

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

**Videoconference
September 29 – 30, 2020**

Council Members:

Corey Gilmore – Chair
Heidi Lieb-Williams – Vice Chair
Anna Atla
Meghan Clark
Jena Crafton
Art Delaune
Lyle Downing
Don Enoch
Margaret Evans
Dave Fleurant
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus
Joshua Gill
Alex Gimarc

Elizabeth Joseph
David Kohler
Sydney Krebsbach
John Lee
Duane Mayes
Peter Micciche – not present
Molly McManamin
Mack McAnally – not present
Travis Noah
Nona Safra
Charlene Tautfest
Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich
Jennifer Zucati-Pirtle

Guests:

September 29th

Julie Connor
Kate Foster
Stephanie Hopkins
Colleen Shivers
Patrick Pillai
Kristen Spencer
Lesley Thompson
Laura Beth Miller
Robin Chartrand
Eric Boyer
Sarah Watkins
Jolene Goliver
Kim Champney
Tom Crafton
Teisha Simmons

September 30th

Stuart Goering
Lizette Stiehr
Jennifer Smerud
Michael Christian
Steve Williams
Jimael Johnson
Kim Champney
Karen Ward
Lucy Cordwell
Beverly Schoonover
Lesley Thompson
Julie Conner
Kate Foster
Kristen Spencer
Colleen Shivers
Alison Nielsen
Mary Middleton

Council Staff:

Kristin Vandagriff, Executive Director
Anne Applegate, Planner
Elena Markova, Program Coordinator II
Ric Nelson, Program Coordinator I
Jessie Doherty, Program Coordinator II
Lanny Mommsen, Research Analyst III

Minutes Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo, Peninsula Reporting

Tuesday, September 29, 2020

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – 10:00 a.m.

Chair Gilmore welcomed Council members to the meeting. Roll call was taken.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Anne Applegate recognized that there are five separate Native Alaskan peoples. She stated that they typically try to base their land acknowledgement on the location the Council is meeting physically, and one of the advantages of Zoom is that the Council is physically spread out all over this great land. She recognized that among those five separate Alaskan peoples, there are numerous subpopulations that have a distinct language and dialect and different facets of culture. These people have lived in Alaska for more than 10,000 years and have developed rich, complex cultures. As diverse Alaskans, they are fortunate that they get to share in that culture. They have been the guardians since time immemorial, and they continue to be a resource to help guide their planning today and in the future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Kristin Vandagriff provided the Council with an overview of Zoom etiquette, and **Corey Gilmore** welcomed new members and reminded the Council that this is a public meeting that is being recorded.

APPROVAL OF MAY 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Jena Crafton MOVED to approve the minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by **John Lee**. Hearing no objections, the motion **PASSED**.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Molly McManamin MOVED to approve the agenda as presented, **SECONDED** by **Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus**. Hearing no objections, the motion **PASSED**.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflicts of interest were declared.

CHAIR/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kristin Vandagriff reported the following activities of the Council as follows:

GCDSE Mission, Composition, & Roles:

- 26 Council members appointed by the Governor.
- Mission: Creating change that improves the lives of Alaskans with disabilities.
- DD Shared Vision: Alaskans share a vision of a flexible system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, their job and their community. Our vision includes supported families, professional staff and services available throughout the state now and into the future. **Corey Gilmore** added that the Executive Committee has been working diligently this past year to infuse the DD Shared Vision into all the work they do.
- DD Council Role:
 - Advocacy
 - Capacity Building
 - Systems Change.
- Staff – Welcome to Jessie Doherty; farewell to Ric Nelson.

Council Activities:

- Met regularly with DHSS Commissioner's Office staff, DVR Director, Trust Program Officer, and with DSDS Director.
- Presented as part of the Council on State Government's West ADA 30th Anniversary Celebration.
- Presented at CSAVR with Director Duane Mayes before the nation's Vocational Rehabilitation Directors.
- Presented to the Trustees of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.
- Administration on Disabilities for Projects of National Significance Performance Measure Development Workgroup.
- Participated in several NACDD national calls, including as a member of the Public Policy Committee.
- NACDD Technical Assistance Institute Training.
- Monitored SFY 20 budget closeout.
- Began SFY21 budget, including new expenditure process.
- ACL Living Well grant (semiannual reporting in process as well as annual carryover amendment; renewal contracts).
- Coordinated Joint Advocacy efforts with the Trust and advisory boards.
- Overseeing Trust reporting.
- Supporting State Five-Year Plan development efforts.
- Leading virtual meetings with U.S. Congressional Delegation.

Kristin Vandagriff highlighted the Council's COVID-19 pandemic efforts as follows:

Stakeholder Concerns:

- Mask requirement (businesses, airlines, community)
- Social isolation
- DD services providers - fiscal concerns and staying afloat
- Special education students – skill regression.

Council Research Analyst (funded by Trust):

- Attends weekly COVID-19 statewide meetings (bringing in the perspective of Alaskans with disabilities).
- Leads the Alaska Disability Advisory Group (ADAG) on Emergency Preparedness.
- Reviewing local, state, federal guidance including mandates and press conferences.
- Robust resource dissemination (social media, email listserv, website).
- Working with partners to create website link to more information regarding masks.

Alaska-Specific Plain Language COVID-19 Toolkit (everything from understanding the virus and how to stay safe to ideas on how to keep engaging with people virtually):

- <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dsds/Documents/covid-19/AlaskaCOVID-19-Toolkit.pdf>
- This was a collaborative effort with the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services.

COVID-19 Resources

The following are some resources the Governor’s Council has developed with partners to support Alaskans with disabilities and their families amidst the current pandemic:

- **Compensatory Education and Extended School Year Services FAQs:**
<https://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Documents/pdf/Extended-School-Year%20FAQs--Accessible.pdf>. Collaborative effort with Stone Soup Group and Disability Law Center.
- **Your Child’s Rights to Special Education During COVID-19:**
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Documents/pdf/Rights-to-special-ed-COVID19--Fact%20sheet.pdf>. Collaborative effort with Stone Soup Group and DLC.
- **FAQst– COVID-19 Stimulus Payments and ABLE Accounts:**
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Documents/news/2020-Stimulus-FAQs--Accesible.pdf>. Collaboration with Department of Revenue and the Disability Law Center.
- **Empowerment Through Employment Guide:**
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Documents/EmpowermentThroughEmployment.pdf>

Other activities of the Council include:

30th Annual ADA Celebration:

- On July 26, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed by Congress, establishing America’s commitment to end discrimination against people with disabilities.
- Council ADA page created: [http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Pages/history/A DA-30-anniversary.aspx](http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Pages/history/A%20DA-30-anniversary.aspx)
- Executive proclamation.

Disability Pride Celebration:

- Disability Pride means accepting and honoring each person's uniqueness and seeing disability as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity.
- Disability Pride awareness events promote visibility and mainstream awareness of the positive pride felt by people with disabilities.
- Council Planner Anne Applegate was awarded as the 2020 Statewide Community Champion for Disability Pride.

National Association on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD):

Council members recognized through induction into the NACDD Self-Advocate Leadership Circle:

- Heidi Lieb-Williams – winner of the Betty Williams Champion of Equal Opportunity Award
- Sydney Krebsbach
- Corey Gilmore

Chair Gilmore shared messages regarding the following:

- Committee participation – ensuring quorum at committee meetings. Find a committee that fits your passion. In particular, the DD Committee has many members, and many attendees need to appear in order to achieve quorum. People are encouraged to attend any meetings they are interested in, even if they are not included as an official member of a committee. The Employment and Transportation Committee has very few members, and Council members were encouraged to be members of that committee.
- Important reminder going into the next session:
 - Council positions and vetting process – ensure the message shared has been vetted by the entire Council.
- Executive director evaluation process – evaluation process has been completed.
- What's next for the DD Shared Vision – structure of the Five-Year State Plan has included the DD Shared Vision to bring the Vision to life.

Kristin Vandagriff shared upcoming activities for the Council to include:

- Monitoring local, state, and federal mandates/guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic (ongoing)
- ACL Living Well Semiannual Reporting (October 2020)
- Program Performance Reporting as DD Council and State Plan Update (December 2020)
- Winter Council Meeting (February 1st and 2nd, 2021)
- Monitoring legislative/budget developments on a local, state, and federal level
- Virtual Legislative Visits (February 4th and 5th, 2021)
- Key Campaign 2021 (virtual)
- Some Council member terms expire June 30, 2021
- Completion of next State Five-Year Plan (due August 2021).

COUNCIL BUDGET UPDATE

Kristin Vandagriff provided the following budget update:

- The Council was funded the full year-three amount for SFY'21 for the federal Living Well Grant, and they are working on the carryover.
- The DD Council federal award. The federal fiscal year will be ending soon, and they are anticipating a continuing resolution for a few months of funding for the start of the next federal fiscal year. They expect status quo funding for the continuing resolution, and she is hearing that the full year will also remain the same.
- Reimbursable Service Agreements (RSAs) in process:
 - State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) from SDS
 - DEED RSA for the Special Education Advisory Panel.
- Trust funding statement of intents have been finalized for funding for the Beneficiary Employment & Engagement Initiative and funding for the research analyst position.
- Trust grant money received for maintaining the Disability Benefits 101 website.
- Continue to receive a small amount of general funds/mental health (GF/MH) focused on the Microenterprise program.
- Looking forward to 2022, they don't expect any significant changes from 2021 other than additional funding coming to the Council that was approved by the Trustees for the Council's employment work, specifically for an Empowerment Through Employment Conference as well as additional funding for the Council's planner position for work on the Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program Plan (Comp Plan).

COVID-19 UPDATE

Lanny Mommsen gave a brief COVID-19 update as follows:

- Alaska has had 7,597 people diagnosed with COVID-19; approximately half of those have recovered.
- There have been approximately 100 or so new cases a day. People in the high-risk categories should take precaution because the virus is still very active.
- COVID19.Alaska.gov has resources on case counts and health mandates. Coronavirus Response Data Hub contains detailed information.
- Alaska Disability Advisory Group has been working on emergency preparedness.
 - More community spread, and they are reminding people that not everybody might not be able to wear a mask, but wear a mask if you are able to.
 - If someone is going into a business that has a mask mandate, the establishment may allow people to enter the establishment without a mask as long as it doesn't place others at risk. However, establishments may deny entry, but they have to provide reasonable accommodations such as curbside pickup, online delivery, and telephone/video appointment.
 - Wearing a mask is a very highly charged situation. If Council members find themselves in a situation where they are unable to wear a mask, if people are rude to them, Council members may elicit a more positive response by calling a business first and asking if there are alternatives to entering the establishment.

- Keep in mind that business employees may be high risk and may act out to unmasked patrons in fear.
- COVID-19 plans for families with children, Circle of Support, and specific additional information for children with disabilities.

“LIVING WELL ON THE LAST FRONTIER” UPDATE

Kristin Vandagriff shared a PowerPoint presentation titled *Living well on the Last Frontier*, and shared the following information:

New Administration for Community Living (ACL) Grant:

- Five-Year federal grant awarded to the Council - \$392,000 per year
- Develop and coordinate model approaches:
 - Community monitoring
 - Community capacity building:
 - To enhance the independence, integration, safety, health, and well-being of individuals living in the community.
 - Targets three different interrelated groups:
 - Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families/guardians
 - Service providers
 - Policymakers.

Overarching Goal:

The overarching goal of this project is to increase the community integration, health, safety, independence, and well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities through realization of our DD Vision.

Objectives:

1. Enhance the health and safety of individuals who experience developmental disabilities by increasing their independence, self-determination, community integration, employment, and participation.
2. Strengthen the knowledge and skills of direct support professionals to use evidenced-based and/or promising practices related to culturally and linguistically person-centered thinking and supported decision making, which may improve workforce stability, retention, and advancement.
3. Strengthen and elevate the leadership roles that self-advocacy organizations, Centers for Independent Living and other peer support networks, working together with families and others, play in improving and assuring the quality of home and community-based services.
4. Enhance the effectiveness and coordination of efforts by the state, the DD Act network, and others to implement the HCBS settings rule and address rights violations in the HCBS service delivery system for people with developmental disabilities.

