

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Executive Committee
January 28, 2026

RENODA WASHINGTON: Good morning everyone. It is now 10:11. The quarterly meeting of the executive committee for the Louisiana Developmental Disability Council will come to order. This is our first meeting of the new year. Thank you all for sacrificing your time and coming and joining us. We're looking forward to a great year doing what we do best. Will Ebony Haven please call the roll for attendance please.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jill Hano.

JILL HANO: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Angela Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Brooke Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Erick Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: And Ms. Renoda Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: You have five and you have a quorum.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you. At this time we will have Ms. Jill Hano read the mission statement and Ms. Ebony Haven to read the ground rules.

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

EBONY HAVEN: The 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 communication, i.e. texting, during council and committee meetings. Silence or turn off all cell phones. The mission statement is posted at every meeting. Be on time for meetings. No alphabets. And side conversations are kept to a minimum, done quietly and restricted to the subject at hand.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you Jill and Ebony.

Appreciate you guys. To ensure the meeting runs smoothly and that we all can participate in an orderly manner please adhere to the following rules. 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 Q and A is to only be used by those needing an ADA accommodation to participate in the meeting. Public comment will not be accepted via 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 and having 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 so please we kindly ask that you be patient. All comments and questions from committee members and the public may be limited to three minutes or less should be run into time constraints so please keep that in mind as well. 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. The chair may also use their discretion to determine if comments will be accepted outside of those times.

The next item of business is the approval of the meeting summary for the October 29th executive committee meeting which was distributed. The meeting summary will not be read unless a member request it. Are there any corrections?

JILL HANO: I did review the executive committee

summary and (inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm going to go ahead and share it. So I do have it on the screen. It's also linked on the website under the 2025 meetings.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you so much for putting it on the screen. Any other corrections? Okay. If there's no objection the meeting summary is approved as distributed. Hearing none, the meeting summary is approved.

The next item of business is an update of the 2026 legislative advocacy agenda. The chair recognizes Brenton Andrus for the update.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So I will try to make it quick because I know you have a lot of stuff to go over. As y'all recall your advocacy agenda included funding for LRS, the emergency alert for folks with disabilities, increased rates for DSW wages, or increased rates and DSW wages and functional behavior assessments. And this is about the functional behavior assessment. So after y'all voted in October on your agenda staff spent some time looking into the issue. We met with the Department of Education, spoke with some of our advocacy leaders, some FHF staff and tried to look at whether legislation would be feasible in this session for that particular issue. And through that process we realized that we are not in a position yet to be able to move forward successfully with tackling that FBA issue.

One of the big challenges we ran into was we don't have a legislator. There was no one that committed to run the bill. And so even if all the information and all the ducks were in a row we don't have a legislator to run it during session. And their filing time is coming up pretty quickly. And for us to move forward with our legislative activities, which would be legislative visits, roundtables, we had to make a decision on whether or not FBA should be included on the agenda so we can start putting out our information.

Another challenge that we had, and it was also a pretty big challenge, was while I think the legislative ad hoc committee and also the council by voting in October made the intent clear that you wanted functional behavior assessments to be done per year there wasn't a lot of specificity about what that would look like. (Inaudible) apparently if we're looking at ten days did you want nine,

did you want eight. What we're looking at is there are guidelines from a federal standpoint of when FBAs are supposed to be used and that's what Louisiana is supposed to be following. So what you're trying to do is implement a best practice but what is that best practice. We didn't really have guidance. And that also would have slowed us down. We would come back to this meeting if we were able to get a legislator on board to try to figure that out. What is that you're looking for as a best practice for Louisiana. What does that look like.

And so we did meet with Department of Education representatives. We had conversations with them about some of the concerns especially around like formal and informal approvals from schools. And they are planning on working on guidance that they're going to put out for schools around functional behavior assessments for parents that they can utilize that for more understanding about functional behavior assessments. I know some of the FHF, Families Helping Families centers had talked about incorporating that in trainings when they could. I know Families Helping Families in Southwest did a training on it last week. And so trying to get more information out there to the parents about knowing their rights and that they can request FDAs at any point.

So at this point basically what I'm trying to say is we don't feel like we had enough information, guidance and even understanding about what a best practice should look like here in Louisiana to move forward with legislation. But if this is something that the council wants to continue working on and feels like there needs to be a change I encourage you to include that in your education and employment committee because that is the purpose of that committee to have these discussions to develop these thoughts so that way maybe in future sessions we'll have worked out sort of a plan through that committee of what this would look like. Also in partnership with the Department of Education. They also sit on that committee. They can share information and figure out does this need to go through the legislative process or is it something the department can work on directly. Does it need to go to BESE. Whatever that path looks like.

And so I would encourage y'all to consider that. Just moving that particular issue into that committee to have some real discussions about the path forward and then you

can bring it up in future legislative sessions if that's a route you decide. But that's all I got. The rest of the agenda all the factsheets are on our website with the information that we currently have. We do not currently have any updated information about rate methodology. Hopefully we'll get some more whenever those committees meet today and the council meets tomorrow. And we also had on the website we pushed out an LADDC news that will give you information about our roundtables as well as the factsheets. You can access all of that information. And start advocating with your LaCAN leaders from your region.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you Brenton. Any discussion or comments from committee members?

ERICK TAYLOR: I think we should move this to that committee because we do have a lot of parents and a lot of people don't know enough information towards this.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Taylor, for sharing. Anyone else? The next item of business is the consideration of the council member retreat. Ebony, would you like to open the discussion with staff recommendations?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. I don't necessarily have any recommendations. If you guys remember from the October meeting we kind of discussed the council retreat. We didn't settle on a date. We just knew that we couldn't do January this time like we did last year because we were moving. And so it was going to be very hard for staff to plan a council retreat. And so I will just tell you guys this. If you consider April we will be in legislative session. So we'll have just started session. Session starts March 9th? Session starts March 12th. So you'll still be in session and we'll still be going to the capitol for the legislative agenda items that you guys have. It is the 9th? I thought it was. So it does start March 9th. So I would keep that in mind if you guys consider April we're still going to be in session. Rekeesha, Brenton and I are mostly the staff that are going to the capitol and just running those yellow shirt days. July is more of a meeting where you guys are just basically approving the plan and we don't have as much on the agenda for July. October is a full agenda. You guys are voting for another advocacy agenda. Actually July you're usually voting on contractors for new contracts that start in October. But I can tell you the October meeting is full. So I wouldn't suggest putting it in October. I think July would probably

