

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council  
Executive Committee  
October 16, 2024

JILL HANO: Good morning, everyone. The time is 8:54 a.m. and the quarterly meeting-- I'm reading a book, not reading the script word for word. The quarterly meeting of the DD Council will come to order. And Christi's here, yeah. All right, so Ebony, will you please call the roll?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. When I call your name just say present. Ms. Jill Hano.

JILL HANO: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Angela Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Present.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Renoda Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Present.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Brooke Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Present.

EBONY HAVEN: And Ms. Christi Gonzales.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Present.

EBONY HAVEN: That's all five members.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Sorry about my lateness. I called about 8:10 to let you know I was stuck on the bridge in Lobdell. Taking me 40 minutes to get here. Good morning, everybody. At this time we will have Ms. Ebony Haven read the mission statement and the ground rules. Thanks, Jill.

EBONY HAVEN: The mission of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council is to increase independence, self-determination, productivity, integration and inclusion for Louisianians with developmental disabilities by engaging in advocacy, capacity building and systems' change.

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council's ground rules are members must be recognized by the chair before speaking. Be respectful of each other's opinions. Break for ten minutes every one and a half hours. Discuss council business in a responsible manner. Except as necessary restrict the use of electronic communications, i.e. texting during council and committee meetings. Silence or turn off all cell

phones. Mission statement is posted at every meeting. Be on time for meetings. No alphabet. Side conversations are kept to a minimum, done quietly and restricted to the subject at hand.

CHRISTI GONZALES: At this time I will read you the virtual meeting protocols. For committee members and members of the public attending in person please raise your hand to speak and wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking. To help the meeting run smoothly please keep side conversations to a minimum and comments related to the topic we are discussing. For those committee members who are attending virtually remember you must be on camera and have your first and last name showing to be counted towards our quorum. Please keep microphones muted unless called upon by the chair. Electronically raise your hand to request to speak and wait to be called on by the chair. For attendees electronically raise your hand to request to speak. Once recognized by the chair your microphone will be turned on. After speaking the microphone will be returned to mute.

Also, the question and answer is only to be used by those needing ADA accommodations to participate in the meeting. Public comment will not be accepted by the Q and A except for those individuals who requested the accommodation. As per order, committee members in person and virtually will be allowed to speak first. Public members in person will then be called on followed by public participating virtually who have their hands raised. Comments in the Q and A and chat will be addressed last. As with all hybrid meetings it can be difficult to keep track of all those wanting to speak in person and virtually. Please be patient.

All comments and questions from committee members and the public may be limited should we run into time constraints so please keep that in mind. Also, comments about a person's character will not be allowed. Finally, members of the public will have the opportunity to provide public comment before each vote and during designated public comment periods. Public members will be given one opportunity to speak for each agenda item and will be limited to two minutes. The chair may also use their discretion to determine if comments will be accepted outside of those times. To

ensure the meeting runs smoothly and that we all participate in an orderly manner the committee to consider that's include-- to ensure the meeting runs smoothly if you can adhere to these rules.

The next item of business is the approval of the meeting summary for the July 17th executive committee meeting which was distributed. The meeting summary will not be read unless requested by a member. Are there any corrections? If there are no objections the meeting summary is approved as distributed. Hearing none, the meeting summary is approved.

The next item of business is the 2027 mission statement, 27 to 2031 mission statement as part of the five-year state plan development process that the council will approve at the July meeting. We will consider a new mission statement for 2027 to 2031. The council staff has submitted a recommendation for the committee to consider. It's included in your packet. Since the council is working on redesigning the council website, including working on plain language documents, the council staff has suggested a statement that incorporates clearer, more accessible language. Please take a few minutes to read over the statement.

I will now entertain a motion regarding the recommendations for the 2027-2031 mission statement.

JILL HANO: I'll make a motion.

CHRISTI GONZALES: And we need a second.

BROOKE STEWART: I'll second.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you.

JILL HANO: But Ebony, I have a question.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Go ahead, Jill.

JILL HANO: Nicole, is that allowed?

NICOLE LEARSON: Just hold it for a second. Let Christi repeat the motion and then you can.

JILL HANO: Okay.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right. The motion is regarding us recommending the new mission statement for the 2027-2031 year. Is there any discussion from the committee members? Jill.

JILL HANO: So does this not go into effect till 2027? Because we just updated our bylaws and I don't think it's that different. But we just updated the bylaws with a slightly different mission statement so how does that work?

EBONY HAVEN: So if I remember correctly when you guys updated the mission statement for the last five-year plan, the current five-year plan that we're in, whenever the executive committee and full council approved it that was the mission statement. So you guys have given me permission to make those minor changes to the bylaws and to the policies and procedures, those technical changes. So this will be a technical change, if I'm correct, Nicole?

NICOLE LEARSON: That is correct.

JILL HANO: That sounds familiar. Okay. Thanks, Ebony and Nicole.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Are there any public comments?