Grant Partners:

- Alaska Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education (lead)
- Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD)

- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (the Trust)
- Disability Law Center of Alaska (DLC)
- Peer Power, Inc.
- Key Coalition of Alaska
- State of Alaska Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS)
- Southeast Alaska Independent Living Center (SAIL)
- Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
- University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Human Development
- Alaska DD Systems Collaborative.

Work To Date:

- Project Management Team meetings held.
- Professional Services Agreements and Reimbursable Service Agreements with partners in place with renewals.
- Meetings with ACL, four other state grant teams, Lewin Group, and Mission Analytics, including quarterly and annual meeting attendance.
- Annual meeting June 2020 (virtual attendance).
- Small working groups continue to meet:
 - Evaluation
 - Environmental Modification (EMOD)/HomeMAP Assessment
 - Employment First
 - Challenging Behaviors
 - Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Integrated Settings Transition
 - Direct Service Professional/Provider (Person-Centered)
 - Plan of Care
 - Community Relationship Building (building natural supports)
 - Self-Advocacy
 - Supported Decision Making Agreements (SDMA).

Recent Activities:

- COVID-19 AK resource toolkit webinars
- Self-advocacy leadership resource guide
- Plan of care webinars
- EMOD surveys conducted
- DD Vision survey launching soon for year 2 results
- Person-centered trainings
- Employment Taskforce efforts
- Virtual Self-Advocacy Summit
- Self-advocacy webinars
- DD Vision town halls and self-advocacy Empower Hour
- Retooling some areas due to the pandemic.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Corey Gilmore opened the floor to Council members to bring forward new business.

Travis Noah stated that he and **Corey Gilmore** have previously discussed what to do if someone contacts Council members via their own personal social media accounts to ask about Council business. He was looking for direction on how to handle those types of communications. **Corey Gilmore** stated that people can be directed to the Council website. He noted that it is always appropriate to say that the Council advocates for people who experience disabilities and for more information they can be directed to **Lanny Mommsen**. **Kristin Vandagriff** stated that Council members can always feel free to contact staff directly if they run into a situation they need guidance on. She referred **Travis** to previous slides from the Executive Report that discussed the Council's roles that can be shared. Once formal positions on the legislative session have been vetted by the Council, they will be posted online, and community members can be referred there. If a Council member is asked a question about the Council's stand on an issue they haven't taken a position on, the Council member should let the public know the Council hasn't taken a position on it, and refer the issue to staff. **Anne Applegate** stated that people should be mindful of identifying if they are speaking on behalf of themselves as citizens or as a representative of the Council in their communications with the public.

Sydney Krebsbach stated that she was unhappy they will be having virtual legislative meetings this year. She is very tired of having virtual meetings through Zoom. She misses hugging her friends and seeing her fellow Council members. She is disappointed in all the missed opportunities because of the pandemic, such as not being able to speak on the steps of the Capitol during Key Campaign. **Corey Gilmore** stated that he understands the frustration, but he is looking forward to more accessible and increased participation this year. He further stated that this is just this year, and they don't know what the future will bring. He stated that this Council continues to do a large amount of good work virtually. He agreed with **Sydney's** frustrations in not being able to hug friends, but in the meantime, they still have work to do. **Heidi Lieb-Williams** stated that there are a lot of positive things that have come out of the pandemic too. She pointed out that the Council still has the ability to use their voices, and they have been able to reach more people than they normally would have because of the virtual platform. She wanted to encourage **Sydney** and others that are struggling and experiencing ups and downs that there have been many positives, and some things she hopes continue virtually. She stated that all of the Council members are valued and important, and they should continue to hang in there and get through this. **Jena Crafton** agreed that everybody is having a hard time, but they just have to stay positive. Alaskans should take time to enjoy nature during this time and go for a walk. **Corey Gilmore** stated that Council members should feel free to reach out to him via Zoom any time they are feeling isolated and need someone to talk to. **Jena Crafton** noted that she also teaches Zumba classes on Wednesdays that Council members can join in via Zoom.

Molly McManamin stated that the State has resources available for support. **Lanny Mommsen** stated that CareLine is a great resource for people to call into, and she provided additional resources in the chat box, including some resources available in the COVID-19 Toolkit. **Kristin Vandagriff** thanked Council members for sharing their perspectives and providing resources to

each other. She provided some additional links in the chat box for members to access.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE AND PROJECT UPDATES

Education Committee

David Kohler provided the report for the Education Committee as follows:

Ongoing Projects/Updates:

- Educating Special Education Administrators and Teachers
- Inclusive Practice Award/Paraeducator of the Year Award
- Early Childhood Workgroup: Suspension, Expulsion, Restraint and Seclusion, and Schoolwide Behavior Support
- Parent education:
 - Your Child's Rights to Special Education Services During COVID-19 (Fact Sheet)
 - Compensatory Education and Extended School Year Services FAQs resource
 - Participation at the AADD Hot Topics Call (August).

Other Activities:

- Added new Education Committee community members
 - Sandra DeHart-Mayor (parent)
 - Chris Blake (SSG)
 - Still need two parents/people with disability, and a charter school representative
- Change of committee staff - Elena Markova
- SESA reauthorization status
- DD Awareness Month in Schools – contest was held that may become a regular activity.

Legislative Education and Advocacy:

- SB 6: Public preschools
- SB 136: State/Tribal Compacts
- HB 124: Limited Teaching Certificates
- HB 181: Mental Health Education in Schools
- HB 29: Insurance Coverage for Telehealth (passed)
- HB 194: Consolidation of Districts
- HB 196: APS Maximum Award

Representing the Governor's Council:

- Leadership Council for Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)
- State Board of Education and Early Development (BOEED)
- Special Education Service Agency (SESA) Board
- Alaska Advisory Board for the Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DEB) - TBA
- Department's response to COVID-19
- Updates from the Commissioner on the Smart Start 2020
- State aid for school capital projects.

Heidi Lieb-Williams asked if they were doing the Inclusive Practice Award for the virtual ASSEC conference. **David Kohler** stated that they are, and the committee to do that will be formed in October. **Jena Crafton** volunteered to participate on this committee and was encouraged to contact **Elena Markova**.

Early Intervention Committee (EIC)

Elena Markova shared that this committee is lacking one needed Council member for its membership. She encouraged Council members to consider serving and provided the report from the Early Intervention Committee as follows:

Activities Since February:

- EIC met three times
- Infant Learning programs Salary and Benefits Questionnaire outcomes conducted by Alaska Infant Learning Program Association (AILPA) in collaboration with Programs for Infants and Children (PIC) were presented to the committee
- EIC reviewed and commented on Alaska's Comp Plan
- New parents recruited
- Two more Council members recruited.

Upcoming activities:

- EIC will meet October 21
- Exploring the use of telepractice by the Early Intervention Program

Recent Trainings & Events:

- ECHO (CHD): New - Behavioral Interventions for Early Childhood
 - Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (coming soon)
 - Family (coming soon)
 - Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
- Committee members participated in the Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council
- ILP Coordinators meeting May, 2020
- Autism Ad Hoc Committee meeting September 15, 2020
- Help Me Grow Environmental Scan Report: <https://www.a2p2.org/early-childhood>
- Change of status and leadership of the Universal Developmental Screening Task Force:
 - Advisory committee new host: Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems
- Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council July meeting was cancelled/postponed.

Future Trainings and Events:

- Virtual Zero to Three Annual Conference 2020, October 7 - 9, 2020
- Virtual National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Annual Conference November 4 - 7, 2020
- Anchorage Association for the Education of Young Children Early Childhood Conference, January 28 - 30, 2021

Developmental Disabilities (DD) Committee

Alex Gimarc presented the report on the DD Committee as follows:

Current Status on I/DD Waivers:

- I/DD Registry - 773 people on waitlist (Sept. 2020)
 - Annual count of people drawn from waitlist started in September (50 new draws will be total for the year off of the waitlist).
 - Drawn 13 to offer to apply (Sept. 2020)

Current Status on Individualized Supports Waiver:

- Individualized Supports Waiver (ISW) (Sept. 2020)
 - 600 waivers available total
 - 436 people on ISW; have offered more than 700 to apply over last few years
 - Offered 40 as of September 4th (count starts in September).

Committee Activities:

- Developmental Disabilities Registration and Review (DDRR) Workgroup meetings:
 - Focused on Registry questions (wording and weighting of score)
 - Draft is being reviewed by SDS and Council staff, next step Council feedback.
- Pursuing 2020 legislative priorities:
 - Medical supplies debit card, Medicaid budget and hiring authority, and companion services.
- Reports and stakeholder input for:
 - COVID-19 response
 - FASD Workgroup
 - TABI Advisory Council
 - Diversity, Inclusion, Cultural, and Linguistic Competence Group
 - SDMA Workgroup
 - Workforce Workgroup.

Federal Reporting:

- Program Performance Report
 - State Plan Update (Year 4 Report)
 - DD Committee work plan review for final year of plan completed.
- Surveys will be going out for DD Committee work.

Legislative Committee

Art Delaune provided the report on the Legislative Committee as follows:

Spring Virtual Council Meeting Dates:

- Council meeting will be virtual on February 1st and 2nd, 2021
- Legislative visits will be virtual on February 4th and 5th, 2021
 - 2021 legislative visits will be virtual via Zoom

- The meetings will be conducted over a few days (Feb. 4 - 5)
- A staff member will attend each meeting to assist
- Each meeting will have at least three to four Council members, but all who are not in other meetings are encouraged to join in
- Council staff will provide an electronic document packet to the legislators
- Each meeting will be recorded for debrief reference purposes.

Telework Statement:

- Executive Committee issued a telework statement as a part of cost saving efforts:
 - Telework can benefit organizations by:
 - Saving money by promoting management efficiencies and turnover and absenteeism costs
 - Making organizations more resilient in response to emergencies
 - Reducing real estate and energy costs, transit costs, and environmental impact
 - Improving the quality of employee work life
 - Increasing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Federal Items:

- COVID-19 relief for DD population:
 - Stimulus payments for families with adult dependents.
- Continued importance of Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS):
 - HCBS are central to living meaningful lives and quality of life
 - HCBS decrease chances of contracting COVID-19 and dying (individuals with DD are often in the high-risk category)
 - HCBS are cost saving for Alaska and the federal government when compared to institutional care.
- Appropriations bill funding the DD network.

Dates to Remember:

- Governor's budget is released - December 15th, 2020
- Legislative session begins - January 19th, 2021
- Pre-filed bills come out beginning of January 2021
- Council meeting to prepare (virtual) - February 1 - 2, 2021
- Virtual legislative visits - February 4 - 5, 2021

Special Education Service Agency (SESA)

Patrick Pillai presented on behalf of SESA as follows:

- Current staff: 13.6 educational specialists, 1 technologist, 1 librarian, 2 program assistants, 1 executive assistant, and 1.6 administrators.
- Service delivery:
 - Technical assistance to schools began August 10, 2020
 - Served 629 participants inclusive of school district personnel, parents, and related service providers across 52 districts and 156 schools.

- Service comprised 468 mission-centric activities, 365 provided via Zoom.
- Assisted sites with 63 requests for creation of student-specific materials.
- SESA designates student and site consultation, material development, training, family support, and interagency interactions as mission-centric activities.
- Grants Update:
 - The Alaska Autism Resource Center (AARC). In addition to providing ongoing trainings, the AARC is planning a virtual Autism Walk, virtual Book Fair with Barnes & Noble, virtual Autism Conference, and is beginning initial work on changes to the AARC website.
 - The Alaska Deaf Blind Project. Providing technical assistance on educational interventions on orientation and mobility training.
 - Angel Black, the deaf blind specialist, recently used Google Maps to help a student who is progressively losing his vision to plan a trip to Seward digitally navigating the journey to the town and exploring its sites as a remote tourist.
 - Grant staff assisted a school district to purchase a Juliet braille embosser valued at \$4,400 using grant funds that would have lapsed in FY'20 due to the COVID-19 impact to on-site travel. The purchase of the braille is to serve the print needs of seven students experiencing deaf blindness in the Fairbanks North Star School District.
 - The Alaska Center for Accessible Materials. The grant focuses provision of customized interventions to overcome print disabilities. Grant staff work with school district personnel to understand a print disability, determine a students' need for specific materials, identify accessible educational materials, and approach student need through consideration of evidence-based interventions. This includes, amongst others, braille printing, audio supported software, reading comprehension strategies, et cetera.
- Annual SESA Financial Audit:
 - Completed by Altman Rogers & Co. two weeks ago with no findings. SESA is currently awaiting the final report.
- State Legislative Audit:
 - SESA's sunset date is June 30, 2021.
 - The completed audit passed out of the State Legislative Audit Committee on August 16, 2020. The audit was received by the SESA board chair for final comment on September 22, and was completed and mailed on September 24th.
 - The next Legislative Audit meeting is scheduled to occur in October or November 2020 at which time the audit will have successfully completed with a recommendation for reauthorization.
 - Post audit, SESA will continue to work with Representative Andi Story and Senator Gary Stevens, both of whom have agreed to sponsor a bill for reauthorization of the agency.

