

Executive Committee Summary

November 30, 2023

5615 Corporate Blvd. Ste. 500B, Baton Rouge, LA 70808

LIVE Streamed Via YouTube

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

You can view the meeting transcript [here](#)

Members Present: Christi Gonzales (Chair), Jill Hano, Angela Harmon

Members Absent: Brooke Stewart, Renoda Washington

Staff Present: Brenton Andrus, Rekeesha Branch, Ebony Haven, Hannah Jenkins, Bridgette Talley

Others Present: Jacqueline Blaney, Colleen Boudreaux, David Boudreaux, JP Gaspard, Leona Harris, Christina Martin, Ashley McReynolds, Caroline Meehan, Kelly Monroe

Christi Gonzales called the meeting to order at 2:08 PM. A quorum was established.

The [October 2023 Executive Committee Summary](#) was approved and accepted by unanimous consent.

Consideration of Council Membership

Ebony Haven informed the committee the applicant selected to fill the institutional facility seat, Christinna Bechtold, decided not to accept the seat on the Council due to a change in her circumstances. Ms. Haven informed the committee there was one other applicant who applied to fill the seat, so they could choose to offer the seat to that applicant or advertise again to fill the seat. Ms. Haven also advised the committee the term for the current member holding the seat, Roslyn Hymel, expired in March 2022. The committee decided to offer the seat to the other applicant rather than advertising again.

MOTION PASSED: To recommend Renee Hoyt to fill the institutional/facility seat on the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council made by Jill Hano, seconded by Angela Harmon passed without objections or abstentions.

Update on the 2024 Legislative Advocacy Agenda

Ebony Haven explained after a discussion with Julie Foster-Hagan of the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD), the 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. There is no avenue where OCDD or the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) can directly pay DSWs. The pay has to go through the Provider agencies, and the best avenue is to raise the reimbursement rate. Therefore, the committee had to consider the updated request of advocating for an increased waiver rate and increasing the current DSW wage floor from \$9/hour to \$11/hour.

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council

SELF-DETERMINATION ♦ INDEPENDENCE ♦ PRODUCTIVITY ♦ INTEGRATION ♦ INCLUSION

Additionally, Council staff met with multiple provider agencies who also requested to speak and share information with the committee to shed additional light on how they use the current rate. The providers also requested the Council consider partnering and request LDH use remaining American Rescue Plan dollars to develop a rate methodology. This will help to understand the rate needed to provide quality home – and community-based services (HCBS) to families and guide the Council’s future advocacy on a rate increase.

The committee agreed to the Council’s partnership with the Providers to request the rate methodology. The committee also decided to partner with the Arc, Community Provider Association, and Supported Living Network to advocate for an increase in the night rate during the 2024 session to match the current day rate. The night rate is currently \$13.52, and advocacy will be to ask for an increase to \$18.51.

MOTION PASSED: To change the 2024 legislative advocacy agenda item from “Funding Increase for Direct Support Worker Pay Raise” to “Close the Gap Between the Daytime and Night-time Reimbursement Rates”, made by Jill Hano, seconded by Angela Harmon passed without objections or abstentions.

There was no public comment, and Chair Christi Gonzales announced the upcoming quarterly meeting in January 2024. Chair Gonzales also informed everyone that LDH is in the process of promulgating a rule for [Act 393 of the 2023 Legislative Session](#) and anticipates the rule being published by March 2024. Until that time, all Council meetings will be held in person.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:29 PM by unanimous consent.