

Council Meeting Summary

January 18, 2024, 8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.
5615 Corporate Blvd. Ste. 300A B.R., LA 70808
LIVE Streamed Via YouTube

You can watch the meeting here: <https://www.youtube.com/@LADDCouncil/streams>

View meeting transcript [here](#).

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cherie Kelly-Aduli
Patti Barovechio, OPH/CSHS
Melissa Bayham, LRS
Charles “Mike” Billings
Christi Gonzales
Julie Foster Hagan, OCDD
Jill Hano
Meredith Jordan, LDOE
Pasqueal Nguyen
Melinda Perrodin
Melinda Richard, OAAS
Tory Rocca, DRLA
Samantha Singletary
Brooke Stewart
Phil Wilson, LSU-HDC
Lauren Womack
Tangela Womack, Medicaid

GUESTS PRESENT

Stephanie Charles
Kristie Curtis
Erin Downing
Sharla Green
Lynsey Hebert, Transcriptionist
Aisha Johnson
Nicole Learson, Parliamentarian
Charlie Michel
Caroline Meehan
Amanda Mitchell
Kelly Monroe
Bambi Polotzola, GODA
Kristen Reed
Michael Thompson
Dr. Marilyn Thornton
Debbie Triggs

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mary Frances Avera
Nicole Banks
Cheri Crain, GOEA
Angela Harmon
Roslyn Hymel
Miskey Moore
Tony Piontek
Erick Taylor
Renoda Washington
Vivienne Webb

STAFF PRESENT

Brenton Andrus
Rekeesha Branch
Lauren Brown
Ebony Haven
Hannah Jenkins
Bridgette Talley

Christi Gonzales called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m. with a quorum present.

The [October 2023 Meeting Summary](#) was approved as distributed, by unanimous consent.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – Christi Gonzales

Ms. Gonzales gave an update on meetings she attended during the first quarter and on committee appointments that were made to the standing committees and the Act-378 Subcommittee. Ms. Gonzales also asked for volunteers for the 2025 Planning Committee and appointed: Patti Barovechio, Mike Billings, Julie Foster Hagan, Jill Hano, Melinda Perrodin, Brooke Stewart and Lauren Womack.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee was unable to meet on Wednesday, January 17th for their committee meeting due to freezing temperatures and icy conditions around the state. The Interim Executive Director, Ebony Haven, informed the Council the Council Bylaws had not been updated since July 2018, and the Information and Technical Assistance Center for Councils on Developmental Disabilities (ITACC) recommends that Councils update bylaws annually. Ms. Haven recommended the Council consider establishing an ad hoc committee to update the bylaws and the following individuals volunteered and were appointed: Mike Billings, Jill Hano, Brooke Stewart and Lauren Womack. The Executive Director's salary was also an item on the Executive Committee's agenda brought before the full Council for discussion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:07 AM, a motion by Michael Billings, seconded by Brooke Stewart to enter into executive session with the parliamentarian to discuss the Executive Director position and salary passed without objections or abstentions.

EXECUTIVE SESSION CONCLUDED

At 9:57 AM, the committee ended its Executive Session and the public meeting was called to order at 10:07 AM. A quorum was established.

The Council concluded they need additional information and data before a decision can be made regarding the Executive Director's salary, and the item will be sent back to the Executive Committee for a recommendation. Ms. Gonzales stated she will provide a list of the additional information needed to the Executive Director.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Ebony Haven

Ms. Haven highlighted items in the Executive Director's Report including:

- The Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Budget Request was submitted to the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) on October 12th.
- The Program Performance Report (PPR) for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 was electronically submitted to the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) before the December 30th deadline. The Council will receive feedback in the spring and that will be reported to the Council either during the April or July meeting depending on when it's received.
- The LaCAN legislative agenda item "Funding Increase for Direct Support Workers (DSW) Pay Raises" was not possible as written in the motion the

Council approved at the October 2023 meeting. Therefore, that agenda item was changed on November 29th by the Executive Committee to “Increase the Waiver Rate for Night Services.” LaCAN will collaborate with The Arc of LA on this agenda item during the 2024 Legislative Session.

- The Executive Committee also decided to collaborate with the Community Provider Association of Louisiana, The Arc of Louisiana, and the Supported Living Network and sent a [letter to the Louisiana Department of Health](#) (LDH) to consider utilizing unused enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the development of rate methodologies for the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) and the Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS) home- and community-based services (HCBS) programs. Kimberly Sullivan, the Interim Medicaid Executive Director informed the ED of CPAL that the request is being considered, but they need to provide more information to the new management team before a decision is made. This is due to the change of administration and new leadership within LDH with the incoming of Governor Landry.

BUDGET REPORT - Ebony Haven

Ms. Haven shared details from the [SFY24 Budget Report through December](#), and highlighted the following:

- All contracts have been approved and are moving along as planned including expenditures. More information on the contractual activities in the status report.
- National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) annual membership dues were paid in December.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ACT 378 SUB-COMMITTEE - Bambi Polotzola

The Act 378 Sub-committee was unable to meet on Wednesday, January 17th for their committee meeting due to freezing temperatures and icy condition around the state. There was no report given for the committee.

SELF DETERMINATION/COMMUNITY INCLUSION COMMITTEE (SD/CI) – Brooke Stewart

The Self Determination and Community Inclusion Committee was unable to meet on Wednesday, January 17th for their committee meeting due to freezing temperatures and icy condition around the state. However, Ms. Stewart brought forth an item on the SD/CI agenda for recommendations on the FY2025 Action Plan for the Planning Committee to consider that fall under Goals 1 and 2 for full Council discussion. The Council recommendations included:

- Promotion of ABLE Accounts
- Create a TikTok page to share more information about the DD Council
- Foster parent training who care for children with developmental disabilities
- Training for medical staff including nurses on how to work with individuals with developmental disabilities (similar to first responder training)

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (E/E) COMMITTEE – Christi Gonzales

The Education and Employment Committee was unable to meet on Wednesday, January 17th for their committee meeting due to freezing temperatures and icy condition around the state. However, Ms. Gonzales brought forth an item on the E/E agenda for recommendations on the FY2025 Action Plan for the Planning Committee to consider that fall under Goal 3 for full Council discussion. The Council recommendations included:

- Training on the procedure of how to file a formal complaint
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) awareness, assisting professionals to diagnose and treat individuals with FASD
- Working with Chambers of Commerce to educate them on hiring individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Objective 3.2)
- Seizure and epilepsy training for schools/compliance with current legislation

STANDING COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS:

LSU Human Development Center – Phil Wilson (No Report Submitted)

[Louisiana Rehabilitation Services](#) – Melissa Bayham

[Bureau of Health Services Financing](#) – Tangela Womack

[Office of Public Health: Children’s Special Health Services](#) – Patti Barvechio

[Office of Aging and Adult Services](#) – Melinda Richard

[Department of Education](#) – Meredith Jordan

The Council recessed for lunch at 11:57 a.m. by unanimous consent.

The Council reconvened the meeting at 1:01 p.m.

STANDING COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS CONT’D:

[Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs](#) – No representative was present

[Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs](#) – Bambi Polotzola

[Disability Rights of Louisiana](#) – Tory Rocca

[Families Helping Families Centers](#) – Charlie Michel

[Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities](#) – Julie Foster Hagan

There was no public comment.

Ms. Haven informed the Council that there are two appointments on the ABLE Advisory Council that the Council is responsible for filling. Ms. Haven asked for any volunteers that would like to participate, and Ms. Lauren Womack and Ms. Tangela Womack volunteered to fill those vacancies.

The DD Council January Quarterly meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m by unanimous consent.