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)

Elena Markova explained the Council's SICC role:

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - Part C for Infants and Toddlers with

Disabilities (birth to 3).

- §34 C.F.R. 303.600 – 306.605.
- Required component of the statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system of early intervention (EI) services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.
- To receive federal funding, each state must have an SICC.
- In Alaska, the SICC is under the jurisdiction of Health and Social Services.
- Governor's Council's responsibilities:
 - State Council on Developmental Disabilities
 - State Advisory Panel on Special Education (SEAP)
 - State Interagency Council on Infants and Toddlers With Disabilities (SICC)
 - Governing Board of the Special Education Service Agency (SESA)
 - Beneficiary Board of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.

SICC Functions:

- Membership comprised of specific, required seats. Currently lacking a Head Start representative. All members have voting privileges.
- Advise and assist the Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program – lead agency
 - Identifies fiscal and other supports
 - Assigns financial responsibility
 - Promotes interagency collaboration
 - Prepares applications.
- Advise and assist on transitions.
- Submit annual report to the Governor and to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Other Authorized Activities:

- Advise and assist EI/ILP and the DEED on appropriate services for children 0 – 5.
- Advise State agencies on the integration of services, even if the infants and toddlers are not eligible for early intervention services.
- Coordinate and collaborate with other interagency early learning initiatives.

SICC Role:

- Policy development
- Policy approval
- Policy implementation.

Stakeholder Responsibilities:

- Attend meetings. Meetings are quarterly with a break in July. They are currently held by Zoom. Dates are set by the SICC chair.
- Be prepared. This is a working group with priorities and duties determined by federal responsibilities. Come ready to do the work.
- Be a voice. You are part of the EIC to represent a stakeholder group. Their voice will not be heard if you don't speak up.

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

Elena Markova explained the Council's SEAP role:

- IDEA - Part B for students with disabilities aged 3 - 21
- SEAP Authority:
 - Federal Authority for State Advisory Panels (SAPs) from IDEA legislation:
 - Sec. 612(a)(21) "The State has established and maintains an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State."
 - State Authority:
 - AS 14.30.231 Special Education Advisory Panel, 1978.
- Membership comprised of specific, required seats.

Purpose of Panel:

- Provide policy and procedural guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the state.
- Serves as advisory to the State Office of Education, Special Education Unit, and/or directly to the State Superintendent or State Board of Education.

Advisory Panel Function:

- Advise the State Education Agency (SEA) of unmet needs within the state on the education of children with disabilities.
- Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities.
- Advise the State in developing evaluation and reporting on data:
 - Dropout rates
 - Graduation rates
 - Discipline
 - Participation in statewide assessments
 - SPP/APR/SSIP.
- Advise the State in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports.
- Advise the State in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

Advisory Panel Effective Practices:

- Maintain knowledge regarding state and national education issues.
- Time at meetings to share relevant information from partners in the field.
- Keep communication open among the members, legislators, State personnel, OSEP, parents, and members of disability groups.

Employment & Transportation Committee

Anna Attla and **Ric Nelson** provided the report from the Employment & Transportation Committee as follows:

Updates Since May:

- Held a Virtual Transition Fair because there were many students with disabilities that did not receive the right resources because of COVID.
 - Partnered with 10 different partner agencies
 - Had 25 attendees
 - Discussed available resources.
- Empowerment Through Employment Resource Guide:
 - Brief transition handbook for people with disabilities during the pandemic
 - Partnered with different agencies to develop the guide
 - Posted guide on different agency websites.
- Working on the Work Plan for 2020 – 2021.
- Working on updating the Employment First reporting.
- Discussing design change of the report.
- Receiving monthly updates from the DVR director and employment first coordinator.

Sydney Krebsbach asked what happens when someone is working a full-time job but then they are reduced to part-time hours and they lose their health insurance. Can they receive other health insurance benefits through Medicaid or the state? **Ric Nelson** stated that yes, but the person would have to work with a benefits counselor if they are receiving Social Security. People can also go to their local Division of Public Assistance, and they can assist people if they are qualified for Medicaid.

FASD WORKGROUP

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus stated that she will be stepping back in her duties as co-chair of this workgroup, although she will remain part of the group. She gave the report for the FASD Workgroup as follows:

Recent Activities:

- Priority Area Workgroups meetings - about once per month.
- FASD Awareness Month activities:
 - Virtual movie and discussion event - *Moment to Moment: Teens Growing Up with FASD* sponsored by Alaska Center for FASD on Wednesday, September 9.
 - Alaska Center for FASD is virtually resuming two groups for youths who experience an FASD and parents/caregivers of youths who experience an FASD.
 - Jenn Wagaman's group is running a Caregivers Support Group on the third or fourth Thursday of the month from 9 to 10 a.m.
 - Red Shoes Rock international FASD awareness campaign.
- Long Acting Reversible Contraceptive (LARC) letter of support.
- Meetings with Autism Ad Hoc leadership to discuss combining efforts.

Upcoming Activities:

- Priority Area Workgroups continue to meet
- FASD meeting in October – date to be determined.

AUTISM AD HOC COMMITTEE

Heidi Lieb-Williams gave the report for the Autism Ad Hoc Committee as follows:

Things that have happened since February:

- Five-Year Plan on Autism Focus Areas:
 - Updated the work plan
 - Explored the possibility of merging the ad hoc with FASD Workgroup
 - New Help Me Grow training.
- Five-Year Plan on Autism Focus Areas:
 - Center for Human Development (CDH) started a Family ECHO
 - Neurodevelopmental ECHO coming soon
 - Autism Behavior Technician (ABT) ECHO - Coming soon.

Upcoming Activities:

- Neurodevelopmental Outreach Clinics outside of Anchorage and Mat-Su October 9th and 16th via telehealth. All neurodevelopmental providers have commented on the positive impact of the change of Medicaid rules to allow for telehealth for autism evaluations.
- Neurodevelopmental partners to continue work on developing a tiered approach to diagnosing ASD.

Recent Conferences and Events:

- Heidi Lieb-Williams winner of the Betty Williams Champions of Equal Opportunity Award (NACDD)
- Virtual Ad Hoc meetings – April 14 and September 15
- Planning Autism Ad Hoc/FASD meeting – July 22
- Autism Awareness Month (April)
- Stone Soup Group Parent Conference 2020 – cancelled. A series of talks on Person-Directed Lives: A Shared Vision for the Future, four weeks in June.
- Autism Awareness Book Fairs, Anchorage/Fairbanks – cancelled. Virtual Book Fairs will be taking place.
- Virtual 4th Annual Peer Power Self-Advocacy Summit for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities - September 21 - 25, 2020

Upcoming Conferences and Events:

- U.S. Autism Association's 14th Annual World Autism Conference - first time entirely online. Year-long conference starting October 2, 2020
- Virtual Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference (ASSEC) February 6 - 7, 2021
- Autism Awareness Month - April, 2021
- Autism Ad hoc meeting– March 23, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- Discussion of the potential for an Autism Conference.
- Future autism resource website/book and autism toolkit through Help Me Grow.

Corey Gilmore commented on the positivity of the increase in neurodevelopmental evaluations

that have been able to take place because of the lifting of the Medicaid restrictions for telehealth.

Sydney Krebsbach asked if people who are recently diagnosed or their families receive resources about what to do next. **Heidi Lieb-Williams** stated that is part of what they are working on through Help Me Grow, as well as to be an example as a best practice for other states as a foundation for autism resources. **Corey Gilmore** noted that having such a toolkit will go a long way for realizing the DD Vision for people with autism.

MEDICAID AD HOC COMMITTEE

Ric Nelson gave the report on the Medicaid Ad Hoc Committee to the Council as follows:

Updates Since May:

- Submitted comment letter regarding proposed changes to Healthcare Price Transparency:
 - All healthcare providers must post pricing for healthcare online, in the office, and available by telemedicine
 - The Council supports this and recommended plain language formats be listed for pricing and description of services.
- Submitted comment letter to the Division of Behavioral Health regarding changes to Medicaid Payment Rates of Behavioral Health Services and Medicaid Program; General Provisions:
 - The Council expressed appreciation for implementing two new codes for telehealth and autism services.
- Drafted comment letter expressing appreciation on the changes to the Nursing Facility Level waiver amendments:
 - To change assessment from every year to every third year
 - To include public input from various partners
 - To change the “level of care criteria” to include “telehealth” to assessments.

STATE FIVE-YEAR PLAN DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION

Anne Applegate reviewed the State Plan development process and noted they will be reviewing the data collected from the surveys, and then they will go through the proposed goals and objectives the Executive Committee has crafted. She would like the Council to reflect on this information for further discussion tomorrow.

GCDSE current State Five-Year Plan is located at http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Documents/Publications/StatePlan/2016-2021_StatePlan.pdf. **Anne Applegate** reviewed the timeline of events leading up to and through the course of the development of the current Five-Year Plan.

Terminology:

- Goals – Council decides at the fall meeting. Goals are an outcome.
- Objectives – Council decides at the fall meeting. Objectives break up the goal areas into specific and measurable items and explain how things are going to be accomplished. Objectives are the basis for monitoring the implementation. Objectives should be smart, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and they should be related to the goal they are

trying to achieve based on the resources that are available.

- Work Plan Activities developed after goals and objectives are completed.

Lanny Mommsen reviewed the survey data with Council members as follows:

Demographics:

- 215 people took the survey as of last Friday.
 - 15% were individuals with disabilities
 - Almost 50% were family members of individuals with disabilities
 - Approximately 30% were members of an advocacy organization or concerned citizens.
- Regions:
 - Over 50% were from Anchorage/Mat-Su
 - About 15% from the Interior
 - Southwest, Gulf Coast East, and Southeast were the bulk of the remaining
 - Very few responses from the Northern region.

Survey/Forum Data Shows:

Overall Areas of Highest Need:

1. Community Supports
2. Education and Early Intervention
3. Employment
4. Health/Safety
5. Self-Advocacy

Anchorage/Mat-Su Areas of Highest Need:

- Community Supports
- Education and Early Intervention
- Health/Safety

Remaining/Rural Areas of Highest Need:

- Community Supports
- Housing
- Employment

Anne Applegate continued on in the presentation to review with Council members that staff instruction at the last meeting was to take the decisions of the Council and create three different models that reflected the directions on priorities and the subareas that people cared about that they wanted to have in the proposed goals and objectives. The Executive Committee reviewed these models during three different meetings through the summer. The committee discussed at length how the goals should reflect the priorities based on the data that **Lanny Mommsen** continued to update. The Executive Committee chose model 3 to bring forward to the Council, and **Anne Applegate** briefly reviewed the goals and objectives developed by the Executive Committee noting that the Council would be opening this up for discussion during tomorrow's session for final approval to put out for a 45-day public comment period.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS STATE PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Corey Gilmore explained how the Executive Committee developed the goals and objectives noting that the entire plan was written with the DD Vision in mind. He educated members of the Council on the impact of housing and community support choices for people with physical disabilities. He stated that there are not many choices for service providers, so sometimes people are unable to change their staff unless there is a substantial issue. He also noted that many people with disabilities are unaware that they have the ability to choose the contents written in their plans of care, and this is why the self-advocacy goal is so important. He stated that people don't have many housing choices and are often placed in group homes with roommates not of their choosing. He stated that they want to ensure people are aware that they have the option to choose who they live with, and that they are allowed to live with a significant other if they so choose. He stated that a lot of the focus in the objectives is about educating people about resources available to them.