SPEAKER: I'm just wondering if at the end whenever you said and people be included that should say how it should be fully included. As in fully included as members of society, as citizens. Because it just says and be fully included. Or as Louisiana citizens.

LAUREN WOMACK: I feel like it needs something after that.

VIVIENNE WEBB: So I think it's not a bad thing that it's vague. That way it covers more. Because if you're too specific it can leave room for discrimination in other areas. Like we can be fully included as a citizen, but not be included in society. And you can be included in society but not have the proper accommodations to succeed.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So would it be like as a Louisiana citizen and in society or you want to just...

VIVIENNE WEBB: I don't know if you want to outline every because we want to be fully included in every capacity and like everything, not just certain aspects.

SPEAKER: Maybe and be fully included in all aspects.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Of community living.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So to be fully included in all aspects of community living?

BRENTON ANDRUS: That would have to come from your committee though.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So we would need to have an amendment to include instead of just saying and be fully included we would add to be fully included in all aspects of community living. Is there any objection to this amendment? Is there any other discussion about

the wording on the mission statement? Ready for the question? So the question is on us accepting the amended mission statement and I'll read it out loud. So to help Louisianians with intellectual and developmental disabilities live more independently, make their own choices, be more productive and be fully included in all aspects of community living. When Ebony calls your name please respond with yes if you're in favor of the motion, no if you're opposed to the motion, or abstain if you are not voting. Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jill Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jill Hano, yes. Ms. Angela Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Angela Harmon, yes. Ms. Brooke Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Brooke Stewart, yes. Ms. Renoda Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Renoda Washington, yes. That's four yeas, zero nays.

CHRISTI GONZALES: The yes votes have it and the motion is adopted.

The next item is the consideration of position papers for the new 2027 to 2031 state plan. The chair recognizes Stephanie to start the discussion.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Good morning. I have gone through the council's position on these areas. I don't know if we want to go through each one independently or if you want me to talk about them overall. Christi, what do you think?

CHRISTI GONZALES: I would say we would just go over them unless somebody has a question because just in case-- because I don't know, committee, what do y'all think?

BROOKE STEWART: Overall.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yeah, so what I did was I went through the position papers for like our current position papers, the ones that were approved during the last five-year plan, and I just took the essence of it and I reworded it to be a little bit more plain language and easy to read. There were a lot of

technical words in a lot of the position papers so I tried to make it a little bit easier to read and make them a lot shorter so I tried to include each one to only be about a page long. That way it was easier for us to read and, you know, wasn't just mumbo jumbo, if I'm being honest.

And then I also updated any of the data. So a lot of it were just more recent studies so the actual information didn't change, just the sources of the information might have been updated or another study or literature had come out. But it still has the same essence of the original, yeah. So I am going to-- please read them. Let me know if you have any questions.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Stephanie. At this time the chair will entertain a motion to recommend all six of the position papers for the new 2027-2031 state plan.

JILL HANO: I'll make the motion.

CHRISTI GONZALES: And we need a second.

ANGELA HARMON: I'll second it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: It is moved and seconded to accept the six position papers for the new 2027-31 state plan. Is there any discussion from committee members? Are there any public comments? You ready for the question? And the question is on if we accept all six position papers for the new 2027-31 state plan. When Ebony calls your name please respond with yes if you are in favor of the motion and no if you're opposed to the motion. Or abstain if you are not voting.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jill Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jill Hano, yes. Ms. Angela Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Angela Harmon, yes. Ms. Brooke Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Brooke Stewart, yes. Ms. Renoda Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Renoda Washington, yes. That's four yeas, zero nays, zero abstentions.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right. The yes votes have

it and the motion is adopted.

The next item of business is the consideration of a council member retreat. At the July meeting the executive committee gave the executive director, Ms. Ebony Haven, feedback during her quarterly evaluation. That feedback included the desire to have a council member retreat. Ebony and the staff have recommended adding an extra day to the January 2025 quarterly meeting to conduct the retreat. The ultimate goal is for council members to get to know each other better and work together better as a unit. However, the staff would like more feedback on what the council would like to have at the retreat. For example, session with the Information and Technical Assistance Center for councils on developmental disabilities, presentation from one of the PIP presenters. And at this time I open the floor for suggestions to offer the council.

BROOKE STEWART: Can I speak to the food?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Go ahead.

BROOKE STEWART: Okay. I love the options that we have like the Outback Steakhouse, very excited for that. So if we have more options like that.

CHRISTI GONZALES: In August I attended the (inaudible) workgroup and just some things that with the sessions they identified a lot of gaps in collaboration across child welfare, mental health, social security and I just brought this graphic to show us. So I think that's something we were trying to plan like a one-day seminar to get people all together. Remember we had spoken about putting everything on one page and this is the beginning of that. So this is something I think we could start doing to collaborate with everybody and just the beginning of just getting to know who our people are in the state and beginning to have conversations with them because they are realizing that there are gaps. And major gaps if you do not belong to one organization like OCDD you wouldn't know where to look. So they are working on that. We are working on that for the next four years as well. And we learned a lot in two days. So that could be something. We can work on collaboration with our fellow state members.

