

## **Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities Spring Council Meeting**

**In-Person Meeting at Atlanta Hyatt Regency Hotel 265 Peachtree St, NE, Atlanta, GA**

**April 25, 2024-April 26, 2024**

**Thursday, April 25, 2024**

**Attendees:** Tianna Faulkner, Maria Pinkelton, Fanta Mitchell, Evan Nodvin, Neal Davis-Evan Nodvin's Support Staff, Mark Crenshaw, Marsha Coles-Felix, ASL Interpreter, Celio Best, ASL Interpreter, Eric Foss, Charlie Miller, Felicia Dillon, Charlotte Densmore, Starr Bruner, D'Arcy Robb, Tonya Fair, Harry Nelson, Devika Rao, Nandi Isaac, Katrina Lynch-Nandi Isaac's Support Staff, Dorinda Peterson, Jalen Lovemore, Nicholas Leroy, Melissa Barwick, Lisa Newbern, Zolinda Stoneman, Lori Campbell, Rena Harris

### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Maria Pinkelton reads GCDD statement of place, acknowledgement as an organization. Lisa Newbern reminds the group that guests who are attending the meeting are not permitted to be a part of the discussions during the meeting, but speak only during the public comment section of the meeting on Friday, April 26, 2024. Everyone introduces themselves. Lisa Newbern opens the floor for anyone who has an announcement. D'Arcy Robb made an announcement that DBHDD has a national project regarding 988 and crisis services. Fanta Mitchell made an announcement about GCDD and council members signing the conflict-of-interest form. Eric Foss introduces himself.

Lisa Newbern goes over the meeting agenda: Thursday's agenda: CAP, Council Business, Breaks, Membership update, Items to vote for during Friday's vote, Lunch, DEI training, Public Policy Update, IPSE update, State Agency updates, project and budget updates. Friday's agenda: Breakfast, welcome, consent agenda, Blue Fire, Inc. presentation, committee meetings, committee updates, public comment, closing shoutouts, meeting ends, lunch provided.

D'Arcy Robb gives CAP update. There are only three items left on the CAP, verses 15, that were on the CAP in February 2024: First area: Plan overview - setting five-year plan, committee work, and GCDD's annual budget. The second area is staff. Edits and language changes have been made in GCDD policy and procedures document to be in compliance with CAP. The third area is DEI. DEI committee to present on GCDD DEI practices and DEI training. GCDD has also increased its capacity in using plain language for documents and communications. The October council meeting will be in person and will include DEI training. D'Arcy Robb opened the floor for questions. Lisa Newbern introduces D'Arcy Robb and Harry Nelson to talk about council business. The items of Business include budget updates, executive director role education, Dottie Adams scholarship suggested plan, Spirit of Kim Award, NACDD and Council meeting updates, Federal budget update, including GCDD budget adjustments.

Harry Nelson goes over presentation about the Dottie Adams Scholarship. Six thousand eight hundred ninety-eight dollars have been awarded this year to three individuals. The committee also worked to determine how the current process to award scholarships.

D'Arcy Robb gives presentation about the Spirit of Kim award in memory GCDD staff member Kim Person. SOKA award that GCDD staff member Lisa Eaves is heading. Anticipate an award ceremony this fall in person. The NACDD annual conference will be July 22-26<sup>th</sup> in Washington DC. The next GCDD council meeting will be virtual on Thursday, July 11<sup>th</sup> and Friday, July 12<sup>th</sup>. The October council meeting will be in person October 24-25, 2024.

Lisa Newbern shares with the group the following items that will be voted on tomorrow: February meeting minutes, quarterly financial report, programmatic dashboard, recommended members for council, executive director hiring language, all of these to pass or none of them to pass. Lori Campbell raised a question about the membership applicants. Lisa Newbern and D'Arcy Robb answered questions about the membership campaign. Mark Crenshaw recognized Fanta Mitchell and individuals on the membership committee for their work regarding the membership campaign to recommend new council members.