be a sweet spot for you guys to have your council retreat. I kind of just wanted to reopen that conversation. Those are my suggestions for when you guys should have it. But as far as what you should have I'm looking for suggestions from the committee. I will open it. Or chair can you open it up to the committee for suggestions?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Let's open up for discussion and suggestions. I was thinking after you stated that we would be in session would be a good way for current council members to just have the opportunity if they haven't we can go collectively to the capitol. Have something like that where we can all be a part and really get real world instruction on how that goes, what it looks like. Just a visual because everybody has not participated in that. So it could be something that we could do as a group. Or part of it. Like a capitol day for everyone.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I was just going to second what you said. I agree. I think that we should do it all together especially for those of us who haven't had a chance to be able to attend a capitol day. I think that we should all be able to go and be more hands on and let people see us and we see them. Get our voices out there because that's important. These are important as well but I believe being able to let people see us and actually hear us that's very important. We can't do this by ourselves. If it wasn't for you guys we wouldn't even have this. I feel we should all go together as a group and do this together.

JILL HANO: So like would this be our retreat going to the capitol?

RENODA WASHINGTON: It will be a part of it. I don't know how many days it will be but it could be incorporated. Maybe after some discussion on some things and we could just incorporate a day, go out and come back in, maybe have dinner together. I think it would be a great experience.

ANGELA HARMON: So what you're saying we should do it in April?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

ERICK TAYLOR: I think the more numbers the more our voices will be heard and supported. And the public that's disabled make them feel comfortable. Hey, I want to be a part of that. Even though I'm not on that but I want to be a part of it. It could get more people to come out and recognize that. There's a lot of people, how can I say it,

a lot of people don't know what we're doing and how we do. We just sit here blah, blah, blah. But we want to say no, we're not just here blah, blah, blah. We're doing things to be out in the community, not just around these walls.

RENODA WASHINGTON: And that is a move that we want to make as being a new chair is a great opportunity for us also to collaborate, to unite, to strengthen ourselves as a council doing things like that. Now that my seat has changed I remember being a member and not really knowing what we did or how to navigate. My opinion. My suggestion. It just strengthens us to know also while we're still fulfilling our mission, being recognized and letting people know who we are and things like that. I think it would be a good idea. What do you guys think? What's on your mind? I heard from two. Staff? Anybody?

ANGELA HARMON: I personally think it's a good idea. We did something similar one year where we all went to the capitol. I think it's a great idea. It's a chance to really represent and put a face so it's not so scary.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Members who have not attended get an opportunity. And it will probably increase more participation now that they know how it looks, how it goes and all of that. That's what the retreat is about anyway. Just real-world experience.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I feel like if we go to the capitol they can see us as people and not just numbers. Because when they don't see us as people the reality is, unfortunately, we're just numbers. So I feel like if they see us their perspective will change.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Agree. Any other comments? Any further discussion?

EBONY HAVEN: I have something. Just so I'm clear, you guys want to do it in April when session is in? So I'm thinking since you want the second part of the day to be at the capitol that we have sort of some kind of LaCAN training, how to talk to your legislator, how to write a letter to your legislator. Those types of things that you sort of learn in Partners in Policymaking. During that third session they learn all about how to write a testimony. How to tell your story. And so we can focus on the three agenda items that you all have on your agenda currently. We could kind of do like what we do for the LaCAN leaders. We just basically train them on how to present and then basically tell your story to the legislator on why that

issue is important. We all want increased rates. We all want the DSWs to make more money. So I don't think that would be a hard one. We want LRS to stop losing all of their federal funding. We want the state to match that money so they can draw down their full federal allotment.

And the third issue, the emergency alert for individuals with developmental disabilities. I don't think that's going to be a hard sell because we have several other organizations that are supporting that legislation including the governor's office. So I don't think you guys will have to convince any of the legislators about that particular agenda item. But definitely we want you guys to tell your stories about waivers and what your waiver means to you. What your workers means to you. So we can have the first part of the day sort of centered around LaCAN activities and how to get involved and the second part of the day we can maybe go to the capitol.

ANGELA HARMON: I think it's a great idea. I'm just trying to figure how we would navigate that if we accept the schedule in April.

EBONY HAVEN: Yeah. So the council retreat probably will be the day before the council meeting. It would be an added day before the council. It would be the Wednesday. And it's just easier for us to tie the retreat to the council meeting because people are already planning to come for the council meeting. So you just add an extra day. We can add that extra day and do the LaCAN part in the morning and then head to the capitol in the afternoon. I think that's a great idea.

JILL HANO: Is this logistic wise feasible for the staff to do it in session?

EBONY HAVEN: Well, we're always going to have the council meeting regardless if there's a yellow shirt day or not. We trust our LaCAN leaders to take over that yellow shirt day. Even if there was an issue that came up on April 30th we would still have to have our council meeting so it is feasible.

JILL HANO: All right. Cool.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I can't plan session. So for you to do a retreat during session I don't know how that impacts your plan of going to the capitol. Meaning may have something going on that day, there might not. Occasionally they have events and things for legislators. You might have trouble finding them in the hallways because

they might be attending something that an organization has put on that day. Because at this point disability day hasn't passed where you have a day that is set. Likely missed that deadline of trying to block off something at the capitol for your day. You would just be attending and trying to find people there. It's hard to say if it's going to actually coincide with anything we have going on. There might not be a committee that is meeting that those issues are going to be heard. I'm not going to lie and say planning is not going to be complicated. It would be easier if you did it at a different time, if I'm being honest, yes, in my opinion. But if your thing is you want to go to the capitol and run into legislators (inaudible).

ANGELA HARMON: I know you want to have the retreat but maybe just make it that day since we're already here. (Inaudible) Ebony went and some of the council members and LaCAN members (inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: Are you talking about disability awareness day?

ANGELA HARMON: It may have been. And even then someone had blocked off where they were outside meeting people and doing different things. You remember? So everybody wasn't really around as much so we were just kind of waiting to catch someone on that day.

EBONY HAVEN: I think that was still in session though.

ANGELA HARMON: So maybe if we plan a day to do something like that but not necessarily our retreat.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I will say my understanding is they're supposed to be doing one again this year. We could ask the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs when they come back later today or tomorrow. I know last year when they planned it they wanted it to be annual. If it's happening again.