Corey Gilmore stated that they included an emergent needs objective prior to COVID, but the pandemic has shown them that life changes, and they need to have an area to address that. He opened up the floor for questions and comments from Council members as follows:

- Community support is very important in order to support people in running their own businesses.
- Community-based resources and support from family and friends is important in realizing the DD Vision. Every person has their own choice to live the lives they choose.
- Alaskans with disabilities may have jobs, but do they have the jobs they want to do? Do they have a career?
- Family encouragement to get meaningful jobs and live a life beyond sitting on the couch watching TV is important. People with and without disabilities should be equal. They should be able to get married and have anything they want.

Anne Applegate asked for discussion specifically related to the advocacy goal and the outputs. Feedback was provided as follows:

- Self-advocacy can start off slowly for people and then they can gain momentum based on opportunities they are provided.
- Many people with disabilities don't know who to talk to learn about advocacy.
- Share your own self-advocacy journey with others to change their lives.
- People may know their vision for themselves, but they may need assistance getting started down the path.
- Self-advocacy starts very, very young with respecting choices youth make and respecting their comfort level with different people. They need to consider educating not only people with disabilities but those who impact their lives to having this mindset that the goal is for people to be able to make their own choices. **Anne Applegate** added to the parking lot area to include this as a high priority activity for achieving the outcome. She noted across-the-lifespan education for natural and institutional support.

Travis Noah stated that the DD Collaborative is reaching out to school administrators and

teachers to work with them to design a teaching tool that will teach not just teachers, but some of the students, exactly how to start educating children K through 12 what it means to live the life they choose. The education system is fairly unaware of the DD Vision. The DD Collaborative is designing different tools depending on the age of the students, and they are also looking at developing virtual trainings depending on the age groups. **Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus** suggested asking students what it is about the job that interests them can give direction for additional conversation and discovery.

HEALTH UPDATE

Lanny Mommsen provided the health update as follows:

Aging and Disability Summit: October 5 - 9, 2020 – Theme is “Aging Well in Alaska”

- Daily “Coffee Chats”
- Presentations:
 - Elder Panel
 - Legislative Panel
 - COVID-19: Aging Persons with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities
 - Building Natural Supports, Aging in Place
 - Changing Guardianship Statutes.

Statewide Disability Pride Celebration: July 20 - 26, 2020

- Special Guests:
 - Temple Grandin
 - Zack Gottsagen
 - Judy Heumann
 - Sqirmy and Grubs
 - Micah Fialka-Feldman
 - Lydia X.Z. Brown
 - Erik Howk from Portugal. The Man
 - Stand Up For Mental Health
 - Alaskan Self Advocates.

COVID-19 Resource Toolkit:

- Contains resources about staying socially connected, phone calls, chat, e-mail, FaceTime, Skype, et cetera.
- Statewide activities – updated regularly.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Topic: What are the greatest areas of need facing Alaskans with developmental disabilities?

Public testimony was heard and a full transcript was prepared.

RECESS

Sydney Krebsbach **MOVED** to recess, **SECONDED** by **Jena Crafton and Anna Attla**.

Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting recessed at 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – 8:30 a.m.

Corey Gilmore reminded Council members that this meeting is recorded and is available for playback. Meeting participants were reminded to say only those things that they would say to people in person.

CHANGES TO AGENDA, IF ANY

No changes to the agenda were offered.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Stuart W. Goering with the State of Alaska Department of Law presented to the Council on the Open Public Meetings Act and discussed the following topics:

- Overview
- Fundamental State Policy - Open Meetings Act - AS 44.62.310 - .319
- Presumption:
 - Meetings of a governmental body of a public entity are open to the public.
 - Closed sessions are permitted only if an exception applies, or another law so provides.
 - Materials considered by the governmental body in a meeting should be available to the public, even at teleconference locations.
- What is a Meeting? Essentials:
 - More than three members or a majority, whichever is less.
 - Applies to committees.
 - Applies if policies or decisions are considered, even if not prearranged.
 - Applies to prearranged consideration of recommendations or advice, even if the body lacks independent authority to act.
- Required Notice.
- What is “Reasonable Public Notice?”
 - Contains date, time, and place of meeting, including teleconferencing information.
 - Posted on AOPNS, at the agency’s offices, and optionally publicized in print and broadcast media.
 - E-mail and physical mailing lists are common.
 - Objective is to reach as many interested persons as possible.
- Timing of Notice:
 - Agency should be consistent in the timing and manner of public meeting notice
 - General rule is at least a week, but in appropriate circumstances a shorter period may be acceptable:
 - Response to legislative inquiries
 - Litigation matters
 - Time-sensitive personnel or financial matters.

- Exceptions - AS 44.62.310(d):
 - Adjudication by a judicial or quasi-judicial board (AS 47.30.031(b)(4))
 - Staff meetings
 - Participation in or attendance at a gathering of national, state, or regional organization of which the agency or a constituent is a member (but no action may be taken).
- Executive Sessions:
 - As a matter of policy, should be used infrequently.
 - Matter to be discussed must be specifically described in public without compromising the need for confidentiality.
 - Board must affirmatively vote to go into executive session.
 - No action may be taken in executive session, except to provide direction to an attorney in a specific legal matter.
- Subjects for Executive Session:
 - Matters the immediate knowledge of which would have an adverse effect on the finances of the agency.
 - Matters that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, except that the person may request a public discussion.
 - Matters that are by law confidential.
 - Matters involving consideration of government records that by law are not subject to public disclosure.
- Non-Statutory Reasons.
- Consequences of Violations:
 - Actions taken in violation of Open Meetings Act may be voided by a court.
 - Agency may cure violation by holding a properly noticed meeting and substantially reconsidering the action taken.
 - Cure may occur either before or after the action is voided by the court.
- Conclusion:
 - As a governmental body, the Council is expected to operate in public whenever possible
 - When in doubt, ask for legal advice before acting.

Stuart Goering suggested that members of the Council keep on hand the slide from his presentation that goes over AS 44.62.312(a) and the fundamental state policy and refer to that if they have questions about their activities.

ACCESSIBILITY UPDATE

Elena Markova reported on Council efforts on document accessibility as follows:

What Document is Accessible?

- Readable by sighted/low vision/non-sighted reader
- Uses high visual contrast and does not exclusively use color coding to communicate
- Aims for standard readability
- Passes the Accessibility Checker

General Guidance:

- Add alternative text to images, pictures, clip art, charts, etc.
- Use styles in long documents
- Specify column header rows in tables
- Use meaningful hyperlinks
- Avoid using blank cells for formatting or paragraph marks for spacing between lines or paragraphs
- Avoid using watermarks that are images.

Why is it Important that Council Documents are Accessible?

- Eliminate barriers in information technology
- Make available new opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with disabilities have access to and be able to use information and data that are comparable to the access and use by individuals without disabilities
- Americans with Disability Act (1990)
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Where is the Council at on this Path Right Now?

Elena Markova stated that SDS is leading the way in making all public facing documents accessible, and the Council is a part of these efforts. In addition to following the ADA and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Council is practicing the inclusion that they want in their community. Council staff have been educating themselves and attending training on document accessibility so that every publication they create or update can pass the Accessibility Checker.

How Can Partners Assist in this Effort?

- Provide materials for dissemination by the Council on the listserv or social media in an accessible format. It speeds up their work.
- If running into difficulty, resources available:
 - Plain English Ireland. Test readability using the Flesch Reading Ease Scale. Retrieved on May 15, 2020 from <https://www.plainenglish.ie/plainenglish/flesch-r/>
 - Section 508 GSA Governmentwide IT Accessibility Program. Create Accessible Documents. Retrieved on May 15, 2020 from <https://www.section508.gov/create/documents>
 - Usability.gov. How To & Tools - Writing for the Web. Retrieved on May 15, 2020 from <https://www.usability.gov/how-toand-tools/methods/writing-for-theweb.html>
 - The Writing Center, Inc. - How to Use Your Computer's Readability Statistics Scores-Passive Sentences. Retrieved on May 15, 2020 from <http://www.writingcenter.com/2014/07/12/how-to-use-your-computersreadability-statistics-scores-passivesentences/>

STATE FIVE-YEAR PLAN DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION, Continued

Kristin Vandagriff recapped yesterday's discussion by reiterating the outline of the draft State

Plan goals and objectives as discussed during the previous day's session. **Anne Applegate** stated that they are going to work to ensure all Council members have an opportunity to provide feedback to their specific areas of interest in a roundtable process. **Kristin** stated that the goal for today is to vote on the goals and objectives in order to put it out for a 45-day public comment period and stay within their required deadlines for federal funding for that fiscal year.

Kristin Vandagriff asked Council members to consider if any of the draft goals or objectives should be swapped out for any issue or topic that is more important. **Anne Applegate** then led the Council through an extensive exercise in wordsmithing each draft goal and objective. The results are as follows:

Goal 1 - Community Supports/Inclusion, Supports & Services

People with developmental disabilities will have access to supports and services in their homes and communities to increase the number of people living the lives they choose.

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus MOVED to adopt the language as presented for goal 1 of the Five-Year Plan, **SECONDED** by **Josh Gill**.

Discussion was opened up, and Council members were asked to provide comment and feedback on the title of the goal and the goal itself. The amended goal was read as follows:

Goal 1 - Community Inclusion, Supports, and Services

People with developmental disabilities will have increased access to a flexible system of meaningful supports and services in their home communities to increase the number of people with developmental disabilities living the lives they choose.

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus MOVED to approval goal 1 as amended, **SECONDED** by **Josh Gill**. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED** and goal 1 was approved as amended.

Goal 2 - Self-Advocacy

People with developmental disabilities across the lifespan will have access to information, training, tools, and opportunities for self-advocacy to increase the number of people expressing their vision of meaningful lives in local, state, and national forums.

Without a motion, discussion was opened up, and Council members were asked to provide comment and feedback on the title of the goal and the goal itself. The amended goal was read as follows:

Goal 2 – Self-Advocacy and Leadership

People with developmental disabilities will have increased access to education, tools, and opportunities for self-advocacy across the lifespan to increase the number of people expressing their vision for their lives in local, state, and national forums.

Sydney Krebsbach MOVED to approve goal 2 as amended, **SECONDED** by **Travis Noah**. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the goal was approved as amended.

Goal 3 - Employment

People with developmental disabilities across the lifespan will have access to supports, services, programs, and training necessary for successful transitions to adulthood, meaningful work experiences, employment, and career development.

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus MOVED to adopt goal 3, **SECONDED** by **Josh Gill**.

Discussion was opened up, and Council members were asked to provide comment and feedback on the title of the goal and the goal itself. The amended goal was read as follows:

Goal 3 - Employment

People with developmental disabilities will have access to supports, services, programs, and training necessary for successful transitions to adulthood, meaningful work experiences, integrated and competitive employment, as well as career development across the lifespan.

David Kohler MOVED to adopt goal 3 as amended, **SECONDED** by **Anna Attla**. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the goal was approved as amended.

Kristin Vandagriff suggested that the goals as approved and the draft objectives be put out for 45-day public comment. After public comment period has ended, the Council will have an opportunity to review the public comment and make any needed changes at which time the amended draft would go out for one additional 45-day public comment period. She asked for Council feedback or approval of the document as written. It was determined that a review of the individual objectives was necessary, and **Anne Applegate** reviewed and discussed the objectives with Council members as follows:

Goal 1, Objective 1: Choice & Independence in Long-Term Supports and Services

People will have information, training, tools, and programs for systems change, supported decision-making, strategies and technology for independence, community-building, and more to increase the number of adults with developmental disabilities who choose and direct their long-term supports and services.

Goal 1, Objective 2: Housing

People with developmental disabilities and their families will have information, training, tools, and programs for housing accessibility, housing availability, housing rights, landlord-tenant relations, cohabitation strategies, and more to increase the number of people with developmental disabilities who live where and with whom they choose.

Goal 1, Objective 3: Health and Healthcare

People will have information, training, tools, and programs about Medicaid services, home- and community-based services, health and well-being, community events and activities, and more to increase the number of people with developmental disabilities across the lifespan who are living full and meaningful lives.

