



# Council Meeting Minutes

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September 24, 2021

**Council Members Present:**

Shontie Brown\*  
Allison Bynum\*  
Jody Cheek\*  
Roddey Coe\*  
Jennifer Coleman\*  
Sarah Cripps\*  
Ryan Durham\*  
Tatum Fowler\*  
Lesley Guilaran\*  
Alicia Hall\*  
Chrissy Hood\*  
Lisa Johnson\*  
Edward Mitchell\*  
Tecia Puckett Pryor\*  
Brigham Scallion\*  
Martez Williams\*  
Alison Gauld, Dept. Special Education  
Kendra Mitchell, Dept. of Health  
Mandy Johnson, Voc. Rehab. Services  
Lisa Primm, Disability Rights TN  
Mark Liverman, Dept. Mental Health &  
Substance Abuse  
Carrie Brna, Dept. of Intellectual and  
Developmental Disabilities  
Bruce Keisling, UT Center for  
Developmental Disabilities (UTCDD)  
Nina Coyle, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center  
Don Watt, THDA  
Rose Naccarato, Tenn. Commission on  
Children & Youth  
Shannon Nehus, TennCare

*\*denotes Governor appointed citizen*

**Staff Present:**

Wanda Willis  
Lynette Porter  
Alicia Cone  
Cathlyn Smith  
Lauren Percy  
Jolene Sharp  
Emma Shouse Garton  
Ashley Edwards  
JoEllen Fowler  
Mildred Sparkman

**Guests Present:**

Representative Brandon Ogles  
Cara Kingrea (UT Chattanooga)  
Brooke Larson (UT Memphis)

**Visitors Present:**

David Griffin  
Elliot Pinsley  
Sharon Stout

**Council Members Absent:**

Clancey Hopper\*  
Brent Wiles\*  
Tennessee Commission on  
Aging and Disabilities

## **9:00 a.m. Opening & Introductions**

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Council Chair Tecia Puckett Pryor called the meeting to order after ascertaining there was a quorum at 9:02 a.m. Tecia welcomed everyone and led introductions.

Tecia then reviewed the meeting agenda.

## **9:05 a.m. Business Items**

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### **Approval of May 2021 Minutes**

The May 2021 Council meeting minutes were emailed to all the Council members prior to the September 24, 2021 Council meeting to give members an opportunity to review before the meeting. Tecia called for a motion to accept the minutes, as edited, from the members present at the May meeting. **Sarah Cripps moved to accept May 2021 minutes as amended and Tatum Fowler seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously.**

### **Executive Director Report**

Wanda Willis, Executive Director, encouraged members to read the Executive Director report included in the email to members dated September 22, 2021. Wanda emphasized key projects in the report:

Thanks to the investment approved by the Council in 2019, we began the largest-scale modernization of Pathfinder since its founding in the 1990s. Highlights include:

- launching a new website with a better, more intuitive way to search for services;
- completing a large-scale public input survey reaching over 3,000 Tennesseans in 94/95 counties has given us data about how to improve Pathfinder;
- and bringing together 6 state agencies to contribute funding and joint oversight of these efforts.

The Council is managing all agency contracts through our office, permitting one contract with Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. This requires the Council to have interagency contracts with 5 other state agencies

Federally funded disability agencies received grants to help people with disabilities get COVID vaccines. In TN, the Council convened all the disability grantees to work together. The TN team is facilitating in-home vaccines for those who want the vaccine but cannot get out to receive one. Successes include a family who wanted the vaccine but their adult son on the autism spectrum was nervous about going to a pharmacy. The in-home vaccine was provided, and the family was grateful. In another situation, 3 deaf men living together requested an in-home vaccine where an interpreter was provided, vs. using the local pharmacy with no means of communication.

The Council convened public and private partners to update Tennessee's Employment First Strategic Plan. Consultant Cissy Mynatt led a series of planning meetings. The plan targets employment programs provided by state agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Employment and Community First waiver services, Department of Education transition services and others. The plan's purpose is to build in best

practices and cross-agency coordination. The plan provides a road map for proving services and concrete measures of success. The plan will be reviewed at each meeting of the Employment First Task Force.

At the end of her briefing, Wanda shared her plans to retire in January 2022. She is grateful for the people she has served alongside and eternally grateful for the opportunity to support Tennesseans with disabilities and their family members through her work with the Council. Council members shared words of appreciation for Wanda's impact on the state.

