months in the works. We have utilized them a lot in the past year for assistance with permanent ramps and small home modifications, funded through MFP. They are now able to complete home modifications through ND Medicaid waived services! WAHOO! 😊

Fargo Consumer Story Spotlight

I worked with this young lady, 26 years old who has a learning disability and was terminated from her position. We worked on her connecting with VR in ND and some paperwork for medical assistance and snap benefits until she was able to get a new job. Sounds like she has a new job at Costco! Yay!

IL Classes/FIA- Living Well 103 will run 8 weeks starting Tuesday, February 7-March 28 from 9:30-11:00am.

Listening Session- We hosted Pie Day and had a listening session. 13 people attended. They were asked questions about what Independent Living means to them, what services are helpful, issues they are experiencing as a person with a disability, what barriers are there in our community and if they had advocated or spoken to others about their ideas & experiences. We had good discussion and feedback from many of the attendees.

The number one take away from the session and the attendees was that they feel a lack of **respect** in our community. Many of the attendees were very emotional about this and it was brought up in one way or another with each of the subjects we discussed. Many of the people thought that places like Freedom are helping communities get more open about accepting people with disabilities.

There were some concerns for the lack of activities and resources available to people with disabilities as there seems to be a lot of case management services for addicts, but not a lot of case management services for other disabilities.

Another common theme was the lack of staff available at many of the services people would like to access.

We took notes on the discussion and may plan FIAs around what people can do when they are experiencing disrespect in our communities. This week, an individual who attended will meet with one of our advocates to discuss interactions she is having with her providers. This is one small step in which we plan to take action and empower people with disabilities to live their life how they would like to live it.

Wahpeton

Office Updates:

- IL Advocate position still posted, no new candidates.
- Joyce will continue to work out of both the Wahpeton and Fergus offices until we get it filled.

Jamestown-

Upcoming Freedom In Action:

- Friendship Soup - February 23rd 1:30-3:00pm, rsvp by February 17th.
- Disaster Preparedness – March 23rd 1:30pm-3:00pm, rsvp by March 17th.
- Spring Craft – April 27th 1:30pm-3:00pm, rsvp by April 21st.
- Virtual Book Club reading the book The Ultimate Gift by Jim Stovall. It will run 4 weeks on Tuesday afternoons from 2-3:15pm February 21, 28, March 7, and 14.

Young Adult Gatherings

- Spring Gathering – Jamestown March 7th 5:00pm-7:00pm rsvp by March 3rd, held at Freedom Resource Center Office Suite 207 300 2nd Ave NE, Jamestown
- Spring Gathering – Valley City March 9th 5:00pm-7:00pm rsvp by March 3rd, held at the Vault 223 Central Ave N, Valley City

IL Skills Classes

- Decluttering and Organizing – Tuesdays March 21st-April 25th 3:30pm-5:00pm

Interview/Hiring update-

- Jen Erickson will join our team in February as our new Independent Living Advocate/Accessibility Specialist. Jen has a ton of experience within the disability community and will be an asset to our team.
- Irina will be transitioning from Resource Specialist to Independent Living Advocate/Transition Coordinator over the next month.
- Molly has accepted another position; her last day is February 3rd

GHD

“Nothing about us without us” is our slogan this year. Empowering people with disabilities by teaching skills and fostering growth to promote independence. Our GHD fundraising goal is \$51,000.

We will have open houses at each location, except Lisbon. Times are as follows:

Fargo: 9:00-11:00, Fergus Falls: 9:00-11:00, Jamestown: 8:00-10:00, Wahpeton: 11:00-1:30

This gives donors the opportunity to stop in to donate if they prefer in-person as well as meet/visit with the staff. Our Fergus Falls and Jamestown locations are both partnered with a group of organizations in their area promoting GHD as a whole.