Goal 1, Objective 4: Education & Early Development

People with developmental disabilities across the lifespan and their families will have

information, training, tools, and programs to increase the number of people with disabilities included with nondisabled age peers in infant daycare, preschools, K-12, and post-secondary education.

Goal 1, Objective 5: Emerging Needs

People with developmental disabilities and their families will have information, training, and tools to prepare for them for personal emergencies, natural disasters, and/or other emergent circumstances to increase personal safety and the security of services, supports, and self-determined choices.

Jena Crafton MOVED to adopt the five objectives under goal 1 for the State Plan, **SECONDED** by **Sydney Krebsbach**. Hearing no discussion or objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Goal 2, Objective 1: DD Shared Vision Implementation

People with developmental disabilities will have information on the Shared Vision and will have opportunities to actively participate in planning and implementation of the Shared Vision to increase the number of people who understand the Shared Vision and the number who live the life they choose with the supports they direct.

Goal 2, Objective 2: Support Self-Advocacy Organization

A self-advocacy organization will have direct funding support; and information, training, and tools for success to increase its membership, sustainability, and organizational outreach.

Travis Noah MOVED to adopt the two objectives under goal 2 for the State Plan as read, **SECONDED** by **David Kohler**. Hearing no discussion or objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Goal 3, Objective 1: Employment First Implementation

People will have information, training, tools, and programs on telework, the State as a Model Employer, employment rights, and universally designed work environments to increase the percentage of people with disabilities with meaningful, integrated, competitive employment in typical work settings.

Goal 3, Objective 2: Traditional Transition

Transition-aged youth (14-22) with developmental disabilities will have increased information, education services, training, and tools that are regionally, culturally, and linguistically relevant to them to increase the number of young adults in rural communities with skills for meaningful place-based adulthood.

Jena Crafton MOVED to adopt the two objectives under goal 3 for the State Plan as read, **SECONDED** by **Sydney Krebsbach**. Hearing no discussion or objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Kristin Vandagriff explained that the links to the notice for public comment will be provided to Council members. She asked that Council members use their own networks to get the word out.

PARTNER REPORTS

Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS)

John Lee stated that it has been a pleasure to be able to participate fully in this Council meeting. He stated that the SDS Anchorage office is in the process of relocating to the Bragaw building next to East High School. This new location solves a lot of the issues that were problematic for their current location.

Waivers and Regulation Work

John Lee reported that SDS has five waivers, and those waivers provide the State a mechanism to provide a tremendous amount of support for many Alaskans. Four of the five waivers will be undergoing a five-year renewal:

- People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)
- Alaskans Living Independently (ALI)
- Adults with Physical and Developmental Disabilities (APDD)
- Children with Complex Medical Conditions (CCMC)

The Individualized Supports Waiver (ISW) is SDS's newest waiver and is on a different renewal cycle. The ISW began in 2018 and will renew in a few years.

John Lee explained that there is a tremendous amount of work that goes into the waiver renewal process. Each of the waivers has a very detailed description of how the service is provided and is then submitted to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). SDS needs to devise their programs to meet the requirements that CMS puts forward, and SDS has begun the work of looking at the waivers up for renewal and are starting to update that. They expect the information to go out for public comment this fall. After the public comment period, SDS will finalize it and submit it to CMS in the spring. CMS has a 90-day window to approve the waivers, and SDS expects to have this process completed by July 1st.

John Lee reported that while each waiver is renewed every five years, SDS regularly manages and amends the waivers throughout their lifecycles, so there will not be many significant changes that will be made, with the exception of some regulation work that is ongoing. SDS is currently working on the following:

- Waiver service of chore conversion to Community First Choice (CFC) has gone through the public comment period, and SDS expects the effective date to be January 1, 2021. They are working on a communication plan to get that information out to individuals, agencies, and care coordinators.
- Hoping to streamline the nursing facility level of care (NFLOC) determination process to make it smoother so they can process the NFLOC determinations more quickly. SDS is working in partnership with Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) on this. These regulations are currently undergoing public comment, which closes today.
- SDS is finalizing the updates to supported employment. Those regulations will go out for public comment this fall, and SDS hopes to have gone through that cycle and have it incorporated into the waiver renewals when they are submitted. SDS is looking at being

able to be a lot more flexible in the updated supported employment package.

- Currently provider certification is every two years, and many providers have multiple certifications. The intent of the regulation is to change that to a four-year cycle. SDS is going through the regulation review, and they are hoping to get that out for public comment late fall or early spring.

John Lee summarized that these are some of the important regulation changes they are working on and are hoping to be able to incorporate into the waiver package for submittal to CMS.

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)

John Lee reported that EVV is a federal requirement of the 21 Century CARES Act of 2016 that requires states to stand up an EVV system by the end of the year. Alaska has had several extensions from the federal government, and now they are facing an end-of-the-year deadline. The federal government passed this requirement because they felt it would assist states to improve the health and welfare of recipients by validating the delivery of service as well as to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse.

John Lee stated that the EVV project will begin with personal care services, and by 2023 home health will need to be added. He stated SDS is working in partnership with Health Care Services as they oversee home health. Therap is the company that Alaska has selected, and they should be finalizing that contract within the next week or so. Once that contract is in place, SDS will be reaching out to stakeholder organizations such as the Council, AADD, and AAPCS to start the dialogue and the interaction with stakeholders and agencies that will need to adopt these services. They are also finalizing a contract with Public Consulting Group (PCG) that will help SDS proceed with the implementation of EVV and making sure that Therap is delivering on the goods as assigned and Alaska has a compliant EVV system under the 21 Century CARES Act. SDS had calls with the Congressional delegation, and they asked each of them if they could help all states, because as of now, only one state has a certified system. Alaska is one of 49 states and two territories that are struggling to get this implemented by the end of the year. SDS is hopeful that Congress will pass something to extend the deadline by another year. SDS staff that were working on EVV were pulled off this project during COVID, so he is hopeful that an extension will be granted, but given that they can't rely on an extension, they need to keep moving forward.

COVID

John Lee noted that during this Council meeting, there has been a lot of discussion about how important it is for systems to be flexible so individuals can choose the supports that they want. One of the things that SDS has learned through COVID is when CMS allowed the State to have flexibility, it really aided the State's ability to provide services. His hope is that CMS understands how important these flexibilities are so that when the public health emergency is no longer, CMS will allow some of these flexibilities to continue. The Governor's Council should continue to advocate for a system that is flexible. In order for SDS to be able to design a system that is flexible for individuals, the State needs certain flexibilities from the federal government.

John Lee thanked the Governor's Council on behalf of himself, the Commissioner, and the Deputy Commissioner for stepping in and bringing up concerns about what was going on in the Lower 48 so SDS could act early to remind the community they can't discriminate against people with disabilities during a pandemic or otherwise. That advocacy was the reason why Alaska didn't have the significant issues that some of the other states had.

John Lee continues to lead the Vulnerable Alaskans COVID Task Force, which is primarily looking at the long-term care infrastructure to include the services and support for seniors and individuals with disabilities in home and community-based settings. He stated that Alaska should be proud because they have handled things better than most states. COVID is still a threat, and the work is not done yet, and he reminded Council members to continue to practice social distancing and other strategies to keep people safe.

John Lee reiterated that one of the things that has enabled Alaska and other states to be successful during this pandemic is through the flexibilities the federal government gave through the Appendix K, 1135, and the Governor's emergency declaration. They have also modified the State Plan under disaster. They are evaluating a host of these flexibilities with the Congressional delegation to see whether or not some of them can be permanent after the pandemic, such as conducting virtual assessments and bringing technologies into SDS's programs going forward.

Legislative Session Preview

John Lee noted that this is an election year, so it is difficult to predict what is going to happen with the legislative session. SDS is excited to see how the elections come out and who they will be working with at the State level. SDS is starting to analyze what they think might come up this session, but he doesn't want to speculate at this point. He stated that SDS is looking forward to having an impact with the legislature and educating them, in partnership with the Governor's Council, on the programs that are important.

Companion Services

John Lee reported that unfortunately SDS doesn't have an unlimited budget, and at this time, SDS doesn't have an adequate resource allocation methodology, but it is something they are working on. Without a resource allocation methodology, they don't have a good way of allocating the budget so it's budget neutral to allow individuals to select amongst a menu of service options what services they want so they can manage their own budget. It's something they are working on with Steve Lutzky, and they are a few years away from getting a tool that will allow them to do the resource allocation appropriately. They are looking maybe two to three years down the road to be able to add that in and be able to allocate a budget to individuals so they can manage their programs consistent with what their desires and their intent is. Adding companion services to the budget right now would increase the demands on the budget, and they just don't have the flexibility and the luxury to increase the budget. This would have to be something the legislature would appropriate and allow.

During question and answer, **Corey Gilmore** noted that they heard in public comment yesterday that waiver services can be difficult for recipients of those services, and they are often difficult

because of the interpretation of those services by some of the providers. He noted that they hear complaints that some service providers are very focused on “active habilitation,” which is difficult when people are just trying to live their lives. He asked **John Lee** what they could do to address that particular problem. **John** stated that he is reaching out to other states to see how they are managing these issues. He stated that there are examples of states that are trying some innovative things, and he believes that is the direction they need to go. He is anxious to see the results of other states’ innovations to see what could be incorporated in Alaska. He stated that the Council’s collective voice is so important in talking to SDS and the legislature, but he also noted that change takes time and is unfortunately challenging at the state government level. He stated this is something that everyone in the SDS leadership team agrees is the direction to go, and part of what they need is the infrastructure to manage it. Again, creation of a resource allocation tool will help to address this.

Sydney Krebsbach noted that this is an election year, and she wondered if some new legislators will have a difficult time understanding what the Council wants to share. **John Lee** stated that sometimes people have a hard time appreciating situations when they haven’t had to experience them. He stated that the value of the Governor’s Council is their ability to advocate and educate in partnership with other organizations. That focus of the Council will be needed this year more than ever. He stated that he’s looking forward to educating legislators on the process, and SDS is starting to put together some talking points to that end.

Travis Noah noted that it was mentioned that care coordinators could do assessments via Zoom and other electronic means. Has SDS polled the care coordination agencies and other services to see if that’s something they want to continue when the pandemic is over? **John Lee** stated that SDS continues to have dialog with them. Some really enjoy the flexibility and it allows them quicker access to individuals in remote locations, but many of them like the personal touch. If CMS were to approve this post-pandemic, it would certainly be an option to do either in-person or have the flexibility to do it via distance if it works out best for the individual and the care coordinator to do that.

Travis Noah commented that SDS has been willing to be very flexible with amendments and adjustments to peoples’ plans of care, particularly during the pandemic. He wanted **John** to know that people have appreciated the flexibility SDS has shown as a division.

Jena Crafton stated that she wanted to give back all of her SSI money, and she wants a meaningful life with a better job and a job that she really loves to do so she has money to live off of. **John Lee** stated that he wants that for her too, and the Governor is very supportive of work-type programs as well. Tom Crafton added that he believes that **Jena** is trying to convey that the system is backwards because a lot of money is wasted on lifetime care for someone who doesn’t want it, doesn’t need it, and wants to stand on her own feet with a meaningful job. Financially it doesn’t make sense and doesn’t add up. **John Lee** looks forward to receiving feedback on the supported employment regulations when they go out for public comment to see how they can make the program better. **Kristin Vandagriff** stated that **John Lee, Duane Mayes, Jimael Johnson**, herself, and many other partners have been working on some great employment policy enhancement work. She believes there will be good things to come in respect to that.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

Duane Mayes stated that they are wrapping up a client survey, and the primary focus is to get an idea about how DVR clients are feeling now that DVR is teleworking and services are being provided virtually. DVR's offices remain physically closed, although DVR remains open. To date they have had about 200 responses, and about 80 percent are indicating they feel comfortable doing virtual counseling. DVR will continue to solidify their data points, and he will share the report with the Council, because he thinks its very relevant for the Council and other divisions within state government to know that.

Duane Mayes stated that public vocational rehabilitation has been in existence for 100 years, and DVR has been celebrating that over the last couple of months. He stated that they are also working to get the word out to let people know that DVR is still open for business. They did a proclamation that is with the Governor's office right now for Disability Employment Awareness Month, which is a national event for the month of October.