### **Executive Committee Report**

Tecia briefed the members on the succession plan in place following Wanda's announcement. The Executive Committee, along with a representative from the Department of Human Resources, is acting as the hiring committee for the next Executive Director. The hiring committee will recommend to the Executive Committee any potential hire. The Executive Committee will communicate any new information to the full Council.

In the past, the Council provided funds to begin the Center for Decision-Making Support, the first of its kind in the country. The Center provides a central hub for information and support related to decision making. Additional funding has been requested to support efforts to educate judges, schools, conservators, and community members about The Center for Decision-Making Support and best practices in conservatorship. Activities in this project include but are not limited to: creating handouts and pamphlets, trainings, and networking events. The Council will use its partnerships to help ensure this project is impactful statewide. This project has a proposed budget of \$55,000. After presenting this overview, Lisa Primm left the virtual meeting so that Council members could discuss. **The Executive Committee recommended funding this project, not to exceed a total cost of \$55,000. Since this motion is made by a committee, no second is needed. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Budget/Operations Report**

Lynette Porter, Deputy Director, provided an update on federal budget allotments:

- FY20 has been fully obligated in July continuation contracts
- FY21 had a current unobligated balance of \$64,929. This includes obligation of the above Decision-Making Support contract.
- In September, the Council received additional funds from the Puerto Rico allotment, totaling \$34,078. This brings the total unobligated funding in the FY21 award to \$99,007.

The Council recently completed several operational reports that are required by federal and state entities. These include end of fiscal year requirements, contract monitoring, the Five-Year State Plan, Title VI Plan, and an annual secretary of state records report.

Lynette also highlighted an email sent to members dated September 22, 2021 which included the Council Member Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policies. Annually, the Council is required by the

Comptroller of the Treasury to submit signed copies for each Council member. These forms can be sent directly to Mildred Sparkman, Administrative Secretary.

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### **9:35 a.m. Committee Report Outs**

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*Minutes from committees are attached to these minutes.*

- Leadership Development Committee (Lisa Johnson, Chair)
- Public Policy Committee (Lesley Guilaran, Chair)
- Communications Committee (Tatum Fowler, Chair)

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### **9:50 a.m. Break**

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### **10:10 a.m. Comprehensive Review & Analysis**

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Lauren Percy, Director of Public Policy, shared an overview of the Council's Comprehensive Review and Analysis (CR&A). This report is completed every five years as a part of the required Five-Year State Plan that Councils submit to the U.S. Administration on Community Living. There are several components of the report, including a survey of state agencies. The purpose of the survey of state agencies is to document all disability services offered by Tennessee's state government for federal reporting purposes. Council interns spent the past 2 years working to collect the required information from state agencies. Then, for the first time, the Council created a summary of the results for public use. This public-facing summary is now available on the Council's website (<https://www.tn.gov/cdd/about-the-council/state-plan-and-goals/state-disability-services-snapshot-2019.html>). Lauren Percy shared this website with Council members and shared several key takeaways:

- As of 2019, there are at least 23 state agencies with 154 unique disability-related programs in Tennessee state government. This shows that the system is complex and difficult to navigate.
- The report indicates the breadth and depth of services available in state government. The report itself is not meant to act as a method for finding up to date services; it is a snapshot in time from 2019.
- The Council sees TN Disability Pathfinder as the solution for helping families navigate this complex system. TN Disability Pathfinder has been a long-term investment for the Council and Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. The Council facilitates a leadership team with five other state agencies who are investing in modernizing Pathfinder.

Council members reflected that this broad overview of the disability service systems is key to helping us understand the landscape in Tennessee, and suggested the Council consider updating the state agency survey annually in addition to meeting the required 5-year cycle.

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### **10:30 a.m. Council Members in Action: Changing Spaces Initiative**

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Council members Chrissy Hood, Roddey Coe, and Alison Bynum shared how their work has grown this initiative from the local level. The Council shared a video interview with Chrissy about how her role as a Council member has helped to amplify her voice in advocating for adult sized changing tables in more places. Roddey Coe highlighted the partnership between Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee and the

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Chattanooga Aquarium for their work to get an adult-size table installed at the aquarium. Alison Bynum shared how she was able to turn information conversations in her community into actionable next steps, thanks to the work Chrissy and Roddey were doing in their community.

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**10:45 a.m. Council Members in Action: Precious Cargo Act**

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Representative Brandon Ogles presented Council member at-large Martez Williams with a framed copy of the legislation that Martez helped to pass. Martez's advocacy efforts connected him to Representative Ogles' work on the Precious Cargo Act, which identifies individuals who have difficulties communicating with law enforcement officials.