ANGELA HARMON: I'm for it. I'm just saying maybe if it's not tied to the retreat.

JILL HANO: I remember what you're talking about.

EBONY HAVEN: I had the same concerns as Brenton, which is why when I first started the conversation I was saying April. Session sometimes that's a little hard. It's going to be hard for us to plan. And I'm saying that because we don't know when committees are going to meet with the three items that you have on your legislative agenda. We could find out three days before and then we're trying to get with our LaCAN leaders to make sure we have LaCAN

members there to provide testimony in those committees. And a lot of times we don't even know when the bill is going to be heard or when that issue is going to be heard. So sometimes we're sitting in committees all day. So it's just very unpredictable. We can plan it, it's just really hard for us to plan during session.

ERICK TAYLOR: That's why you suggested that we try to put it (inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: Yeah. It's just hard for us to plan around session because, again, we don't know like when issues are going to be heard in committees. A lot of times we're stalking the website looking for agendas and we're finding out maybe two to three days beforehand when an issue that you guys have on your agenda is going to be heard. And we're scrambling trying to make sure that LaCAN leaders can get here with LaCAN members to provide testimony.

ERICK TAYLOR: Let me ask you this question. How much time do LaCAN leaders need to push it out and do what they have to do?

EBONY HAVEN: I mean, as much time as we can give them. You have to realize we have LaCAN leaders all over the state. Like our leader in Monroe she is going to need as much time as we can give her so she can gather up members to drive all the way down here to Baton Rouge for one day.

ERICK TAYLOR: Do that put an issue on when they have to drive and all that?

EBONY HAVEN: No. It's not an issue for the council. We just try to give them as much time as we can before a committee is going to hear any of your agenda items. And if they can come great. If they can't find any members to come that's okay as well.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. The chair recognizes Jill.

JILL HANO: Okay. So if I ran the world why don't we have our retreat in July and make the retreat LaCAN based and involve how to tell your stories, testimony, this that and the other. And disability day, y'all can't like make us come, but like the final one is, I like to think for the most part, we're like a group of maybe friends, maybe not, I don't know. But like casual disability week. If they have the disability day you can encourage the council to go. And then maybe like we do something like make it, I don't want to say field trip. We're not seven. But like an outing. Because like I'm saying LaCAN but like after probably the retreat would probably be after this.

Disability day council outing, trademark. That's just my thoughts.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you Jill.

JACKIE: So I just wanted to let y'all know this year's disability awareness day will be May 4th, 2026.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right. Great discussion. And keep in mind no one is right, wrong. Just a discussion. We're trying to get somewhere. So I appreciate everyone's suggestions. I think it's worth reviewing. And I think collectively we will come up with what works best for everyone. That's what it's about. Great suggestions. Great input. I know Ms. Haven and the staff is going to work. We're going to get it.

EBONY HAVEN: Can we at least know when y'all want to have it. I know we've thrown out April and July. I don't think October is the best time to have it. I'm just going to put that out. I don't even think April is the best time. But I at least want to have a time when you guys want to have it so the staff can prepare.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I just wanted to make a quick statement about the timing. I know y'all are interested in having LaCAN come and talk about like writing testimony and things like that. I know April is not an ideal time but when we get to July session is over. So if you were wanting people to go to actually I guess like give their story on your factsheets for this session it would be like at the end or past that point when July is here. So it would be prepping maybe for the next session. So I just wanted to throw it out there. And I know this year is a little different because if we did it maybe in January, you know what I'm saying, you would have the time before the session starts. But January is not an option right now. April kind of gets bogged down with session. If you do it in July it's at session already. Just some things to think about if you wanted to, again, just a suggestion, if you wanted to have it in July maybe have a different idea and save this idea for the next retreat so that if we have it in January we could prep with those new fact sheets before session starts. Brooke has her hand raised also and then Ayden after.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Brooke.

BROOKE STEWART: Hi everyone. I have been listening to the discussion. After listening to the DD staff I do think we should do it at their recommendation of July just

to give them time to plan for us. And also our LaCAN members, like our LaCAN leaders in our region they also have days that they go to speak to people at the capitol. I believe Angela went recently. So I think that's an opportunity that we can participate with LaCAN and then we can do the staff retreat in July like the staff is recommending.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you Brooke. Ayden.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I just want to say I agree with everything Stephanie said. It was on point. Everything she said, I agree with her.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you Ayden.

EBONY HAVEN: I will say this. You guys don't have to have a retreat this year. Like Stephanie's saying session will be over. So if we wanted to wait until after October when y'all set your agenda again and then we have the retreat in January we're prepping y'all for when session begins. Does that make sense? Whatever you guys vote on for that agenda you will be prepped. If we do a full day like this, like the LaCAN leaders come in and you guys have a chance to work with them. We can even do a mock legislative session visit. The retreat can be whatever you want it to be. But it doesn't have to be this year. If y'all wanted to skip a year and then wait until January next year we can do that as well.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Whatever works best for you guys. We know you guys are busy and things like that. But we do have new members. We want to just make sure that we're doing something where those members are not stagnant or not really knowing what they need to do or how this operates or anything like that. We definitely want to do something, you know. With all the suggestions and ideas my brain is...

EBONY HAVEN: I'll just say this one last thing. They will definitely have an orientation. So I don't know if you guys remember orientation last year. I broke it up into one-hour lunch and learns for like five sessions. Nicole was the last session. They are getting all of the information in lunch and learns. They can ask questions. They can interact. I thought that orientation went very well last year. And all the members are invited. You don't have to just be a new member. If you're a veteran and you want to come back and hear about conflicts of interest or what the council's responsibilities are as far as like federal responsibilities anybody is invited to

those orientation sessions. And so I think I'm just saying that just to say that the new members will definitely have something that they are learning about how the council operates, all about LaCAN. There's a session about LaCAN. There's a session about conflicts of interest and the rules of the Louisiana council. We have been having Nicole come at the last session and do parliamentary procedure. They will definitely have something that they will learn about how the council operates.

JILL HANO: I don't know about 2026 but why don't we start adding to the January meeting a prep session and that be a retreat?

EBONY HAVEN: Say it again.

JILL HANO: Tack on to each January meeting. Does anyone know what I said?

BRENTON ANDRUS: You basically want to be prepped on like advocacy based on the agenda you set in October every January. Not a full-blown retreat but at least some sort of brief meeting or whatever it would be where you kind of package sort of what we talked about but catered to the agenda. How do you write testimonies. Do you understand the factsheet.