Duane Mayes stated that they are doing as much as they can to ramp up their social media to communicate with the public in terms of how they are doing their work, who they are, that they are open for business, and they are here to help. During the month of October, they are putting a lot of effort into recognizing the employer community for the work they have done to hire Alaskans with disabilities. Their database shows that there are approximately 500 employers that have worked with DVR over the years, and the top 30 employers that have done a lot to hire people with disabilities and have worked on diversity will be recognized through a virtual awards recognition. There will be four events October 27 through the 30th at noon to recognize employers from different regions. Congressman Young will be calling in for the event on the 29th, and he will be presented an award for being the co-chair to the bipartisan Disability Committee. The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) was going to award that to Congressman Young six months ago, and they have asked **Duane** to do it.

Duane Mayes stated that Job-Xtis a program where they do a weekly one-hour event where they highlight a signature employer to give a presentation on all things specific to their vacant positions and how they go about hiring Alaskans with disabilities. This program has been ongoing in Anchorage for quite some time, and it has now been rolled out to the other regions in the state.

Duane Mayes stated that he has been in communications with **Corey Gilmore, Kristin Vandagriff,** and **Art Delaune** about the recent addition to the Freedom Act. The House is still not adding language into that bill that affords public vocational rehabilitation programs throughout the country flexibilities with their programs. There needs to be Congressional action in order for DVR to be able to move any money they have left over in this fiscal year into the next year, and they don't want to be penalized for that. Almost every state in the country is going through the same thing because they are having a hard time spending their money in this virtual world they are living in, and they don't believe they should be penalized as a result. Many of the states, including Alaska, believe that within six months to one year, they are going to be hit hard with people applying for services, and DVR needs to be ready and they need to have the budget to be able to manage that. He has been working very closely with the

Congressional delegation, and they are having robust conversations around those flexibilities in terms of carrying forward their monies and not being exposed to penalties going forward.

Duane Mayes stated that the Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Social Services established an At-Risk Youth Initiative, and they are working to bring that to the forefront again as things became a bit stalled during the pandemic. He stated that the purpose of the initiative is that youth coming out of foster care that may have challenges or may have disabilities need to be attended to. This initiative was moved under DVR about two weeks ago.

Duane Mayes stated that DVR also has a Senior Employment Initiative. They know that there are seniors that may have the need to continue to work because financially they cannot afford to retire. DVR has put a lot of effort into promoting that within the state.

Duane Mayes concluded his presentation by stating that it's a trying time right now, so he will often say to staff that they need to be relentless in their pursuit of perfection, and the number one aspect to that is their ability to communicate. During this pandemic, if people aren't talking to each other, they will fail miserably. The ability to work through this pandemic is our ability to communicate with each other. He tells staff, "Let's be the party of getting it right," in everything they do in terms of serving their community. He also tells them, "Be impeccable in everything that you do; be impeccable to your word." When he thinks of those principles, he thinks of the Governor's Council, and he thinks of the power that the Council can bring when it comes to that relentless pursuit of perfection.

Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD)

Lizette Stiehr directed members of the Council to the document that describes AADD as the voice of providers. They had 64 members last year that work for networking best practices, hold monthly teleconferences, provide representation on many different meetings, provide written communication, have grants, provide input to SDS, and participate in the Shared Vision.

Lizette Stiehr stated that providers are in a really, really tough place right now financially, administratively, and staffing-wise. One of the things the Council can do is express their appreciation to providers for the hard work that they're doing. She stated they are fortunate to have people like **John Lee** and **Duane Mayes** in state leadership trying to move Alaska toward the Shared Vision. She added that if people are feeling stressed in their life, know that people that work with them and for them are also feeling stressed. Anything that can be said to them to make their day a little better is really good.

Lizette Stiehr stated that it is critically important that they follow the leadership of the self-advocates of the Council to make meaningful lives really happen and be able to change the system. Keep fighting for meaningful lives and keep listening to self-advocates advocating for directing their own lives; keep moving in the direction of a plan that works for you. She stated that they need to keep holding providers' feet to the fire because providers also want this for people.

Lizette Stiehr noted that if Council members know of anybody who is interested in doing this

direct service work, anything they can do to encourage people to enter the field now as a DSP or an administrator would be wonderful. Providers are having a very difficult time recruiting workforce right now.

Lizette Stiehr concluded by encouraging the Council to keep standing tall and strong like they are. The Council is so important and they make such a difference, every single one of the members. She is very impressed with the Council leadership and sincerely thanked them.

Corey Gilmore added that the average work lifespan for a DSP is three to six months, and their wages continue to be low. Now with COVID, DSPs are afraid to go into people's homes to provide them services they need. He wanted new Council members to be aware of why this issue is so important.

Stone Soup Group

Mary Middleton reported that things at Stone Soup Group haven't changed much since spring. They continue to have all of their staff working remotely, and their office remains closed to the public. They are currently fully staffed, and they welcomed a new program director, Christopher Blake earlier this month. They also have regional parent navigators now in Soldotna, Bethel, Fairbanks, and Ketchikan, and they have an office in Wasilla for their DDRC navigator there.

Mary Middleton stated they have been working the past several months creating some videos, and the first one to be released in the next few days is about what a Medicaid waiver is, and it has been translated into Yupik. This is the first of a series of videos in Yupik, and topics of others include basics of IEPs, 504 plans, and TEFRA. She noted that they now have two fluent Yupik speakers on staff.

Mary Middleton stated that they have begun planning their Parent Conference for 2021, which will again be virtual. The theme will be "Community Inclusion," and they will hold sessions the first two weeks of April.

Stone Soup Group continues to offer their monthly support group Building Strong Parents, which is available via Zoom. Registration is available on Stone Soup Group's website. They have also transitioned their Souper Gaming Night to an online format for their youth. Registration is also available on their website.

Mary Middleton stated that Stone Soup Group just received a small telehealth grant from their national technical assistance provider Family Voices, and they will be starting to do some work on providing telehealth education and instruction for families. There is also a little bit of funding available to help with actual connection and accessibility to telehealth appointments.

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC)

Jennifer Smerud, project manager for the Statewide Homeless Housing Office, reported that they have been doing a lot to deal with COVID response with people that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. They have seen not only an uptick in people needing assistance, but also a need

to make sure that people are in safe and stable housing so that they aren't at higher risk for COVID. They have been doing a lot of policy changes and program changes to ensure they can house people temporarily in hotels or other temporary housing. They have also been shifting their budgets as much as they can to provide assistance to physical shelters so they can keep higher-risk people safer.

Jennifer Smerud stated that AHFC has used some of the federal CARES funds to do some big homeless prevention programs. Through the Alaska Housing Relief Program, they were able to give out \$10 million directly to communities to pay for missed rent or late mortgage payments for individuals who were financially impacted by COVID-19. They were able to do a project through the public housing office for individuals who were paying a portion of their rent based on income, to discontinue that for individuals who lost their job or lost their hours to COVID-19 restrictions.

Jennifer Smerud reported the following for AHFC:

- 305 units at 15 properties are funded through the Special Needs Housing Grant.
- 1,117 units of affordable housing built through the GOAL program, the teacher housing program, and the tax credit program.
- Providing basic homeless assistance through 35 programs in 17 communities.
- AHFC has a \$5 million Emergency Solutions Grant that is out for competitive bid right now to either open new emergency shelters in communities that don't have them, expand services for communities that do have emergency shelters but need more, and also provide prevention and rapid rehousing programs in communities that are outside the Anchorage area. AHFC is the balance of state recipient of the Emergency Solutions Grant, so all of their resources are going to go outside of Anchorage. Anchorage has their own Emergency Solutions Grant and already has plans underway.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

Michael Christian reported that the Youth Leadership Forum was postponed due to COVID. The SILC did not have the resources available to put on a virtual Youth Leadership Forum because of the magnitude of the event, which is typically six days and 60 hours. The SILC will be working to host the event late July or early August of 2021. He will send out updates on that as things solidify.

Michael Christian reported that the Independent Living Network is looking to try to hold an Independent Living Conference in 2021 or early 2022. An Independent Living Conference was held in 2017 but was only available to staff of the Centers for Independent Living and the SILC board and staff. They are looking to host a conference that is opened up to partners as well, and he would like the Council and others involved in the Shared Vision be a part of that planning committee and process, because the Shared Vision really is rooted in the independent living philosophy and movement. At the same time, he believes the Shared Vision has an opportunity advance the independent living movement itself. He stated that e-mails should be coming out in the near future asking for volunteers to be a part of that planning committee.

Michael Christian stated that the SILC's advocacy agenda this year is to have their SILC council

members connect with their legislators prior to the session. With the depletion of the Constitutional budget reserve and the budget issues they can expect to be coming soon, they want to make sure that all the new legislators are aware of who the SILC is before they engage in those conversations in February. The SILC board is also very interested in joining forces with others wherever possible to carry out joint advocacy.

Michael Christian stated that for the first time, the SILC now has standing committees beyond the executive committee, and among those is an advocacy committee. He stated that people should expect a much higher involvement from the SILC in terms of advocacy in the coming year. He also expects members of that committee to start sitting in on all the various legislative teleconferences like those with the Trust and the Alaska Commission on Aging and others.

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

Steve Williams thanked the Council for the invitation to speak today. He welcomed new Council members and looks forward to getting to know them. Jimael Johnson introduced herself to the Council and stated that she is the general liaison to the Governor's Council in addition to her other programmatic work.

Background and History of the Trust

Steve Williams stated that the Trust's work is dependent on the partnership and the work that they do with the advisory boards as well as the State departments, the tribal health system, community behavioral health system and other systems of care, as well as individual Trust beneficiaries. This network advises the Trust on the needs of the beneficiaries and ensures that the Trust is able to carry out its mission.

The Trust is governed by a seven-member board of Trustees that was established when the Trust was formed in 1994. The Trust was formed out of a lawsuit against the State of Alaska. When Alaska transitioned from a territory to statehood, the federal government granted a million acres of federal land to the new state to be used in trust to develop a health and social services system. During the late '50's and early '60's there wasn't a large population, and there wasn't a lot of infrastructure or revenue for the new state to develop a system of care that could support Alaskans when they needed it. The point of the million acres being in a trust was that it served a specific intent to be used to leverage resources to develop the system of care. As legislators and governors moved through, half of that million acres was sold off in various ways, and the revenue went into the State, sometimes allocated for health and social services, but a lot of times not, and the legislature was violating the terms of the trust. When it was discovered that the million acres had a very specific purpose and that the legislature had violated its role as trustee over these lands, the lawsuit was filed and was resolved in 1994.

As a part of the settlement, a seven-member board is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the legislature to serve five-year terms to oversee the assets of the Trust. An individual Trustee can serve two consecutive five-year terms if they are reappointed and reconfirmed. The charge of the Trustees is to oversee the cash assets, non-cash assets, and to carry out the mission of the Trust. He noted that Trustee Laraine Derr has just recently completed two consecutive

five-year terms, and a new appointment Annette Gwalthney-Jones was just named by the Governor to be confirmed by the legislature.

Steve Williams went on to explain that as part of the settlement, the million acres was reconstituted, and to compensate for the lost cash assets as a result of the land that was lost, \$200 million was set up and invested with the Permanent Fund to serve as the corpus of the Trust that cannot be withdrawn. It's the dividends of those investments that the Trust then has the ability to grant money out through the State, tribal health system, or local governments in the community. The Trust operates similarly to a private foundation, and these are non-state general funds that only the board of Trustees has the authority to expend.

The lawsuit identified the following beneficiaries of the Trust:

- People experiencing mental illness
- People with an intellectual/developmental disability
- People with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia
- People with traumatic brain injuries
- People with substance use disorders.

Steve Williams explained that the Trust is also responsible for working with DHSS on ensuring that there is a Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program Plan (Comp Plan). Governor's Council staff have been very engaged in developing this plan with the department and the Trust, and they are now at the point of identifying the indicators and the metrics for monitoring the plan, and then they will make recommendations for how Trust funds and how the State should be spending its general funds to implement the Comp Plan.

Steve Williams stated that the Trust is really invested in trying to look at what they can do early on to prevent and do early interventions for children and families to mitigate some of the impacts to the beneficiary groups.

