



**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CITIZENS (GACEC)
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING- ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT
9:00AM, October 8, 2022
ZOOM MEETING**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Al Cavalier, Nancy Cordrey, Matt Denn, Bill Doolittle, Karen Eller, Ann Fisher, Cory Gilden, Tika Hartsock, Jessica Heesh-Mensack, Molly Merrill, Beth Mineo, Maria Olivere, Trenee Parker, Erika Powell, Jennifer Pulcinella, Stefanie Ramirez on behalf of Laura Waterland, Brenné Shepperson, Meedra Surratte, Erik Warner

OTHERS PRESENT: Dale Matusevich/Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), Barbara Mazza/DDOE, Susan Veenema/DDOE, and George Tilson/Career & Workforce Development Consultant/George Washington University

STAFF PRESENT: Pam Weir/ Executive Director, Kathie Cherry/Office Manager, Lacie Spence/Administrative Coordinator

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kristina Horton, Genesis Johnson, Thomas Keeton, Jill Scannell and Lindsay Williamson.

Chairperson Ann Fisher called the general membership meeting to order at 9:08am. It was announced that a quorum was present. Bill Doolittle **made a motion** to accept the October agenda with flexibility. Erik Warner **seconded the motion**, and the **motion was unanimously approved**. Erik Warner **made a motion** to approve the September meeting minutes with Tika Hartsock **seconding the motion**. The **motion passed unanimously**. Bill Doolittle **made a motion** to approve the August financial report, with Erik Warner **seconding the motion**. The **motion passed unanimously**. There was discussion on the proposed meeting dates for the upcoming year. The November 2023 meeting date was changed from November 21, 2023, to November 14, 2023. Council explained what the two-day retreat experience was like in the past and debated whether it would be better to go back to the two-day format. Bill Doolittle **made a motion to approve** attempting to plan a two-day retreat next year on October 6 and 7, with a backup date of October 13 and 14, 2023. Erik Warner **seconded the motion**. The motion was **approved** with Molly Merrill abstaining.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment during the meeting.

DISABILITY HISTORY AND AWARENESS MONTH

Chairperson, Ann Fisher acknowledged that October is Disability History and Awareness Month (DHAM). Kathie Cherry added that she will be creating weekly newsletters and that GACEC will be holding its Annual Poster Contest. Information is being disseminated to all public, private and charter schools. Ann Fisher encouraged all members who have not already seen it to go on YouTube and view “Boundless, A Musical Journey” and share it with others.

Pam Weir announced that GACEC staff have been in communication with Senator Coons and have had opportunities to work with him and his team. Pam mentioned that the *Front of the Class* videos are now complete. Erik Warner is featured in some of the videos. They will be ready for viewing on the DeIDHub website. Erik Warner added that promoting the DeIDHub website is imperative.

Pam hopes to work with the ACLU and the League of Women Voters to provide trainings to learn more about legislation. Pam would like to work with the Disabilities Law Program (DLP) to promote voter disability rights and have legislators participate. The State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) has created a coalition for voters with disabilities that Pam will be joining. Pam explained that she and Kathie met with Joanne Kingsley from DLP and they are putting together a presentation about rights for voters with disabilities. In the coming year Pam plans on working with Joanne to put events together to share information. Matt Denn strongly suggested setting up a meeting in November or December with legislators who have a particular interest in special education issues, (e.g., Representative Heffernan, Representative Hensley, and Senator Poore-if they are re-elected). It would be very helpful to hear what they think priorities and opportunities are for the next session. Often, the Council’s input is given at the very end of the process. They could invite their colleagues. Pam appreciated Matt’s input.

Pam added that she has been working with the Office of Childcare Licensing (OCCL) to share information about Disability History and Awareness Month. Pam asked if there were any other DHAM topics that Council would like to highlight. Bill Doolittle would like Council to investigate emergency plans and how we handle emergency evacuations for individuals with disabilities. Pam replied that she will reach out to the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) to see what they have in place. Kathie has information on this topic that she will send out to Council. Pam asked Council how they would like to receive this type of information. Some suggestions were to create a spreadsheet or google doc and using Microsoft Teams.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no committee reports for this month

CHAIR REPORT

Ann encouraged members who have not already done so to complete their Biographical Sketches. Ann presented Terri Hancharick with a tribute from the Governor’s office in appreciation of all her dedicated years of service. Ann announced absent members and guests.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Pam reminded Council that the celebration for Wendy Strauss for her retirement and appointment to the President's Council for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID) will be held next Saturday from 1:00-3:00pm at Massey Station. Pam encouraged members to log into their Delaware.gov email addresses and log into Microsoft Teams so we can start sharing information through that platform. She advised Council to put an outgoing message on their state email, so people know to continue contacting them through their usual email address. Bill Doolittle **made a motion** to switch to Microsoft Teams for GACEC business on January 1, 2023, or when all technical barriers are addressed (whichever is later). Erik Warner **seconded the motion**. Molly asked if technical issues are something will be resolved or if it will be an ongoing issue. Pam answered that we are looking into getting funding for devices that can be lent out. GACEC staff is committed to providing ongoing technical support and working with the Department of Technology and Information (DTI) to ensure members have access to Teams. Ann Fisher suggested sending a high priority message for those who have not been able to connect to Teams to let staff know. This way we can get a grasp of who is having technical difficulties and what the issues are. The **motion was amended** to set a deadline of December 1, 2023, for members to respond to GACEC staff to let them know if they are not able to log into Microsoft Teams so technical issues can be identified. The **motion passed** with Tika Hartssock abstaining.

2022-2023 COUNCIL GOALS

There was extensive discussion regarding the draft of the 2022-2023 Council goals. Erika Powell made a **motion to approve** the 2022-2023 Council goals as amended. Erik Warner **seconded the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously. Once each Committee's goals are completed, staff will compile them and ensure that all Council goals are covered within the committee goals.

Council members broke out into their individual committees and adjourned once they were finished.