ERICK TAYLOR: We got a lot going on and we skip a year and then come back. And you're saying we don't have to have one and we can have one the next year?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. You don't have to.

ERICK TAYLOR: So I'm going to ask the committee and chair will you step in if you have to? Is it a lot on y'all to do what we're trying to do? We also want the committee to be comfortable too where it's not a pileup if I'm making any sense to you. We're just trying to see we definitely want to have something that the new board members know that we definitely wants to do this but we need to know where y'all standing right now. We did a new move so we're trying to settle everything in. What would be better? Next year? If I'm making sense to y'all.

RENODA WASHINGTON: We're just trying to see what's convenient for them because we have a goal and we want the new board members to be acclimated and just knowing what-- I'll say it. Let's just be real here. Any of us who have done council together we did not really fully know the roles and responsibilities. If you want more participation in LaCAN we have to make sure our council members know what we are supposed to do. If you want that

(inaudible). And I will speak for myself. I am big on accountability. I teach so I was not always able to make these things. But if this is something that we want for council members to see the greater need of then we have to have where we're teaching them their roles and responsibilities when they get on. And I just think that needs to be a focal point even while considering what you guys have going on.

But the council members it needs to be a must that they know and fully understand so there won't be any excuse further down the road where they're being told we're not participating, we're not calling. Well, I look at it both way. Maybe they were not aware. Maybe they didn't know. Maybe they didn't know how to write. It's just a lot of things, at least from my perspective on because I have been in their seat. I know what I felt. I know those things. So if you want the council to really be strengthened as a whole and for us to perform our tasks and the roles and responsibilities we have to make these things a priority. That's just where I am. So wherever we can have a retreat, and it may not have to be a retreat, but it needs to be something where at least I feel that these council members have what they need.

ANGELA HARMON: I agree with what you're saying but I don't think we need to tie it to a retreat. It could be just a day of where I think when I first got on I felt the same way. I still feel sometimes let me see what my responsibilities are. But even like the mentor. When I first got here I asked for a mentor. That wasn't really implemented at the time but now we have mentors. Jill I feel like she could teach me some things. With that being said, yes, we do need to-- I hate to say a party. We have to have where we can meet everybody before we come to the meeting and everybody oh, that's so and so. We saw her online and we interviewed her but we really don't know. Sometimes people are not approachable and you feel like do I go say something. Maybe if we can meet each other before, like if we have a meeting in January, say April the 29th or whatever, or we meet that night and have a get-together or something where we can just-- I don't know. Just my thoughts on it. In January, not so much in April. Not just tied to a retreat.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you Ms. Angela.

MIKE BILLINGS: Just a suggestion from the bleachers

back here. I think an easy way for y'all (inaudible) throws it all towards Ebony but she already does the orientation online with the new members. Would you consider or think about adding on what you're talking about now, a session on calling legislators, on writing your testimony. Just briefly to give them an idea of how that's done. And then if you go more in depth at a later time if you have time to plan a retreat.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you. It's input and it's valuable that's what we're here for.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I'll also say every year in the briefing our LaCAN leaders beg for your involvement. Frequently throughout the year regionally they're hosting member meetings that cover exactly what you're talking about. And frequently throughout the year. They also have statewide LaCAN member meetings that they're doing where they jointly get together and host these. And a lot of times they're partnering with their FHF center as well to do advocacy trainings. If you want to do something every year specifically with our agenda that's great, but I just can't sit here and make it seem like the information is not out there because the information is out there. They host these meetings. They beg for involvement from our council members. And some of y'all are very involved. And some of y'all may not even know who your LaCAN leader is.

And so it really depends on kind of if you want that information, if you want to tackle it, it's out there. We have ways for you to access that information and participate in those trainings. There's a lot of LaCAN leaders that I know would actually do an individual training with you if you wanted. They meet up with you. They do a Zoom where they just get to know you just to help you understand the agenda and write your testimony. Because we would actually love y'all to give testimony at the capitol as well. And they can help you write it and do all that stuff as well.

The other thing I just wanted to add was keep in mind when you're thinking of planning, especially if you're going to look at planning let's say every year you want to do this particular training, you have this new schedule that you're going to vote on. So you're going to have a month where you're having a meeting every single week of the month including the full council meeting. And the full council meeting is an all-day meeting. If you want to tie

something into a time when y'all are all here you would have to consider adding a day at the end of that month or getting rid of something in your full council meeting. I know y'all haven't gotten to that yet on your agenda but this is probably going to factor into some of your decisions that you might be making. And I know some of y'all like to be here in person for every meeting so just consider that. It's in your packet for y'all to look at if y'all need it to figure out how to factor in additional retreats or training or anything.

EBONY HAVEN: We're running out of time. It's 11:06 and you guys are supposed to stop at 11:45 and we still have four things on the agenda. I don't know if you guys want to vote on it today?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Or do you want to come back to it? Go through this and then come back?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: That's a good idea.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right. The next item is a consideration of the new council meeting schedule. Attached is the proposed meeting schedule for the standing committees and council meetings.

EBONY HAVEN: So this is the continuation of the conversation that we had in October. I did also include something else in your packet. It's the council expenses for 2025. I know that I remember at the last meeting we kind of talked about the reason I brought the option for y'all to change the meeting schedule was because of budgetary reasons. And so I kind of wanted you all to like firsthand see how much money you guys are spending on council meetings. And that's including ad hoc committee meetings. For anyone that's not here it is linked on our website under the executive committee meeting agenda so if anybody wants to pull it up. Thank you, Stephanie, for pulling that up for me. But I just wanted to kind of show you guys expenses for the council meetings. Now if you look at the January meeting of course we had to pivot. I don't know if you guys remember last January we were going to have the council meeting at our office however the office manager he rented out the space without telling us so we had to pivot at the last minute and have the council meeting at Embassy Suites. As you can see the council retreat just by itself is about 5,500-dollars.

In April that will be like a regular council. Us paying for travel, gas, hotels and then meetings. So the

average cost is around 2,200-dollars. If you kind of look at April and then in July we spent a little more because we had another meeting in July. We had the nominating committee in July. But then in August we had the planning committee. And then we had the legislative ad hoc committee meeting in October and then our council. So in all we spent about 18,000-dollars on council meetings. So I wanted to bring that up because, again, I wanted to let you guys know I'm only suggesting this because of budgetary reasons.