BREAK

Meeting continues. Fanta Mitchell presents about membership on behalf of the membership committee. Fanta Mitchell, Dorothy Harris, Evan Nodvin, Nandi Isaac, Rena Harris, and D'Arcy Robb. GCDD received 92 applications. She discusses the membership selection process. Twelve self-advocates were interviewed, 18 family members were sent a survey, and 2 organizations were interviewed. Each region of Georgia was represented among the applicants, including 2 Asians, 3 African Americans, and 1 Latina. There are 6 family member recommendations and 1 organization recommendation. Applications are never closed. GCDD is looking for another organization. Lori Campbell commented that Tools for Life would be another great organization to serve on the council. Maria Pinkelton shared with the group that Tianna Faulkner oversees the Tech White paper grant, where Tools for Life have been integral in the work for the grant as they are a part of the advisory committee for the Tech White paper. D'Arcy Robb shares more detail about the membership selection process. Fanta Mitchell shares with the group that the council will vote on the recommendations by the membership committee so that the Governor's Office can make the final decision. The GCDD membership committee has several back up applicants if the Governor's office disagrees with their recommendations. Those who have been recommended have not been given a status update. Fanta Mitchell opens the floor for questions. It is a little too early for lunch. Lisa Newbern suggests the meeting start with the state agency updates.

Lori Campbell-DBHDD, gives update. Commissioner Tanner is doing a major reorganization at the agency. 2011 there was oversight of regional operations. Commissioner Tanner would like to go back and decentralize operations and quicken communications, adding new positions. There are two new assistant deputy positions over the North Georgia regions and Georgia south region (Allen Morgan and Jennifer Dunn). Also, Commissioner Tanner plans to hire regional coordinators to cover the different regions throughout the state. They will oversee regional operations and will consist of six individuals. Regional coordinators report to the assistant deputy commissioners who report to Commissioner Tanner. DBHDD has recently opened two homes in the Augusta area to address emergency hospital situations. These are not permanent homes, but homes for individuals with IDD to find permanent living situations and resources to keep them out of the homes and emergency rooms. DBHDD completed IDD work group and shared final report., which focused on waitlist, individuals left in emergency rooms/hospitals, and workgroups. DBHDD has 3 pilot projects going on regarding the workgroup, 200 individuals going through programs. Lori Campbell opens the floor for questions. Maria Pinkelton had a question asking if there will be more homes throughout Georgia, in addition to the two homes in the Augusta area to accommodate individuals with IDD.

Melissa Barwick-DHS said that this month is Senior Hunger Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month. May is Foster Care awareness month. Low-income heating and assistant programs for the elderly are also open for individuals with disabilities, which are distributed through local action agencies. DHS is still dealing with Medicaid redetermination applications. Certain DHS employees to receive pay increases this summer. Melissa Barwick hopes this will help with job retention at DHS. DFACS employees to also get pay raises. She spoke about the Foster Care program regarding funding and prevention, to children and families. DHS went from 18 floors to 2 floors at the state office and is continuing to work virtually and working towards more accessible settings and work environments. Melissa Barwick opened the floor for questions. D'Arcy Robb had a question about pay increases for all state employees and a question about guardianship. Lisa Newbern has a comment, sharing about IEP meetings from the Georgia Department of Education. Lori Campbell has a question about children who age out of the system. D'Arcy Robb shares that GAO has a supportive decision-making grant they are working on.

Lori Campbell finishes her update and response to Maria Pinkelton's question about additional homes and resources across the state in addition to the two new homes in the Augusta area. Lori Campbell said the two Augusta homes are not limited to individuals in the Augusta area, but to anyone with IDD and/medical complexities in the state of Georgia. Harry Nelson had a question for Lori Campbell that she addressed. She shared that DBHDD is working with their community center-based service boards to support individuals with dual diagnosis.

Mark Crenshaw with CLD gives his update. CLD is ending the spring semester with 3 IDEAL students who are exiting the program with great plans for life after the program and will be participating in the undergraduate graduation ceremony next week. CLD staff have reviewed 50 applications and have accepted 10 for the fall semester. Completed 12<sup>th</sup> year of LEND program and selected students for 2024-25 school year, including individuals with and without disabilities. It is a 9-month training with 23 trainees. Eight year in partnership with AUCD and bringing in guest teachers. CLD has a new executive director, Erin Vinoski Thomas. There was a national search to fill the role. Mark Crenshaw is still looking for self-advocates and family advocates regarding the LEND program. D'Arcy Robb opens the floor for questions for Mark Crenshaw.

