



**Texas State Independent  
Living Council**  
**Quarterly Meeting, Virtual**  
Held Virtually, Via Zoom



**Thursday, March 2, 2023**

**Opening:**

The Texas State Independent Living Council (SILC) Quarterly Meeting was brought to order at 9:08 a.m. by April Pollreisz, Board Chair.

**Present:**

**Members in Attendance:**

April Pollreisz, Erik Dally, Heisha Freeman, David Lunt, Joe Rogers, Michael Garrett, Melva Henderson, Jan McSorley, Patrick Sturdivant, Tiffany Walker, Dana McGrath (HHSC), Bonnie Notargiacomo (TWC).

**Members Not in Attendance:**

Hunter Adkins, Debra Medellin (TxDOT)

**Others in Attendance:**

Todd Mitchell (HHSC), Jackie Pacha (BVCIL), Eva Storey, Texas SILC Interim Executive Director, and Texas SILC staff: Sarah Gernsbacher, Christina

Goebel, Pete Salazar, Pamela Clark, Alan Phillips, and Victor Castillo.

### **New SILC Council Introductions:**

- Pollreisz introduced new Council members: Dana McGrath, HHSC ex officio, Tiffany Walker, and Patrick Sturdivant.

### **Staff Introductions:**

- Storey, Interim Executive Director, introduced: Christina Goebel, Executive Administrative Assistant; Pete Salazar, Policy Specialist; Pamela Clark, Project Specialist; Alan Phillips, Financial Procurement Officer; Victor Castillo, Financial Director; Sarah Gernsbacher, Project Director.

### **Open Discussion and Public Comments:**

- Storey and Councilmen gave various stories as it related to the success of individuals achieving milestones in the community, the need for housing, a person with a disability opening up a physical community center, and consumers communicating their needs and desires, sharing youth town hall meetings, and transitioning efforts for high school students.

Public Comments made by:

- April Pollreisz – Board Chair

- Eva Storey - Executive Interim Director
- Bonnie Notargiacomo - Ex-Officio (TWC)
- Michael Garrett - Council Member
- Heisha Freeman - Secretary
- Jan McSorley - Council Member
- David Lunt – Treasurer
- Sarah Gernsbacher – Project Director

### **Approval of the Agenda and Minutes:**

- The October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting agenda was reviewed. Garrett approved the meeting, and Freeman seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- The October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 meeting agenda was reviewed. McSorley made the motion to approve; Garrett seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- The October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 meeting agenda was reviewed. Lunt approved the motion for the agenda, McSorley seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### **Vice Chair Election:**

- Freeman nominated Erick Dally for Vice Chair for the SILC. Council moved forward with a verbal vote; Garrett motioned for the closure of nominations and for Erik Dally for Vice Chair.

Sorley seconded the motion. The motion passed and Erik Dally was named Vice Chair for the SILC.

### **The Texas SILC Organizational Chart**

- Changes will need to be made to the organizational chart to add the new Vice Chair. Freeman motioned to pass on approving the chart and Garrett seconded. The motion passed.

### **Executive Director's Report:**

- Storey presented the Executive Director's Report to Council, including an overview of staff activities and priorities since she was hired.

### **Project Update: Public Health Workforce Fund:**

- Clark presented on this project. The goal is to develop a training module for Centers of Independent Living across the state of Texas on the needs to increase access to Covid-19 testing, vaccines, education, and training. The project now has a Project Advisory Committee and had scheduled its first meeting.

### **Project Update: PAL and OVW**

Gernsbacher presented on the PAL and OVW projects.

- The PAL project is Peer Assistance Leadership, a Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities-funded project. She provided information about the project's collaboration with CILs and the population served.
- Gernsbacher also presented on the Department of Justice/Office of Violence against Women project, Inclusive Services for Survivors in Texas, which creates a foundation between Texas SILC and the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, a statewide organization similar to the Texas SILC. We are working with TAASA to develop a collaboration charter, and then will enter an implementation phase.

### **ILRU Presentation:**

- Jeremy Morris of the ILRU presented on the responsibilities and autonomy of state SILCs.

### **Financial report:**

- Victor Castillo provided information on operations and capital budgeting. A spreadsheet was provided for the Council view.

### **Office Lease Update:**

- Alan Phillips provided information about the SILC lease ending in May and options.

## **State Plan for Independent Living Update:**

- Salazar, SPIL Policy Specialist, updated the Council on the SPIL Amendment and shared Legislative Updates. The life of the amendment will last to September 30th, 2024. The new SPIL cycle will start on October 1st, 2024, covering fiscal years 25 through 27.

## **Project Updates:**

- Christina Goebel and Pamela Clark updated the Council on drafting a proposal for the Rehabilitation Research and Training Grant.

## **Policy and Procedure Updates:**

- As per Policy and Procedure 13.9, the Council reviewed check/cash and receipts processing. Lunt motioned to approved Ms. Storey and Mr. Castillo to have signing privileges on the bank account. Garrett seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- As per Policy and Procedure 13.16, the Council reviewed Texas SILC check signers and credit/debit card holders. Freeman motioned to approve Ms. Storey to have a debit card. Dally seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- New language was proposed for Policy and Procedure Section 16 Travel of the Texas SILC Policy and Procedure Manual. "The Executive Director or the Chair may waive this provision

and exceed (GSA) under extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to, to provide safe and reasonable accommodations. All costs must be reasonable and necessary.” Freeman motioned to adopt the new travel language for exceptions to GSA rates for accommodations. Walker seconded the motion and the motion passed.

### **Committee Appointments:**

- Patrick Sturdivant – Resource Development
- Tiffany Walker - Resource Development
- Erik Dally – Executive, Policies and Procedures, Membership Recruitment
- Heisha Freeman - Policy and Procedures, Membership, Recruitment and Development, Executive Committee (and she requested removal from the Advocacy Committee)

### **Ex Officio Reports:**

- Bonnie Notargiacomo, TWC Ex-Officio, reported on the new VR self-referral portal and new programs for Older Individuals who are Blind. The OIB help line is 512-936-3388. She also shared about the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center, which teaches people how to target the needs surrounding blindness, and Enterprise of Texas, which sets up individuals with vending machines in cafeterias. OIB also offers support

for hearing aids to Centers for Independent Living if the wait list is too long for elder consumers.

- Dana McGrath, HHSC ex officio, shared that the HHSC and the Texas SILC submitted their joint annual program performance report to the Administration for Community Living. HHSC also executed a contract with the Texas SILC to provide fundings for a COVID-19 project discussed earlier. She also cautioned that Medicaid and SNAP participants must redetermine their eligibility.

### **Chair Report:**

- Pollreisz, Board Chair, presented updates, including her time serving as Texas SILC ex officio to the Rehabilitation Council of Texas as a voting and full member. Since she is terming out at the Texas SILC Council, her position will open up at the RTC too and she shared to see if other Council members are interested. She provided an update on her duties and activities in the last quarter.

### **Meeting Adjourned:**

- The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.



Minutes drafted by:

Pamela Clark

**Signed by: X**   
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**Date:** 5/31/2023

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Secretary or Executive Board Member