And so if you pull up that other document now Stephanie. Based on the vote that you all had in October, which was to move the standing committee meetings to throughout the quarter the Wednesday before, this is the schedule that the staff and I came up with. After your October meeting we met and we decided that this would be the best schedule. I know there was some concerns from some council members that you wouldn't remember what happened in those committees so we decided that the best month would be the month that you guys would have your council meeting anyway. You would have an April meeting anyway so we would have the committees throughout the month on a Wednesday. So as you can see let's just take April for instance. April 1st would be the self-determination and community inclusion meeting. April 8th would be Act 378. April 15th would be education and employment. And then April 30th would be our full council meeting. The executive committee would meet in the morning and then we would have our full council meeting immediately after that after a small break. You can kind of see the schedule that I included at the bottom for the actual council meetings.

Now we as staff we would speak to our chairs or our SDC guide in education and employment committee and Act 378 to determine what would be the best time for those days throughout the quarter. And we would send calendar invites. We can send reminders just to make it easy for everybody since this is something we want to make sure that you guys are prepared. And so that's the schedule.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Is there a motion to recommend the proposed meeting schedule? Jackie.

JACKIE: So this is kind of disappointing for me because ever since I started with Families Helping Families I have attended every committee meeting because as far as the discussions are had and the decisions are made and I

wouldn't be able to justify coming to Baton Rouge every week for a month four times a year. It kind of makes me sad this is where it's going.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I did just want to also remind everybody that there is a virtual option. I know you like coming in person but there's also a virtual option for both council members and members of the public because these meetings will be shortened. On average our committee meetings are about two and half hour blocks. So they would not be a full day meeting so people could participate online. But I understand it's not the same. But there is that option. Brooke has her hand raised.

BROOKE STEWART: Is this going to become a barrier? Because if these are our meetings and they're going to be separate days now the opportunity for people across the state to chair or possibly be on executive council they're not going to be able to because they would not want to drive in just for an hour, right? They would be left to do it on Zoom but then you can't chair if you're on Zoom.

JILL HANO: I thought you could.

EBONY HAVEN: That is for any individual with a developmental disability as I understand.

JACKIE: I hate to nit-pick and everything but how is this going to save money with the DD Council? They're going to eliminate the need for meals?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. We had the conversation in the October meeting with the council. And yes, it will save money on meals. It will save money on hotel costs. It will save money on rental costs and it will save money on (inaudible).

JACKIE: It's going to be two days that people if they decide to drive in it would be two separate dates of the month that they would have to do so because the committee meeting is going to be one day and then the full council is going to be another.

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. If they decide to attend in person. Like Stephanie mentioned, these committee meetings are two and half hours at most so some people may choose to attend those virtually instead of driving and coming in person. And I'm not saying, I want to be very clear because I think there was some miscommunication last time. I'm not saying that people can't come in person. That is not what this is about. This is strictly about council expenses. Like I kind of explained to the council in October, expenses are

rising. Gas is rising. The cost of food is rising. The cost of hotels. Like the state rate just raised because hotels are not accepting that 100-dollars anymore. The funding is stagnant. It's been at the same 1.3 million-dollars for the last-- Brenton has been here for ten years, before that. So we have continuing rising costs but our funding is staying the same. The staff and I looked at big ticket budget items where we can save. One of the ways we're saving is having our own space. And then we were looking at council meetings. Another big-ticket item is travel. We spend a lot of money in travel. So how can we reduce those. How can we reduce those costs. Again, I gave the executive committee and the council two other options or suggestions. I gave them two other suggestions and they decided to change it.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you Ebony. Ayden.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I'm just looking at this. I might have to get my thoughts together on this. Because I personally believe that virtual is great but a lot of people would like to be able to attend in person. And if you have it two separate days, I don't know if I'm making any sense, but if you have it two separate days that will be really hard for people who want to. There's got to be a way that we can cut some of this without cutting the people that want to be able to attend in person. I don't know how yet but there's got to be a way. I understand it's really hard but something's got to give. That's not fair for the people who want to attend in person but can't because now it's split into two days. Does that make any sense? Did I make any sense at all? All you guys sitting in this room play important roles and I feel the people that play a very important role that want to be in person should be able to no matter where they're from. That's just my opinion. I don't know how we can figure that out, but I think it's something that needs to be figured out. Because I for one enjoy seeing your beautiful face when you come. I want you to be able to attend in person.

RENODA WASHINGTON: I just want to reiterate, just piggybacking off what Ebony said. This is not to just take away anything. The roots of this decision is budget. We want to keep that in mind. We all love coming to the meetings in person and seeing each other's faces and things like that. I myself enjoy it. However, the root is budget. And I think the last meeting she kind of explained

a little bit more on, I remember you giving like an idea of how, just kind of gave us an outlook on how things could be with money and things like that. I remember but I can't say it right now. But it kind of just touched me. I was like okay, that's wise to think about this now instead of having to think about it later. That's how I took it. It is solely based off of budget. And I think when we are making a decision we have to think about that part even though it may not be something that we totally want but what is the best thing. If that makes sense.

ERICK TAYLOR: My question is I see this budget sitting in front of us. The question I wanted to ask when y'all leave these rooms do y'all pay for these rooms ahead?

EBONY HAVEN: No. We reserve them, Erick, and then once the day comes the person checks in and then checks out and they charge us.

ERICK TAYLOR: So you have to put something down on these rooms?

EBONY HAVEN: No.

BRENTON ANDRUS: If it's not canceled within enough time we still pay for that vacant room.

ERICK TAYLOR: Do y'all owe any board members for that if they cancel? Y'all still pay for that room? Do we get a slap on the hand where you have to pay something?

EBONY HAVEN: I don't know if everybody's noticed but Bridget and I changed the wording in the RSVP email because we had that happen a couple of times to us. And I realize circumstances come up but if a council member does not let us know in enough time that they're not going to need the room we're still charged. Now as your executive director I am not going to hold you guys accountable for the full amount but we can't pay taxes and some hotels charge taxes when a person does not show up for that room. So we changed the wording in the email to say you may be responsible for some of that, for a portion of that room cost. And the taxes is what I'm talking about. We can't pay taxes on our purchase card, our travel card so council members will be responsible for paying those taxes. We still, the council still pays for the room but the taxes are what the council members will start to be responsible for.