## LUNCH

The meeting continues with the public policy presentation given by Charlie Miller. Lisa Newbern introduces Charlie Miller. Starr Bruner and D'Arcy Robb will also help present with Charlie. Charlotte Densmore was unable to attend the remainder of the council meeting. The public policy agenda includes information about the 2024 Advocacy Days (IPSE, Employment, Waivers and Wages), including major successes. IPSE Day, 48 individuals reached out to their legislatures which led to 89 connections through the phone to action campaign. Employment Day, 498 advocates reached out virtually with over 1000 connections. Waivers and wages days, there were 56 advocates who reached out to their legislators and 112 connections were made. Starr Bruner speaks about IPSE Day, the GCDD IPSE programs, program fees, and IPSE grants. In 2023, \$955,000 the state offered to cover programs. This year, the state increased the money for IPSE grants for over \$1.6 million. State planning and late summer/early fall visits to IPSE campuses with legislators. The more money there is for IPSE, the more money there will be to help students (and families of students) in IPSE programs. Charlie Miller continues the public policy presentation to talk about GCDD session wins and losses regarding bills that passed and bills that did not pass. Ending subminimum wage, HB 1125 did not pass. State as Model Employer, SB 384 passed, which was greatly supported by Senator Bill Hickman. The policy team will be working this summer to determine how best advocate and bring people together to support HB1125. The rate study passed and is fully funded, but not the recommendation to fund 2,400 waivers. Currently, only 100 waivers are funded. The policy team will focus on employment and waivers this summer during the off season. D'Arcy Robb talks about DCH/DBHDD proposals. GCDD, DBHDD, providers, etc. worked hard to get the rate study passed. Federal government has to approve changes. DD Network agencies submitted a letter supporting the rate study increases. DCH and federal CMS has to approve the rate study for it to go into effect. DCH is meeting May 9, 2024 to make a decision about the rate study. DBHDD and DCH have proposed 3 new group home services under the COMP waiver, which have to be approved by the DCH board and federal CMS. GCDD wants changes to new potential new group home services. GCDD is advocating to use resources and service design to better support people in their own homes, family

homes, and existing group homes. GCDD communicated public comment along with GAO and CLD to DBHDD. The next step is that it will be presented at the DCH board meeting on May 9, 2024. D'Arcy Robb opens the floor for questions and lets Charlie Miller speak about the Disability Policy Seminar which took place in Washington DC. Charlie Miller and other attendees got national updates at the seminar from ACL, ARC National, and more and met with 3 of the Georgia federal legislators, including Senator Raphael Warnock and Lucy McBath. GCDD Public Policy Fellow Ryan Shindler spoke about his experience at the Disability Policy Seminar and being GCDD's Public Policy Fellow, including managing relationships with state and federal legislators. Charlie Miller spoke about the plan for next year to be prepared for the 2025 legislative session and reminded the group to write their state representatives. Charlie Miller opens the floor for questions. Lisa Newbern thanks the public policy team for the work they have done this past year.

BREAK

Maria Pinkelton and Fanta Mitchell give DEI presentation. Topics include culture, culture diversity, intersection of race, disability, and more regarding services GCDD provides. Give-a-ways will be given during the presentation for group participation. Fanta Mitchell opens the floor for the group to talk about "The Culture Wheel." Fanta Mitchell speaks on racial identity, sexuality, gender, nationality, and disability and how they all intersect. She then shows a short video on intersectionality by the Disability Service Center. Maria Pinkelton shares about her own experience regarding issues with her hearing loss (that she had when she was younger) then shares with the group that there will be an intersectionality activity for the group to write on the handout what makes the group most unique as an individual. Several attendees share their multicultural self-activity sheet. Maria Pinkelton presents why this is important in Georgia. There are 11 million people in Georgia. Georgia has a very diverse populations depending on where you live in the state, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese. There are 146 languages spoken in metro Atlanta, including 95 different languages in Clarkston. Maria Pinkelton shares that there is a great opportunity to reach individuals in these diverse communities regarding developmental disabilities, as well as the challenges in communicating with these communities due to diversity and growing diverse communities. Fanta Mitchell shares future projections of the American population, including an increase in the Hispanic, African American, and Asian communities by 2054 and 2060. White and not diverse communities will decrease. Maria Pinkelton speaks on linguistic competence and cultural and linguistic barriers, in health care, mental health, education and limited understanding of English. Fanta Mitchell presents more questions to the group. GCDD has 95 languages on the GCDD website, including English. GCDD's Making a Difference Magazine is available digitally, through audio/podcasts, in Spanish, and videos. What is next for GCDD and DEI? Maria Pinkelton shares that the October DEI training will be at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. Maria Pinkelton opens the floor for questions. Zolinda Stoneman asks a question that Maria Pinkelton addresses. D'Arcy Robb also adds comments.