The statutory advisors to the Trust include:

- Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
- Alaska Mental Health Board
- Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
- Alaska Commission on Aging

In addition to the statutory advisors, there are a wide array of other stakeholders and partners the Trust regularly works with to get a sense of how the system of care is operating in Alaska.

Budget

Steve Williams explained that the Trust has about \$25 million available for allocation per year. Some of that money goes to the Trust Authority and the Trust Land Office, and combined those administrative budgets are about \$8 million, or about 25 percent of the Trust's overall spend. The other 75 percent of the funding available to allocate goes either through the State system as Mental Health Trust Authority Authorized Receipts (MHTAAR) or Authority Grants that go out to organizations that support and serve the Trust's beneficiaries. One of the programs the Trust

has is the Mini-Grant Program, which are funds that go directly to Trust beneficiaries through community organizations for up to \$2,500 to support a beneficiaries' needs. Jimael Johnson noted that another budget item is the Microenterprise Grants, which is funding from the Trust to the university and is administered through the Center for Human Development to help individual beneficiaries start or expand their own small business.

Steve Williams stated that the board of Trustees just approved the FY'22 and '23 budget. By statute the Trust does a two-year budgeting cycle, and in order to develop that budget, the Trust seeks the input of the Council and all the other advisory members as they develop the recommendations to present to the Trustees. He appreciates the input and commitment from the Governor's Council staff to help the Trust develop their budget recommendations. In addition to recommendations on how the Trust should be spending its money, the Trustees send recommendations to the Governor and to the legislature for how they should be spending the State's general fund dollars to fund the Comp Plan. If those recommendations are not incorporated into the State budget, the Governor and legislature have to respond in writing as to the reasoning.

Trust Focus Areas

Steve Williams explained that the Trustees devote staff resources and funding to the following four major focus areas:

- Disability Justice
- Mental Health Addiction and Interventions
- Beneficiary Employment and Engagement
- Housing and Home and Community-Based Services

Jimael Johnson stated that the Trust engages closely with the Council around the Beneficiary Employment and Engagement Initiative to promote integrated, competitive employment for Trust beneficiaries. The representation from the Governor's Council is critically important to ensure they are able to move this work forward. One of the current areas of focus for this initiative is the implementation of the Employment First legislation. She also noted that for many years the Trust has funded technical assistance to the Council to help support some of the systems efforts they are working on around employment. The Trust will once again be funding an Empowerment Through Employment Conference.

Steve Williams stated that additional priorities staff are focused on include:

- Early Childhood Intervention and Prevention
- Workforce Development

Advocacy and Public Policy

Steve Williams stated that in terms of identifying bills and budget priorities, the Trust works with the Council and advisory boards to develop core needs and core priorities for beneficiaries collectively moving into the legislative session. They develop an advocacy framework for themselves and partners to discuss with the legislature. Throughout the legislative process the

Trust responds to legislative questions and provides testimony or participates in legislative hearings. They also track the budget and bills throughout the legislative process and do their advocacy to try to make sure the needs of the beneficiaries are met.

Trust Land Office

Steve Williams stated that the million acres of land is managed in the Department of Natural Resources in a special section called the Trust Land Office (TLO). All the TLO does is manage the Trust lands to maximize the benefit from those lands to improve the lives of Trust beneficiaries. Maximizing the benefit of the land can be through sale of the land or resource development from the lands. Some of that money goes into the Permanent Fund and is invested as principle. Other revenue that can be generated from Trust lands does not have to be invested in the Permanent Fund but can be used as income that can be expended by the Trustees at the time it's generated. The land assets that the TLO manages include land, minerals and materials, forest lands, timber, real estate, and potential energy development. The million acres are spread across the entire state, and in some cases the Trust owns full rights to the land; in some cases they just own the subsurface rights; and in some cases they own the surface rights.

Steve Williams explained that Trust assets are being used to generate revenue that the Trust can then help to be a catalytic funder to improve the system of care for beneficiaries. The State is responsible for making sure that there is a continuum of care for beneficiaries and that services are there for them; that is not a Trust responsibility. The Trust can partner with the State to look at things within the system of care that can be improved or changed or to identify gaps in services and supports.

Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)

Don Enoch shared the good news that the special education unit is fully staffed right now, and they have three program managers and a 619 coordinator that they share with early childhood.

Don Enoch reported the following from DEED:

- Last year's compliance monitoring is now complete. They have one district still waiting on their corrective actions to come in, but they are within their timeline. The 2021 school year monitoring is already started, and that is being conducted virtually this year.
- The department conducted a virtual Special Education Director Training in September, and they will be doing a second directors training in March, which will most likely be virtual as well.
- DEED had a contract with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTAC). They have been renewed for funding, and the department will be applying to continue that technical assistance from them.
- DEED continues to work with the Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC) to develop a website for secondary transition resources as well as conducting virtual transition camps, which have been very popular. The transition camps going virtual allows more students the ability to participate and has provided greater outreach.
- Weekly webinars are held and were continued throughout the summer for special education directors and district superintendents. These sessions are for questions and

answers specifically related to COVID, but can include anything else that comes up that is special education oriented. They also do regular Wednesday updates.

- The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has notified DEED this week that Alaska will be part of the federal audit for special education as a part of a three-year process. Alaska volunteered to be in the first-year cohort for this new process, and they are excited to be accepted. Alaska has been overdue for an audit, and it helps to make sure everything is running smoothly and can help identify areas of improvement. They are looking forward to robust collaboration with OSEP in this process.
- Complaint and due process hearings:
 - Due processes in 2020 – two completed and settled; two are still in progress
 - Due processes in 2021 – none pending at this time.
 - Complaint investigations for 2020 – zero in progress; six were completed, five of them had corrective actions.
 - Complaint investigations for 2021 – two in progress; one was completed with no corrective actions.
- None of the complaints had anything to do with COVID yet, but that's not to say that there aren't COVID-related issues in the state. They are looking to add some COVID-specific questions to the parent survey to address how their district has fared in providing services during COVID. There have been many challenges for districts in that area, but there are even more challenges for parents and they would like to get a better handle on who is doing well and what can be done to improve it.

Don Enoch stated that they are hoping that by the time they receive the parent survey, this will be a moot point, but they realize that that most likely won't be the case. They know that districts are really struggling, and the department gets dozens of phone calls weekly looking for solutions. What has been encouraging is that districts are looking for solutions; they're not looking for ways to get out of their obligations. Districts are actively looking for ways to serve the children in the best way they can, keeping in mind that child safety is more important than all else.

Anne Applegate offered that a great role for the Education Committee might be to help the department come up with some parent questions that really reflect the experiences of the parents that the Council has both on the committee and on the Council at-large. That might be a great way to make sure that those parent questions really reflect the experiences of that particular part of the stakeholder groups. **Don Enoch** felt that would be really great because working for the State, they come from one point of view. He would really prefer to have the parents' point of view on what they would like to express and have those questions nailed down to exactly what parents need to tell. **Anne** suggested it is something that the Education Committee could do in partnership with Stone Soup Group and LINKS.

Corey Gilmore noted that the Education Committee has had concerns regarding regression for youth in special education during this time of distance learning. **Don Enoch** noted that any social development skills that are not being served by the nature of being with their peers will be a problem, but it's hard to assess while everyone is still in safety mode. He believes that once schools become a safer place for students to return to, they will be able to assess student regression and perhaps be able to formulate a statewide plan that could be used as a model for districts.

Developmental Disability Collaborative

Kim Champney stated that it's been wonderful to have the Shared Vision mentioned this afternoon several times. This is the fourth year of the Shared Vision, and she summarized that the key message of the Vision is: I live the life I choose with the support I direct. Kim appreciated the Trust's commitment to destigmatize disability, and she sees the Vision as shifting people's beliefs and expectations around disability and what people can do and how they live in our community.

Kim Champney shared the five goals for this fiscal year as follows:

- **Aligning the Shared Vision and the State system.** The current State system doesn't always support people to directing their own support and living the life they choose. As they heard before, changing the State system will take some time, but conversations about options continue to take place.
- **Establish disability advocates as the Vision keepers and leaders.** The strategies around this are to:
 - Increase the strength, capacity, and organizational development of Peer Power to be able to make change and to take over holding everyone accountable to the Vision.
 - Encourage and look for opportunities for people with disabilities to have leadership roles in organizations, boards of directors, and at the State level so that the people who are most impacted by the system are in charge and leading the way as far as changing the system.
- **Finalize A Person-Directed Life Toolkit.** Lots of good tools and ways to think about the Vision have been developed. This will be an interactive website that defines what a person-directed life means and has tools for people to learn more about how to increase their independence in certain areas. Possibility for some grant funding to hire a digital communications specialist to design the toolkit in an innovative and cutting-edge way.
- **DSP Workforce.** The DSP workforce has its own state plan that has five objectives:
 - Creating a career pathway
 - Statewide media campaign about the value and the opportunity for this work
 - Looking into wages and benefits and doing some legislative advocacy
 - Implementing technologies
 - Continue to grow the Alliance for Direct Support Professionals
- **Tell schools about the Shared Vision.** **Don Enoch** has offered to bridge the Shared Vision to the school system, so the first step in this work will be meeting with special education directors to describe what they are trying to do with the Shared Vision and getting input on how to share that message in schools.

Kim Champney stated the DD Collaborative will be hosting a series of town hall meetings to open up conversations around the Shared Vision. They have already had one town hall with 40 participants in small groups with very heavy interaction. They will tentatively hold the next one in November, and Council members are encouraged to join in on those conversations.

Sydney Krebsbach asked for people with disabilities that don't have the tools or a service plan to live an independent and meaningful live through the DD Shared Vision, could they still have a plan in the near future? Kim Champney stated that she would like to talk to **Sydney** more about that because she believes Centers for Independent Living may be an avenue for that.

Kim Champney thanked the Council and the Trust for their focus on the Shared Vision.

Disability Law Center of Alaska (DLC)

Dave Fleurant explained that in addition to the DD grant, DLC also gets federal grants to assist individuals with mental illness, traumatic brain injury, and a variety of other physical disabilities. They also work on such topical issues as the right to vote and access to the community.

Related to the COVID pandemic, **Dave Fleurant** reported that one of the issues they worked on early on with the Council and SDS is some of the concerns about discrimination or rationing of medical services at the beginning of the pandemic. It has been on his desk to look at the State's emergency plan to make sure that there isn't discriminatory language as it relates to medical equipment. As Alaska's COVID numbers continue to rise, ventilators and medical equipment are becoming an issue. He stated that they will also be looking to ensure that individuals with disabilities are not on the waiting end of a vaccine when one becomes available.

Dave Fleurant stated that DLC has been working on the airline mask policy. Some airlines have come up with no-mask/no-fly policies, but there are some individuals with disabilities who cannot wear a mask. He stated that DLC has engaged with the airlines, and they are working with their national membership organization and the Senate and the House to try to come up with some way of addressing this. He stated that they believe the no-mask/no-fly policy is inconsistent with what the CDC has come out with, and is certainly inconsistent with the rights of individuals with disabilities. Alaska Airlines has somewhat engaged in the conversation; American Airlines has shut them out, so they are now looking at a complaint to the Department of Transportation.

Dave Fleurant stated that DLC is also looking at SNAP benefits. DLC was trying to encourage the State to make sure that individuals with disabilities could use their SNAP benefits in a manner that did not put them into a point of contact with anyone else. The issue is more complicated than just having the State make it happen. It will require that the grocery chains buy into this, and that has not yet happened.

DLC is also concerned about the tsunami of evictions that should be coming up once the federal and state protections on evictions are lifted. Compounding that is a representative payee crisis that still exists that may also result in evictions.

Other issues DLC has worked on include:

- Visitation – individuals in assisted living homes or hospitals – issues supporting loved ones during COVID.
- Monitoring facilities for abuse and neglect. DLC is exploring doing virtual monitoring.
- DLC has two vacancies, one attorney and one advocate.

Heidi Lieb-Williams asked if **Dave Fleurant** had ever heard of “yellow carding” which allows flight attendants to give someone a yellow card for not wearing a mask that would ban the passenger from flying again for life, even if they have a disability. **Dave** had not heard of that, but he doesn’t believe any type of yellow card issued by a flight attendant would withstand judicial scrutiny.