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**11:00 a.m. Wrap Up**

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Tecia reminded members to complete the evaluation form this week which will be e-mailed immediately following the meeting. The 2022 meeting dates were shared with the members:

- Council Meeting: **Friday, February 25, 2022**
- Council Meeting: **Friday, April 29, 2022**
- Council Meeting: **Friday, September 16, 2022**
- Council Retreat: **Thursday & Friday, November 3-4, 2022**

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**11:10 a.m. Public Comment**

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Visitors to the Council meeting were invited to make public comment.

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**11:15 a.m. Adjournment**

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**A motion for adjournment was made by Roddey Coe and seconded by Sarah Cripps. The motion carried and the Council meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.** The next Council meeting will take place on November 4, 2021.

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## Upcoming Meeting Dates

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**2021 Council Meeting Dates**

- Council Retreat: November 4-5, 2021

  
Respectfully submitted by: Ashley Edwards, Executive Assistant

  
Approved by: Wanda Willis, Executive Director



## Council Leadership Development Committee

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Location: Zoom Meeting  
Date: Friday, September 17, 2021  
Time: 11:10 A.M. CDT

**Present:** Lisa Johnson, Alison Bynum, Ryan Durham, Alicia Hall, Carrie Brna (Dept. of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities), Alison Gauld (Dept. of Education), Mandy Johnson (Dept. of Human Resources, Vocational Rehabilitation), and Bruce Keisling (UT Center for Developmental Disabilities)

**Absent:** Jody Cheek, Brigham Scallion, Mark Liverman (Dept. of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services)

**Staff:** Cathlyn Smith, Alicia Cone, Lynette Porter

**Guests:** Sharon Stout

### 1) **Call to Order/Introductions/Agenda**

- After ascertaining there was a quorum (50% of Committee members), the committee meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. CDT.
- Consent agenda – The agenda for the meeting was shared. Mandy Johnson moved to approve the agenda. Alison Gauld seconded. Approved.

### 2) **FY21 year-end review [45 mins.] – Goal 1– Cathlyn Smith/Alicia Cone**

- An end of year PowerPoint was presented along with an infographic to the Leadership Development committee by Cathlyn Smith, Director of Leadership Development. Cathlyn highlighted accomplishments from each of the goal's eight objectives. This included reviewing activities completed, presenting the results of evaluation data collected and analyzed, and sharing success stories from participants.
- Discussion of FY21 Progress Made:  
Cathlyn Smith and Dr. Alicia Cone, Director of Program Operations, then facilitated a discussion among committee members in order to determine what went well, and where opportunities for improvement existed.

#### What worked:

- The virtual model: it seems beneficial to participants, we were able to keep on keeping on
- Transitioned to a virtual platform, but retained the core of the program and kept people engaged



- Nice to hear about Partners who went on to other leadership roles
- Partners continues to be a superstar to our leadership programming;
- Participation and engagement looked good, even in light of the pandemic, which speaks to the flexibility of our programs;
- A real plus that while other state agency programs saw disengagement, our programs did not.

#### Areas to improve

- Partners - Could we serve more people if we expanded Partners to on-line format? Can we expand somehow, and still have programmatic integrity??
  - All programs – Are there ways to improve our virtual outreach and reach rural and East TN? Great way to reduce expenses and allow more people to take advantage.
  - Scholarship Fund - Continue to think about branding and marketing the Scholarship fund, we need to increase awareness of its availability. Maybe the Comms team could put together an outreach package for Scholarship Fund and other state agencies can help with that outreach plan.
  - LAEDS – Can we shift and connect it to the state as a model employer...tie it to building the model? Maybe look at barriers to address that issue. Partner with agencies that we want people attending. Specifically, with LAEDS, what is missing from the virtual platform is the networking aspect of it. The more we use virtual platforms, the more we need to create that networking space.
- Determination of progress:
    - **Are we on track with the state plan?** (Yes/No Vote) – **Yes!** 9 out of 9 positives (8 out of 9 thumbs up and one heart!)
    - **Did we make progress on Goal 1 -Developing Leaders?** (Yes/No Vote) – **Yes!**

### 3) **FY22 Leadership Development plan [15 mins.] – Cathlyn Smith**

Cathlyn Smith updated the Committee on program plans for FY22.