Lisa Newbern shares that Rena Harris and Zolinda Stoneman will give their state agency updates, then Harry Nelson will give his Budget update.

BREAK

D'Arcy Robb shares with the group from Melissa Barwick's presentation, regarding APS salary increases.

Rena Harris-GAO gives her agency updates. Rena Harris shares that all of the agencies are on the same page regarding crucial issues in Georgia that all of the agencies are trying to solve. Private and public ICFIDD. Individuals in these facilities have no access to communications. GAO is working with DBHDD making sure people are being properly assessed to help improve the quality of for people living in these institutions and to get people access to what they need. Lowering the risk of abuse and neglect is also a priority. GAO has started a licensed personal care home coalition working along with DBHDD, DCH and other state agencies. GAO is preparing for their second meeting regarding this initiative and there is a data group at Georgia State University that is working on data to provide for the project. They have launched a new Facebook page. She encourages people to like the page.

Zolinda Stoneman speaks about IHDD ending the semester. She is excited about the future and the students and their interest in disability rights and more. She said there are new advocates each year with interests in the work the IHDD work. Zolinda Stoneman said they are excited about state as model employer, sad about 14C, and that they have projects similar to DBHDD. IHDD has a joint project with CLD and Emory regarding autism, to help students with autism to graduate through the program and advance to plans and life after college. She raves about the autism students in this program. IHDD is taking note of CLD and Emory's education programs and applying it to UGA/IHDD education programs. Farmers are aging due to health and disability issues. Lisa Newbern opens the floor for questions.

Harry Nelson begins his presentation on GCDD's Budget Process and Preview and Update in relation to the GCDD's CAP. He recognizes GCDD's operations team, Lisa Eaves (not present), Felicia Dillon, and Tonya Fair. The budget begins with the GCDD 5 year plan, driven by community feedback and the council' input. GCDD is currently in year 3 of the 5 year plan. GCDD will begin working on the next 5 year plan in 2025. He shared a visual overview of the yearly budget, which has been \$2,100,000 each year, which generally takes 3 years to spend. He shares how the council can get involved and accessibility to the GCDD budget. He speaks about ways the committees are involved in the state plan budget and goes over the budget cycle (spring, summer, fall, winter). For example, the council votes on the budget at the summer meeting and the new budget begins in the fall. He goes over the 2024-2025 council budget (federal and state budgets), the beginning budget, expenses, and remaining balances. The beginning Federal budget is \$2,299,047. He goes

over the budgets from the 5 year plan, (year 1 through year 3). Next in his presentation, he talks about

budgetary duties as a council member, including staying on top of their committee work and voting on the budget at the July meeting. He opens the floor for questions. There were no questions. D’Arcy Robb also shared comments about the budget and there will be more conversations about GCDD’s budget at the July meeting and shared that Mark Friedman of Blue Fire, Inc. will be at the meeting in person to present about the Tech White Paper. A short video is shown about the small project UnlockGA. D’Arcy Robb shares that through the program 22 people became unlock self-advocates. The last item on today’s meeting agenda is GCDD’s programmatic dashboard. D’Arcy Robb opens the floor for anyone who has questions about the programmatic dashboard. Lisa Newbern opens the floor for anyone to ask questions about today’s meeting and shares that the Friday meeting begins at 9:00am.