Dave Fleurant encouraged Council members to direct people to DLC if there are individual situations and concerns so DLC can understand the scope of the problem.

UAA Center for Human Development (CHD)

Meghan Clark played an international video that was put together by a Project ECHO team out of the University of New Mexico. The video was developed because ECHO and Zoom launched at the same time and formed a partnership that allows CHD to use Zoom in many different ways to leverage Project ECHO. Karen Ward stated that they wanted to share that because **Meghan** leading ECHO for CHD received international recognition in the video.

Karen Ward shared the following updates for CHD as follows:

- Started their new LEND cohort two weeks ago, and **Jena Crafton** is a Fellow this year. **Sydney Krebsbach** and **Corey Gilmore** are previous Fellows.
- Capacity Building for Autism Interventions (CBAI) has six new people pursuing a certification in behavioral analysis as well as seven from previous cohorts. Not all of these people are working for school districts.
- Upcoming webinar on celebrating the holidays during the pandemic on October 17th.
- Disability Abuse Response Teams (DART)– one-stop location for individuals with disabilities who have been victims of domestic violence and sexual assault (DV/SA). CHD will be using ECHO to cross train providers on disability issues. The new communities are Prince of Wales, Cordova, Seward, Kenai/Soldotna, Anchorage, Valdez, and Nome.
- Effective Behavior Intervention Program provides behavior analytic consultation to agencies and schools primarily under the State’s Complex Behavior Collaborative. They are also working with Kenai and the Aleutian East Borough School Districts, and CHD is continuing to make progress in developing the infrastructure to open up a clinic that will provide early intensive behavioral interventions that will also serve as a training ground.
- EHCOT– Family ECHO; Caregiver COVID Schooling ECHO; Behavior Interventions for Early Childhood ECHO that will begin in October; Neurodevelopmental ECHO has launched with medical providers twice a month; COVID-19 ECHOs; Science ECHO.
- Neurodevelopmental Outreach Clinics will continue. They will begin October 9th but will be conducted in a telehealth format with particular emphasis on children with autism in remote locations. This is in partnership with Women’s Children’s Family Health and Stone Soup Group.
- In the process of doing an Early Hearing Detection and Intervention parent survey. The year two data will be presented to the Council in December.
- National Core Indicators Survey is typically face-to-face interviewing, but Alaska was able to successfully pilot virtual interviewing pre-COVID.

- 2020 ILP Family Outcome Survey was completed. Roxy is available if the EIC would like a report.
- CHD has been involved in a partnership with the University of Kentucky and Utah State around the mental health needs of people with developmental disabilities. Roxy completed a national needs assessment and pulled out the results for Alaska, and people can contact Roxy for the national report and/or the Alaska results.

Traumatic and Acquired Brain Injury (TABI) Advisory Council

Lucy Cordwell reported that the TABI Advisory Council finished their needs assessment and public comment period. She is happy to report that they have finalized their Brain Injury Five-Year State Plan. They are now at the point where they are prioritizing goals and deciding next steps. They are starting to move forward, and there has been some good momentum. They currently arranging some advocacy training for their council members.

Lucy Cordwell thanked the Trust for the approval of funding for a staff position for the TABI Advisory Council in the fiscal years '22 – '23 budget. The Trust also funded for some of the council members to attend the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) Conference. It was a wonderful opportunity for the TABI council to share and learn about best practices resources they can use in Alaska.

Alaska Mental Health Board/Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

Bev Schoonover reported that the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB) and the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ABADA) are advisory boards to the state of Alaska on the State-funded behavioral health system. Half of their board are Alaskans with mental health disorders and their family members, and the other half is people in recovery and others that have experience with alcoholism and drug abuse. Their focus areas are to help coordinate projects, plans, activities, and data about the State behavioral health system; evaluate the behavioral health system; educate policymakers; and advocate with and for Alaskans with mental health and substance use disorders. Their offices are located in Juneau, and they have seven staff.

Bev Schoonover stated that their office also manages the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council, which is an advisory group that coordinates Alaska's suicide prevention services and advises the Governor, the legislature, and everyone else on suicide prevention and postvention programs.

Current items that intersect with the Governor's Council include:

- Employment supports
- Empowerment Through Employment Conference
- Employment First Policy and Planning Task Force
- FASD Workgroup
- Alaska Disability Advisory Group
- TABI Advisory Council
- Chair of the Alaska Mental Health Board is Governor's Council member **Charlene Tautfest**.

Suicide Prevention Council Updates:

- 2019 data for suicide completions is the highest seen in Alaska and was compiled before COVID. They know that COVID is causing mental stress on people, and they don't have the data on mental health, suicide, and increased substance use yet, but they know that people have been impacted.
- Promoting the CareLine, 877-266-HELP through newspaper ads and radio ads funded by the Trust.
- Two-thirds of the suicides in Alaska are death by guns, so they have been working on a project to reduce the lethal means to suicide to try to get people in crisis to safely store their firearms until the crisis passes and then get some help for the crisis. This has been a great opportunity to talk to people statewide about this issue.
- Working with DBH and Public Health on suicide prevention. They are very interested in knowing if any data exists about how suicide impacts the I/DD community. If suicide prevention is a concern of any Council members, they would love to partner with the Council on this. They are currently partnering with the Alaska Commission on Aging on a few outreach efforts right now specifically targeted to Alaskan elders.

AMHB/ABADA Updates:

- Participate in the Statewide Alcohol Alliance, a project from Recover Alaska that is a multi-year project trying to reduce alcohol consumption and the impacts of alcohol misuse in Alaska.
- Work with the Office of Substance Misuse and Prevention (OSMAP) and attend their monthly Opioid Statewide Workgroups. Right now they are doing a statewide opioid state plan update. If there are concerns about Council constituents and opioid misuse, reach out to AMHB/ABADA or OSMAP to share those concerns.
- Working on tobacco reduction, particularly looking at behavioral health providers in behavioral health settings and smoking cessation and trainings for behavioral health providers to help people quit smoking.
- Psychiatric crisis care is a big issue in Alaska. AMHB is a member of the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) Governing Board, and **Charlene Tautfest** is the board's representative.
- Crisis Now is a new project being supported by the Trust to improve access to crisis services through mobile crisis outreach, 24-hour crisis stabilization, and inpatient care. The model will be focused in three communities, although they are doing work in rural areas and Juneau as well to improve crisis services.
- PAL-PAK - Alaska Partnership Access Line. These are pediatric care providers and psychiatrists at Seattle Children's Hospital available five days a week for people to get help for kids who need help with mental health and early intervention.
- Working with the Department of Education and the Trust to get more mental health supports in schools. DEED received a grant for some activities, and the Trust is also providing some additional supports for mental health in schools.
- AMHB/ABADA works a lot on data. They have recently talked to the people that do Alaska's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), and they have been working with the Governor's Council on the Mental Health Trust Scorecard that is trying to be built up to demonstrate how effective the Comp Plan is. They have also been working with Healthy Alaskans 2030 on their data

and trying to understand suicide, mental health, and substance misuse in Alaska.

- The boards were recently asked to join the Alaska Statewide Violence and Injury Prevention Program that is focusing on suicide prevention.

Upcoming Activities:

- AMHB/ABADA board meeting October 8 – 9, 2020. Public comment on Thursday, October 8th at 4:00 p.m.
- Suicide Prevention Council meeting October 21st.
- All meetings will be held via Zoom, and Council members are welcome to attend.
- Legislative session– part of the funding they receive from the Trust is for Teri Tibbett as the advocacy coordinator, who will be doing a series of five trainings for advocates via Zoom October 23rd to 27th. The trainings are free and anyone can join.
- The boards are interested in busting stigma about mental health and substance use disorders, and they are planning and thinking that through and would like to talk to the Council and staff on what that could look like as a statewide effort.

Corey Gilmore noted that Medicaid used to pay for counseling once a week, and now it's only once a month. Many people with I/DD need counseling and need access to these services. He appreciates the work of these boards and offered the Council's help whenever appropriate.

Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA)

Lesley Thompson stated that ACoA has crossover with the Council through member **Nona Safra**. She stated that ACoA is currently staffed by herself as interim director and planner, and Michelle Rogers was hired as a result of a three-year Trust grant. Michelle will be researching the needs of rural communities in Alaska, and they have targeted Shishmaref and Bethel. Shishmaref has not had any senior meals provided in that community, and they are having problems hiring people in the villages for such low wages, but Shishmaref was able to use COVID money to hire a young hunter to get caribou to share with the elders.

Lesley Thompson highlighted the following about ACoA:

- ACoA is partnering with the Council and AMHB/ABADA to bring material and information about the advisory boards during outreach to communities.
- ACoA represents Alaskans 60 and older. People are living longer, and ACoA is finding more people getting early onset dementia. In response to this, the State changed the eligibility age of the Pioneer Homes from 65 to 60.
- ACoA does planning, advocacy, and works with partner boards.
- ACoA hosts legislative teleconferences every other Thursday morning during session that focus on issues and bills related to Alaskans age 60 and older.
- ACoA has 11 commissioners, and once the new executive director is hired, they will have three staff members.
- ACoA operates under the SDS umbrella, and SDS has been very helpful and **John Lee** is wonderful to work with.
- ACoA does a comprehensive State Plan, and they are in the second year of their plan. One of ACoA's mandates is to make recommendations directly to the Governor and the

legislature as to the needs of seniors. They also make recommendations to the Trust, and the Trust has been great in working with the boards in terms of funding different programs, activities, and staff positions.

Lesley Thompson provided senior data and information as follows:

- 140,000 seniors 60 plus in Alaska. People are living longer, and there are more people needing services in their 80's and 90's.
- Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD) – the trend is that the disorder is increasing in the ages of 65 plus, and ACoA will be receiving data on the prevalence of early onset in the state of Alaska.
- Currently working on the ADRD Roadmap with the Trust and other partners so they know what direction they are going to go in terms of trying to get more services to the caregivers and people with ADRD.

Lesley Thompson stated that nationally, 8 out of 10 COVID-19 deaths have been people who are age 65 years and older. A lot of seniors in nursing homes were lost due to COVID in the Lower 48. Assisted living facilities and nursing homes are working really hard to keep COVID out as much as possible, and most aren't allowing visitors, which is very hard on families. ACoA is monitoring senior centers to keep track of which ones are and are not open as well as if senior centers are providing meals and their methods. Most of the senior centers are still doing meals on wheels, but some have a drive up to the senior center to receive meals. The Anchorage Senior Center will be administering drive-up flu shots.

Lesley Thompson stated that ACoA is working on workforce development, and they are working directly with **Duane Mayes** to address senior employment needs. They have been working on this initiative for almost a year. The Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) program provides services to people at least 55 years old that have at least two barriers to employment. Rita Gray, the director of that program, has about 50 slots of people that want to work that can't find employment because of COVID. Anyone who knows of an employment opportunity that they would like to use a MASST participant to fill, please contact Lesley Thompson or Rita Gray. The federal government pays the cost of the wages for the MASST employee.

Lesley Thompson noted that there are some long-term effects of COVID that are starting to become recognized, and they are worried about seniors in terms of these long-term affects. She noted that seniors in Alaska have a high suicide rate, one of the highest in the country. ACoA is working with behavioral health to see how they can increase the capacity with mental health and telehealth for seniors.

Lesley Thompson concluded her presentation by stating that ACoA appreciates their relationship with the Council and staff, and Council members are encouraged to provide comments at the next ACoA meeting.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Kristin Vandagriff announced that the Program Performance Report (PPR) surveys will be

coming out in the next two weeks. Council members may receive more than one survey based on the number of committees they are on. These are very important for Council members and stakeholders to complete.

Kristin Vandagriff thanked everyone for their participation in this meeting and reminded Council members that although the Council offices are closed, they should feel free to reach out to staff at any time if they have any questions or need information.

Heidi Lieb-Williams thanked Council members and partners that participated in the meeting over the past two days.

Lanny Mommsen shared that the Disability and Aging Summit will occur next week, and the Special Olympics website has more information.

SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS

- February 1 – 2, 2021 – Council meeting held via Zoom
- February 4 – 5, 2021 – Virtual Zoom legislative visits
- Mid May, 2021 – TBD– Council meeting

ADJOURN

Sydney Krebsbach **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by **Anna Attla**. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.