- Partners in Policymaking began with 26 new participants on Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>, with 2 sessions per month, through April 2022. The sessions will be virtual for the rest of the calendar year.
- Youth TECH Camp – Summer 22 is when it is scheduled to take place, with a focus on technology devices.
- Summer 22 – 6 course series on developing public speaking skills – geared toward self-advocates – virtual curriculum. This series is adaptable to the needs of the participants and was shared by the MD – DSS as a free tool for states to use in outreach to self-advocates.
- AiM – will continue as it has previously. AiM trainers this past year have been able to ask and receive scholarship funding to purchase iPads & accessories to aid with their virtual training needs.



- LAEDS – Will be planning for Year 4 with DOHR to discuss next cohort and be releasing a new video later in the year on LAEDS.
- Scholarship Fund – will continue as it has previously in funding individual and organizational scholarships.

#### 4) **Motion to Adjourn**

***At 11:51 a.m. Bruce Keisling moved for adjournment. Alison Bynum seconded. Approved.***

Prepared by: Alicia A. Cone



## Council Public Policy Committee

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Location: Virtual (Zoom)  
Date: Friday, September 17, 2021  
Time: 11:15 A.M. CDT

**Present:** Lesley Guilaran, Shontie Brown, Roddey Coe, Sarah Cripps, Brent Wiles, Lisa Primm (Disability Rights Tennessee), Jennifer Coleman

**Absent:** Martez Williams, Clancey Hopper, Rose Naccarato (TCCY), Kendra Mitchell (Dept. of Health), TCAD representative

**Staff:** Lauren Percy, Wanda Willis, Lynette Porter

**Visitor:** Dave Griffin

1) **Call to Order**

After ascertaining there was a quorum, Lesley Guilaran, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m. CDT

2) **Consent Agenda**

Lesley Guilaran shared the agenda for the meeting.

3) **Introductions**

Lesley Guilaran facilitated introductions.

4) **FY21 Look Back: Determination of Progress**

Lauren Percy, Director of Public Policy, reviewed a report on Goal 2 outcomes from FY21. Highlights include:

- The launch of the nation's first Center for Decision Making
- The launch of the nation's first Office of Accessible Transportation
- Council members leading legislative initiatives: changing spaces and the Precious Cargo Act
- Exceeded goals in all activities

5) **Council member input: Determination of Progress**

What worked?

- Sarah – liaison with other agencies and having them at the table/buy-in for Pathfinder. This works in all areas – transportation, DCS. Making inroads across different agencies is great.
- Leslie – Tecia and I have been on the SDM Council helping with the website. Increasing the knowledge about decision-making options. Created a fantastic resource that other states can use as a model.



- Lisa – I became very aware of the Council leadership in collaborations. Not just being a collaborator but leading the collaborations.
- Roddey – being able to go to staff as a resource is very helpful for us at the local level.
- Brent – Sycamore Institute work stood out to me because they are a solid group at the State level. Great partnership with a fact-based group.

What can be improved?

- Sarah – the bar is set so high it is difficult.
- Lisa – it's hard, because you've not only done a great job, but you did it during a pandemic. I can't think of anything you haven't done thoughtfully, and gracefully, under adverse conditions.
- Roddey – The dilemma is, people don't have time to do 9 months of PIP for a variety of reasons. I'm not sure this is a policy committee improvement, but the thought process is 1 hour recorded webinars that we could throw on YouTube or the website. Something to build the skills of people who may not be able to attend PIP. Examples: having coffee with a legislator or how changing a law might take 5 years. How to find out who your legislator is.
- Shontie – it's important to maintain the relationship with our legislators. We could have a letter writing session each year. We could have a legislative meet-and-greet day with others who have been through PIP. I write my reminder letter every year around my daughter's birthday.

**Are we on track with the state plan?**

- **Leslie – asked for a vote. Unanimous “yes” from all.**

**Did we make progress on Goal 2 “Impacting Public Policy”.**

- **Leslie – asked for a vote. Unanimous “yes” from all.**

## 6) **Looking Ahead: FY22**

FY22 plan for Goal 2:

- Adult sized changing tables (legislative + local)
- Respite and childcare (executive branch + local)
- Long-term priorities: transportation, employment, education

Leslie – keep on your radar: Special Education teachers. I'm 1 of 10 in my district that has resigned since August. There is a transportation crisis and a teacher shortage. I know our district is not alone.