ERICK TAYLOR: If we're being hold for holding a seat and we wait for the last minute telling you hey, we're coming and that seat and you have (inaudible) because then that's messing with the budget.

EBONY HAVEN: I mean, we can't hold them accountable for all of it. Sometimes circumstances happen. It's out of our control. And so I do take those types of things into consideration.

ERICK TAYLOR: I understand what you're saying on that. But if we get a list okay, be here this day and it's just like me telling you Ebony, I'm going to be here and then I wait two hours before I supposed to be here it's supposed to be truly on me, not on the budget. Two, why we can't take the food out and everybody be responsible for their meal. Being serious. That's a spot that we know we got that back in the budget. An emergency happen a person needs where they in a situation where they just can't they should be able to come to you or the chairman and say I just can't. I'm just being honest. If I say I need to eat, and I'm a big boy, and I can't (inaudible) 50-dollars or something to the side for those two days.

EBONY HAVEN: I'm going to respond to that. Erick, you all are volunteers, right. You come to the council. It is hard work, this work that you all do is hard work. And so the least that we could do is provide a meal for y'all to come all the way from Lake Charles and other areas around the state. The least we could do if you're going to come to the meetings is provide the meal and help you pay for your stay. So I don't know, as your executive director, I don't know if I would be comfortable saying you guys are on your own. You're volunteering. You're coming in for a meeting and I'm not going to provide you with a meal.

ERICK TAYLOR: But I'm just saying cut somewhere.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Ebony-- Mr. Taylor, I'm just trying to ask this opinion. When you guys-- I know you're very detailed. Is this the only area where we could cut back?

EBONY HAVEN: For administrative costs, yes. Our rent is set. All of the other things that come from administrative costs, like all of the costs that the Louisiana Department of Health charges you, those costs I can't get out of. They're going to charge us for human resources. They're going to charge us for technology services. They're going to charge us for civil service. All of those fees. They're going to charge us for our phone bill. I can't really do anything about those. Travel is where I can. It's just like your everyday budget. Like when you're looking at your budget for your home. Like there are some costs that are just fixed and then some

costs-- my family and I eat out a lot. That's a cost I can cut. Just taking my personal budget, for example. I can easily cook more and then save money at home. It's similar to that. Like the travel was something that we could cut down on. As the other administrative costs I can't do anything about.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Ayden has his hand. Then I will get Jill and then I will get you in the back.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I was just thinking as far as like people canceling at the last minute and that's causing people to pay for the percentage. There's got to be a way, like if you're sitting here there has to be a way, like you have to provide some kind of documentation from somewhere, somebody saying hey, I'm sick. I can't make it. You won't be held responsible for X, Y and Z money. But if you're just not coming then you are responsible. I don't know if that makes any sense.

And as far as I wanted to say something about meals. I'm very thankful for the meals. Thank you guys for providing them for us. But could we possibly maybe cut down the options of what we are able to get? Or would that not be a good idea?

EBONY HAVEN: We can definitely cut down on the options. We can provide a salad and a main course.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Would that save anything?

EBONY HAVEN: I don't know if that's going to affect the budget that much if we're offering two options. Whenever we are choosing meals we try to stay within the same price range. So everything's around the same price range. It's just I don't think it's going to affect it all that much.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay. Just a thought I had.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you. Jill.

JILL HANO: (Inaudible) this is the second item that there's not an easy happy medium. And Ebony, not to sound ungrateful because I am and we all are, but if in-person meeting is the common consensus then could we get Wendy's? My first question. And my second question left me.

EBONY HAVEN: Can I respond? Jill, can you repeat the first one.

JILL HANO: I cannot.

EBONY HAVEN: Well, the second one we order off of something called Easy Cater and I'm not sure if Wendy's is an option. But if you guys want to go that route, yes, we

can definitely order Wendy's or some other fast-food restaurant. I think we were just trying to make the meals a little more...

JILL HANO: You said you want to literally dine us.

EBONY HAVEN: Literally want to what?

JILL HANO: Like how you want to provide us a meal and you want it to be a good meal. Not just a junior bacon cheeseburger with mayonnaise and lettuce.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you Jill.

JILL HANO: What if council members shared hotel rooms?

EBONY HAVEN: I don't know if everybody would feel comfortable with that. Like you just mentioned like there's no happy medium. I think some council members would be okay with that, some won't.

SPEAKER: So I agree. I feel like these are all just very small Band-Aids on a bullet wound as far as budget cuts. I definitely think that you're spending a day trying to tackle really important issues fueling your body with something good verses McDonalds is a marginal cost. However, why does it take a day, because these meetings, like those meetings that are one each week, right. They're about an hour long you said. Two and half hours. If we were not more efficient, not effective and not efficient could you not put all those meetings in one day and say okay, we're going to get this done in one day. Let's be more efficient, more effective. Let's push the conversation forward. Let's be more solution-oriented verses splitting everything up.

EBONY HAVEN: Currently they are a one day. Today is the day. All of the meetings happen back to back to back. They're currently arranged like that. And so we wouldn't be saving any money if that makes sense.

SPEAKER: I thought we were talking about the meetings that the schedule was up previously.

EBONY HAVEN: This is the new schedule that we're proposing based off the motion that the council voted on at the last quarterly meeting. So currently they're all happening in one day like today.

SPEAKER: What was the idea behind the change of that?

EBONY HAVEN: So the budget, the costs. Because it's a two-day meeting.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right. Due to the timing we need to have a motion to recommend this to the council or just present it to the council tomorrow. Which would you

like to do? Do you want a motion to recommend this? If not we need to move forward and just present it to the full council. Brooke, the chair recognizes you.

BROOKE STEWART: I would like to make a motion to present it to the full council.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Motion to present it to the full council.

NICOLE LEARSON: Madam chair. So are you saying that you are recommending the proposed schedule? Because it's going to be presented to the council whether you support the proposal or not.

BROOKE STEWART: Oh, okay. It's going to be presented either way?

NICOLE LEARSON: Yes. So is your motion to recommend to the council that they vote for this? Is that what you're saying?

BROOKE STEWART: No. It wasn't.

NICOLE LEARSON: Okay. Because it's going to be presented to the council for a decision and a vote regardless. It's just whether or not you as the executive committee is recommending that you support it.