#### **Friday, April 26, 2024**

**Attendees:** Tianna Faulkner, Fanta Mitchell, Maria Pinkelton, Mark Friedman, Ruthie Beckwith, Eric Foss, Felicia Dillon, Lisa Newbern, Nandi Isaac, Tonya Fair, Charlie Miller, Starr Bruner, Harry Nelson, Sandra Wilcox, Patsy Shelton-Sandra Wilcox’s Support Staff, Katrina Lynch-Nandi Isaac’s Support Staff, Evan Nodvin, Neil Davis-Evan Nodvin’s Support Staff, Charlotte Densmore, D’Arcy Robb, Devika Rao, Lori Campbell, Zolinda Stoneman, Marsha Coles-Felix, ASL Interpreter, Elijah Izaguirre, Melissa Barwick, Mark Crenshaw, Rena Harris, Jalen Lovemore

Lisa Newbern begins meeting. D’Arcy Robb Cannot vote on consent agenda because there are not enough council members, 8 members are present, but there needs to be one more person. If they cannot get the 9<sup>th</sup> person, they will have to do a virtual meeting to do the vote.

Mark Friedman of Blue Fire, Inc. begins the Tech White Paper presentation. Ruthie Beckwith and Sandra Wilcox, a self-advocate, will also present during the presentation. The highlights of what Blue Fire, Inc. learned and researched, including barriers, will be presented regarding technology and access for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. David Taylor (who is not present) is also a part of the Blue Fire, Inc. research team. In their research, they had four focus groups. Sandra Wilcox participated in the focus groups. Sandra Wilcox speaks about some of the technology she uses as well as some of the barriers she has, including access to the internet. She also gave an update about data and research information found through the focus group. Blue Fire, Inc. did 170 surveys, including self-advocates, family members, and providers. Mark Friedman shares data and research information comparing people with disabilities in the survey with the general population and how people are left behind regarding technology. He also shared other

states that have enabling technology programs made up of 16 states, including Oklahoma, Washington, Colorado, and Tennessee. Tennessee is one of the top states in the country that implements enabling technology programs. There were 90 interviews in the 16 states. What all of the states have in common is that all of the states started out small, they had a technology task force, they did technology summits, and had additional funding (COVID funding, ARPA funding). Georgia did not put that money in technology but put it elsewhere. He talks about artificial intelligence. Ruthie Beckwith talks about the different technologies and devices that help people who have developmental disabilities, including a gentleman who had a problem with speech. She shares that Blue Fire, Inc. hosts weekly technology trainings which not only include industry leaders and experts, but also people with disabilities. She also talks about other new technologies, including smart home technology and fall prevention technology, that people with disabilities are using. She also talks about technology that helps people with disabilities travel, including AbleLink and how technology help liberate people and works so that people with disabilities do not have to heavily rely on their support staff. Mark Friedman talks about what the state of Georgia can do regarding technology and access and resources for people with disabilities. He discusses the risks and benefits. He shares the next steps/recommendations: making broadband available for communities (people with disabilities and underrepresented communities) in Georgia, especially rural communities. Second, DBHDD Medicaid waiver standup, up to \$2000 per year for NOW and COMP waivers and \$300 approved by service coordinators. Thirdly, there are rapid technology advances off the shelf in the mainstream (AI for example). Georgia is behind regarding technology. He gives a summary of two years of work on the project: create Technology Task Force, host technology summits, include people with disabilities, engage broadband rollout, fund one project for the available \$30,000. Digital inclusion equity is what this is about. Mark Friedman opens the floor for questions and addresses questions from the attendees. Presentation ends and committees will meet. The vote will take place at 11:00am because another council member showed up.

The topics that will be voted on include the following: February min, quarterly fin reports, programmatic dashboard, membership recommendations, changing hiring language for executive director job description. Nandi Isaac gives motion to vote. Vote takes place, Wina Low votes virtually. The consent agenda passes.

State plan committee report: The committee reviewed the process to interview NOFA's. The voting project will be sole sourced and the equity and technology project the committee is looking for innovative ways for projects to assist with the grant.

DEI committee: Talked about the plans for October DEI training which will take place at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. Will spend two hours on training modules, 1 hour for a tour of the facility. Also talked about thinking about leaders in this space and will consult with leaders in the DD Council space.



Public Policy Committee: They will host a summit in 2024, to include lobbyists and advocacy groups to have stronger voice in Georgia disability community. Will vote on policy agenda in July.

This is the time in the meeting for public comment. There is no one here to give public comment. This is the time in the meeting for shoutouts. We will come back to public comment if the guest attendee returns. Shoutout continues and a public comment was made. Fanta Mitchell announces remaining council members to turn in their conflict-of-interest forms.

Evan Nodvin motions to end the meeting. Rena Harris seconded the motion.

Meeting is adjourned.