Sarah – my observation is that respite and childcare are brought to the top in a manner that is urgent like we have never seen before. If a parent falls ill in addition to needing a respite break, Covid has an impact here. We remain in a pandemic. This is very timely.

## 7) **Adjournment**

Prepared by: Lauren Pearcy



## Council Communication Committee

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Location: Virtual: Zoom  
Date: Friday, September 17, 2021  
Time: 11:15 A.M. CDT

**Present:** Tatum Fowler, Chrissy Hood, Tecia Puckett Pryor, Edward Mitchell, Elise McMillan (Vanderbilt Kennedy Center)

**Absent:** Don Watt (TN Housing Development Authority), Shannon Nehus (TennCare, Long Term Services and Supports)

**Staff:** Jolene Sharp, Emma Shouse Garton, JoEllen Fowler

**Guests:**

### 1) **Call to Order**

After ascertaining there was a quorum, Tatum Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.

### 2) **Consent Agenda: Approve today's Communication Committee Agenda**

Tatum Fowler shared the agenda for the meeting. *Mr. Fowler called for motion to approve the consent agenda. Edward Mitchell motioned to approve. Elise McMillan seconded.*

### 3) **FY21 Overview**

Emma Shouse Garton, Public Information Specialist, shared an overview of the key metrics for Goal 3 of the Council state plan for FY21. Items discussed included:

- N&R Newspaper insert and video contract
- Evaluation of Pathfinder by Dr. Erik Carter
- Communications outreach at a glance
- Highlights from Council E-News, Social Media, Publications, Press/Media, and other Council Communications activities
- TN Disability Pathfinder

The Council saw significant growth in website visits, largely driven by COVID information gathered there. Emma Shouse Garton and Jolene Sharp highlighted major areas of work that will be continued into new fiscal year.

Mr. Fowler asked if we have any data on what ways of communicating about vaccines are effective. There is some good data and research being done that will inform our work – need to use empathy, understanding paradigms people use to think about vaccines, etc. This work will continue this year as the Council rolls out more targeted communications projects focused on vaccine hesitancy and promoting awareness of in-home vaccine opportunities for people with



disabilities and seniors.

During the discussion, Council members highlighted areas of strength and opportunities for improvement with the goal. Namely:

What worked?

- Feedback from families that they appreciated the plain language vaccine information, in bite-size posts (FAQ series). Great feedback about the newspaper insert; it reached people we wouldn't have otherwise, including people who don't have internet access. Chrissy Hood gets a lot of requests for help from people. She refers them to Pathfinder and people report back that they have a good experience. Staff and members are reaching a lot of people from behind the scenes, helping to problem solve individual situations.
- Tecia Puckett Pryor- we made a ton of progress. COVID info was a great resource during this uncertain time. Quite a few people from her community are following the Council on social media.
- Elise McMillan- we love that we know Council information is being used because of how we are tracking engagement. Supported decision-making video with Will and Lauren received many compliments [released in FY22]. Council puts out quality work.

What could be better?

- Edward Mitchell - Metadata - we are able to track the statistics and should keep building on that. Using LinkedIn to connect with more professionals, politicians.
- Sled hockey teams- connect with Nashville Sled Preds about what they have done around vaccines, especially on the heels of the Paralympics.
- Branding & messaging - Suggested a universal, Council-branded digital background for members and staff to use in virtual meeting. It stays in people's minds, keeping the Council in forefront.

Having heard this overview and Council member discussion, the committee chair posed the question to the committee: Has the Council made adequate progress toward **Goal 3: Informing & Educating Stakeholders** for FY21? 5 said yes; 0 said no.

#### 4) **FY22 Communications Plan**

Jolene Sharp, Chief Public Information Office, shared the communications plan for 2022 to get feedback from members. She explained that we set communications goals internally on the state fiscal year (began in July), but the new 5-year state plan begins in October (beginning of federal fiscal year). FY 22 Guiding Goals:

- Plain language culture change
- Cultural diversity and equity
- Promoting Pathfinder



We want to broaden the impact of our plain language work by engaging with other state agencies and supporting their efforts to improve use of plain language. She reviewed the top priorities for each platform and noted we plan to expand use of videos.

Emma sent the presentation documents to committee members.

5) **Adjournment**

***At 11:59 a.m., Tatum Fowler adjourned the meeting.***

*Tatum called for a motion to adjourn. Elise McMillan moved for adjournment. Chrissy Hood seconded.*

Prepared by: JoEllen Fowler, Office Resources Manager