BROOKE STEWART: Right. I don't think we came to a consensus as a council. It doesn't seem like it.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Can you repeat yourself Brooke.

BROOKE STEWART: I don't think we came to an agreement. Like what I'm listening it doesn't seem like majority came that we want to recommend it.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Executive committee, what do you guys think? Are we recommending this or are we going to let it be presented?

SPEAKER: I would like probably just to send it.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right guys. So we have established that. We're just going to present it to the full council.

The next item for consideration is the council code of conduct. Attached is the proposal. Ebony, would you like to start the discussion.

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. This is, again, something you all discussed at the last council meeting. The full council voted for the staff to come up with a draft of a code of conduct for the council members. And so Stephanie researched and found New York's code of conduct and we really liked it. I know the chair asked for there to be sort of consequences if someone doesn't follow the code of

conduct. Sort of like what we have for the attendance policy. And we found one that we thought would match our council here in Louisiana very well. It's in your packets. I can answer any questions if you guys have any. But it's sort of self-explanatory. But I can answer any questions.

MIKE BILLINGS: The serious behavior it just specifies if a member threatens others or acts violently. My personal opinion would be any unwanted behavior, touching and/or comments of a sexual nature might fall under serious behaviors.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you. Is there a motion to recommend the proposed code of conduct to the council?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Brooke has her hand raised.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Let's go back. Brooke, you're recognized.

BROOKE STEWART: I just wanted to make the motion to approve it for the full council.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Is there a second?

JILL HANO: I'll second.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Ms. Jill seconds the motion. So it is moved and seconded by Jill. Is there any discussion from committee members? So the motion is to recommend the proposed code of conduct to the council. Is there any discussion from committee members? Jill.

JILL HANO: I'm sorry Ebony. What were you saying the difference between this and what y'all sent us during the quarter?

EBONY HAVEN: This is the same thing that I sent to the full council. There were no changes.

JILL HANO: Okay.

EBONY HAVEN: The only change I'll make is the change that Mr. Mike just made. And that's touching or comments of a sexual nature to serious behavior, to that portion of the code of conduct.

JILL HANO: All right. Thank you.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Is there any public comment? Are you ready for the question? The question is on to recommend the proposed code of conduct to the council. When Ebony calls your name please respond with yes if you are in favor of the motion. Or no if you are 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. Mr. Erick Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Erick Taylor, yes. You have four yeses.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The yes votes have it and the motion is adopted. The next item of business is the quarterly executive director evaluation. So we did receive the results from that survey. We have to go to executive session.

BROOKE STEWART: This is when I get on the link, right?

SPEAKER: Yes.

RENODA WASHINGTON: If there's no objection we will go into executive session.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm going to end this Zoom. After I end this if you would like to join for part two just click on that link again from when you registered and it will put you in a waiting room. So once I log in it will go ahead and accept y'all.

{Executive session}

RENODA WASHINGTON: We're calling the meeting back to order. For the quarterly executive director evaluation there was a suggestion to recommend to the council that Ebony receive a 3 percent raise. Is there a motion to recommend the proposed raise to the council?

ERICK TAYLOR: I move to recommend it to the council.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Is there a second?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Brooke has her hand raised.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chair recognizes Brooke Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: I second.

RENODA WASHINGTON: It is moved and seconded by Brooke Stewart to provide a raise of 3 percent for Ebony Haven. Is there any discussion from committee members? Is there any public comment? Are you ready for the question. The question is on to recommend to the council a 3 percent raise for Ebony Haven. When Ebony calls your name please respond with yes if you are in favor of the motion. Or no if you are 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. Harmon, yes. Ms. Brooke Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Stewart, yes. Mr. Eric Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Taylor, yes. You have four yeses.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. The yes votes have it and the motion is adopted. So we're going to briefly go back to the other business that we did not provide more information on. And that's the item of business of the new council meeting schedule. I mean the consideration of the council member retreat. Sorry. So we're back to either we're going to decide on the July date for the council retreat or we're just going to present it to the council and let the full council decide. Which are we going to do?

ERICK TAYLOR: I recommend the full council to decide.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. The full council. Any objections? Is there any public comment? All right. Thanks, everybody, for your comments, questions and concerns. And thank you for attending this meeting. At this time we will have our announcements. The chair recognizes Ebony Haven.

EBONY HAVEN: Hi everyone. The only announcements I have are the meetings that we have for the rest of the day. From 12:45 to 2:30 we have our self-determination and community inclusion meeting. From 2:45 to 4 we have the Act 378 subcommittee. And then from 4:15 to 6 we have our education and employment committee.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Is there any further business? Please state your name.

DAMON VINCENT: So my name is Damon Vincent. I am the proud owner of TrainUnique in Lafayette, Louisiana. For the past six years we've been providing adaptive fitness geared towards people with developmental disabilities and acquired disabilities later in life. And we've seen huge success socially and inclusion wise physically. And throughout the years more and more and more people with disabilities around the state have asked us when we're going to be in the waiver programs. Because fitness is such a basic need for everyone but it's even more important for people with disabilities. Especially developmental

disabilities as y'all age out of physical therapy. I'm not sure when's the last time you guys have been in physical therapy but probably been a little while. As we know therapy's meant to be a temporary option but people with disabilities need to be moving throughout their life because it directly impacts their quality of life, their independence and their inclusion and acceptance into the community.

And so that is the next step is granting our athletes with disabilities who are on all the waiver programs access to adaptative fitness. We have worked out lots of details. As far as I know that with the last services that were added with arts and equine therapy and water therapy the struggle has been providers. But we are a dedicated provider for disabilities. We do not work with anyone who does not have a disability. That is what we are focused on. And so if we were to get into waiver we could promise access through what we're doing. And we're also statewide now as we're opening more locations because we know as well that you guys have to offer these services to people across the state. And so we are really excited about doing this and offering this to our population and I just wanted to bring it to all of you guys so you can help us push this forward. According to everybody we've been talking to it's not a legislative change, thankfully, it's just a policy change towards the waiver office to enact this. Does anybody have any questions?

ANGELA HARMON: You said you're increasing your locations. So you're just in Lafayette right now?

DAMON VINCENT: We're in Lafayette, Lake Charles and Baton Rouge.

ANGELA HARMON: Where in Baton Rouge?