EBONY HAVEN: Can I ask a follow-up question, Christi?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: So for the council retreat if the ultimate goal is for the council members just to get to know each other so are you saying that you want the agency representatives--

CHRISTI GONZALES: It would be just us like to begin to reach out. For us to get together, get to know each other and to begin the communication process of collaborating. Like who we would collaborate with in that regard. Just like a beginning. Strategic. Just like in the beginning plans. Because we really don't get to like immerse ourselves so this would be one way to begin that process. And I can pass this around and make copies. Anybody else? Jill, go ahead.

JILL HANO: I have a question. Like what do you mean who we collaborate with? Because for the most part like we already know-- well, I have two questions. Sorry. For the most part we already know who we collaborate with is the DD network, and then our stakeholders, or like OCDD, correct?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes, but just some extra ones that we sometimes forget about.

JILL HANO: Okay. Oh, and then my next question. Would this be like a personal retreat, or like learning, or like kumbaya?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Well, we can divide it up I think into different sessions. Just a thought. We can kumbaya in the beginning and then learn.

JILL HANO: You know I don't kumbaya, Christi.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I know. So we can start with that, then progress up the ladder.

EBONY HAVEN: So Jill, just to kind of give more information about that. That's kind of why this was on the agenda because the council staff want to make sure we're planning whatever the ultimate goal is for the retreat. We want to make sure we center the planning around that. So if the goal is to learn more about what the council's role is and what your responsibilities are we can center it around that. I guess I'm trying to get more feedback from you all since the executive committee was the ones to make the recommendation for a council retreat what you guys wanted to make sure you got out of the council retreat. Is it more of a kumbaya or is it more you want



information from ITAC about the roles and responsibilities of the council, the council members, how you guys should operate as a unit? That's what I'm trying to get more feedback from you all on.

JILL HANO: I think like half and half. And of course Outback for Ms. Stewart. Because the last retreat was more technical than I realized it was going to be because the last retreat was kind of all ITAC and it wasn't a retreat as much as like a business orientation.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I think a little bit of each one.

JILL HANO: Yeah.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other suggestions? That's it.

SPEAKER: You have a hand raised.

LAUREN WOMACK: I don't know if it's time to bring it up but I know we only have a certain amount of time. Personally I've been wanting to talk to the executive board about more training on ITAC as well as maybe having some public speaking training offered to council members and maybe LaCAN members to help our public testimony, help us feel more confident. That that might be something either we can offer if not next year but the year after. I personally would..

CHRISTI GONZALES: So public speaking and ITAC training.

LAUREN WOMACK: The public speaking may be not at the retreat but in the future may be something that we could offer council members and LaCAN.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Because even though I present a lot at teacher conferences just to give testimony it's totally different so I agree with that. You feel like you're at court, so I understand.

MIKE BILLINGS: I do think the retreat would be similar to what they do when everybody shows up at Partners where you have to do like a self-introduction thing. It's several activities where you learn more about all your members. I know a lot of us come in here and see each other and know each other's names and don't know anything else.

CHRISTI GONZALES: And that's what they did at the working collaborative group in West Virginia. They had us sit with people we didn't know. And at the end they

put us in our states so we didn't even know some people in our own state that were there so it was eye opening. I agree. Any other suggestions or comments? Does that help, Ebony?

EBONY HAVEN: Yeah, that helps.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay. Anything else, anybody? The next item of business is the quarterly executive director evaluation.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible)

EBONY HAVEN: In the bylaws in policies and procedures a newly hired executive director has to be evaluated every quarter.

CHRISTI GONZALES: If there is no objection we will go into executive session. Hearing none, we are now in executive session. The time is 9:24.

EBONY HAVEN: For the committee members we will send you the link for the executive session to your emails right now.

{Executive session}

CHRISTI GONZALES: We're now back from executive session. Committee members if you're attending virtually just a reminder you must be on camera and have your first and last name showing to be counted towards our quorum.

We did complete the executive director evaluation and everything was positive. There was only one question that it wasn't a negative but we were already working towards it and that was the retreat. We did give her some ideas as we discussed earlier. And also for social media getting the committee and council members more involved that way we can post more reels and pictures and getting our stakeholders to send in more pictures as well. So just a thought.

The next item would be public comment. Anyone? All right. Thank you for your questions and concerns and comments. At this time we will have announcements. Chair recognizes Ebony Haven.

EBONY HAVEN: The only announcements I have are the rest of the committee meetings that are occurring today. Right after this committee is the Act 378 that starts at 10:15. Then there is self-determination community inclusion at 1 and the education and employment committee that starts at 3. And then of course our full council meeting is tomorrow from 8:30

to 3:30.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Is there any further business?  
Hearing none, if there is no objection we will adjourn  
the meeting. Hearing no objection this meeting is now  
adjourned.