DAMON VINCENT: Fitness Sports Performance off Airline Highway. And then we'll be still spreading statewide so we can make sure every region has access to this.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Brooke has her hand raised.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chair recognizes Brooke Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you for coming today because I think this is very important for our kids. I want to know what exactly we can do as council members to make sure that he is an approved vendor I guess for our waiver. Because I have the waiver and there is not a lot of options for our children so this is very exciting that you want and you're

willing to be one. So what can we do as council members to make him a vendor or whatever he needs to do?

DAMON VINCENT: I believe just emailing and communicating with the waiver office in Baton Rouge and letting them know that this is something that would be very beneficial to y'all. I know that they have a lot on their plate and they're dealing with a lot but I do think physically, socially, everything that this is one of the highest value services that we can provide. It's going to save the state a lot of money and really improve the quality of life for our athletes.

BROOKE STEWART: Could DD staff email us his information so we can contact our local offices?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, Brooke. I can get his information after the meeting and definitely send it to you guys.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you.

DAMON VINCENT: Thank you Brooke.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: Just the man I need to see. Do you train people with disabilities?

DAMON VINCENT: That is all training. We have over 160 athletes with disabilities. Mostly probably about 85 percent are with developmental disabilities.

ERICK TAYLOR: And what do I have? What service do I have?

DAMON VINCENT: Right now we're still self-pay, which some people can afford and that's amazing and we appreciate that. But we want to serve the people that need it most. Just continue to help us push to get this within waiver. We would love to have you. Can't wait. Where are you located at? Oh, Baton Rouge. We just opened up our facility here in Baton Rouge. Love to have you. We can workout together.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: As far as like-- well, I'll get with you after.

DAMON VINCENT: Okay. Cool.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Appreciate you.

DAMON VINCENT: Yeah, thank you.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Any other questions, discussions?

ALAINA CHACHERE: Does anyone have any recommendations who we could contact as council members or just as parents if we are interesting in asking for the service?

EBONY HAVEN: So Bernard, I think you may be the best person. How do individuals become vendors for the waiver

service?

BERNARD BROWN: This is a terrible answer but this is a lot more complex than what you all think. There isn't necessarily a waiver service that this falls under. There's a lot of contemplation about the intent of the waiver (inaudible) and how this fits. There's also discussion around (inaudible) a service as opposed to actual service. So there's a lot. Saying all that to say there's a lot. It's not as simple as you think it would be. Right now using the full legal resources we have, Act 378, these are the purposes of like (inaudible). If there are things that may not fit squarely under waiver services there's other resources. Act 378 funding, flexible family fund for things just like this.

Like you told me before as adults with MCOs these are value-added things that they cover under the MCOs like a gym memberships essentially. So those are options that you can pursue. I'm just trying to get everybody to think because everything doesn't need to go into the waiver, right. Because everything isn't designed for the services related. I don't want to sound negative but just to give that context, right. The quicker solution is looking at alternative resources like IFS dollars. State general fund, ton of flexibility what you could use it for. Flexible family fund. That's what it's designed for. If you go the MCO route like they're added value benefits with those MCO contracts that cover things like gym memberships and wellness related things.

ALAINA CHACHERE: And maybe I don't have a full grasp of IFS funds. I just know, at least my experience, I think our Acadiana Human Service District does an amazing job but I do know that my experience with asking for something that wasn't necessarily like emergency related, like wasn't super emergent, the need, that we had to pretty much like put a hold for that and it was revisited through the year. I guess my concern as a parent would be if I brought this, if I took the time to do my research just as I did with his adaptive bike and I got letters from his therapists and other people, his doctors saying how this would benefit his quality of life and I took it there. (Inaudible) we'll have to wait until the end of the fiscal year to see if this is something we have in our budget because we like to save (inaudible) this family might need a fence and it's life or death of their child that they might get out and get

harmful or worse than that. I guess my question is tapping into that resource is that actually a possibility for something like a gym membership?

BERNARD BROWN: Yes.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Are we going to get that feedback as parents to do that?

BERNARD BROWN: Yeah. Unfortunately prioritization is a real thing. And how do you prioritize limited resources. The same thing with waiver. How do we prioritize limited resources for particular services, right. To your point some LGEs may say we hold until the end of the year then we disperse. Some hold in the beginning. It is region by region. And how you articulate. But the point is still the same, prioritization is just on every level. Just like he talked to training (inaudible). It's a prioritization issue for us as well. We have to prioritize a ton of other waiver services and other priorities to make sure we can keep a waiver before we introduce more services, right. It is a prioritization. I hear you. I understand the benefit. But like I said, we serve 15,000 and have another 45,000 that at any time could pop up on the waiver. Just giving y'all full context to what we are considering when we look at services. When we look at prioritizations for the year, right. We have to think about the whole system. You know what I'm saying. And what's available and what's available outside the system. So again, that's just where we are. We're not saying no. We're just saying from a prioritization standpoint this isn't something that's high on our priority list right now.

DAMON VINCENT: To clarify with the gym membership. So a gym membership your membership is covered and you can go to the gym and that is not what we do. We train people. Because I don't believe that Erick is somebody who would just roll into a gym and be like all right, I'm about to hit this workout. Number one because most gyms are not accessible. And number two because he needs individualized training. The challenge with the MCO is they cover gym memberships like Silver Sneakers and what not but that is not just what TrainUnique is. It is specialized training sessions for the different disabilities.

BERNARD BROWN: Just to give a little exercise for everybody. Just consideration from a policy standpoint,

right. Could you support everybody that's in the waiver? Could you support people with complex behavioral needs when they may get frustrated and lash out? Do you have the appropriate training to have the appropriate DSWs in place. Those are the things we consider. Because what's going to happen is, and y'all all know this (inaudible), oh, I want to go to the gym (inaudible). Like these are the things we've talked through. So you're pretty much saying I'm going to give up a service to use this other service but that service that you're putting in place has to be able to support all the needs at that time. You see what I'm saying.

DAMON VINCENT: If we can't support the needs--

BERNARD BROWN: But here's another issue. A person that needs insulin, right. You have to get CNA's that are DSWs that are certified to give insulin. That means you have to hire a nurse to be able to train those DSWs. So how you structure that is important.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right guys. Thank you guys for the discussion. Thank you for that information. But all your questions let's do them outside of the meeting. We'll get it to Ebony and she'll do the research and you guys can collaborate for sure after but we have to go ahead and end. I do apologize. Any further business? Hearing none. And if there is no objection we will adjourn the meeting. The meeting is now adjourned.