

## UNAPPROVED MINUTES



Tuesday, September 29, 2020 at 1:00– 4:00 pm  
Videoconference/Teleconference ONLY

**Council Members Present:** Shawnique “Nikki” Cotton (Chair), Laura Duval (Treasurer), Scott Lindbloom, Susan Molloy, Audra Paletta (Vice-Chair), Randy Russell (Secretary), Wendy Swager, Paula Seanez, and Eileen Tohonnie.

**Council Members Absent:** Dr. Danita Applewhite, Suann Moore, Joy Johnson-Pearson, and Kristen Mackey (Ex-Officio).

**Staff Present:** Sara Ann Joehnk (Disability Access Educator) and Melissa Ann “Mellie” Santora (State Administrator).

**Public Present:** None.

### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Shawnique Cotton called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm. Welcome and introductions were completed.

### **Public Comment on Agenda Items Only:**

Shawnique Cotton called for public comment. No public comment was received.

### **Approval of Consent Agenda:**

Shawnique Cotton asked if the committee members have all received and read the unapproved meeting minutes from June 3, 2020. Laura Duval indicated the need for an edit to page 4: “Every Arizona Center for Independent Living, expect SMILE in Yuma, has drawn down funding from the CARES Act.” The correction is “Every Arizona Center for Independent Living, except SMILE in Yuma, has drawn down funding from the CARES Act.” Scott Lindbloom moved to approve the June 3, 2020 meeting minutes, as amended. Laura Duval seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor. None were opposed. None abstained. The minutes of June 3, 2020 were approved unanimously.

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### Report of the Treasurer:

Laura Duval reminded the Council that annually AZSILC must review the Part B Funding Distribution, because the SPIL budget is a projected budget. For fiscal year 2020, there are \$65,789.00 in additional Part B funds that must be appropriated. \$15,745.00 are match funds, and will be split 6 ways, in accordance with the IL Network agreement from 2017, that continues throughout the life of the current SPIL. It is proposed that the remaining \$50,044 in Part B Funds be allocated to Diverse Ability Incorporated, to sustain the organization, and grow the Arizona Youth Leadership Initiatives. Scott Lindbloom moved to approve the FFY20 Part B Funding Distribution. Randy Russell seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor. None were opposed. None abstained. The FFY20 Part B Funding Distribution was approved unanimously.

### Report of the Chairperson:

Shawnique "Nikki" Cotton asked Mellie Santora to explain the conditional approval status granted for the new State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) by the Administration for Community Living (ACL). Mellie explained that the new SPIL goes into effect on Thursday, October 1, 2020. The ACL has asked for additional explanation on a few items, and for further detail regarding the relationship between AZSILC and the Designated State Entity (DSE), which is the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (AZRSA). AZSILC has until December 30, 2020 to submit the additional information to ACL. Mellie stated that she is already working on the revision, and will work with AZRSA to get the clarifying information to ACL. Mellie reminded the Council that this is the first year with the new SPIL tool and approval process, and she feels the new tool was very beneficial in developing an excellent SPIL.

Nikki Cotton asked the Council for their thoughts on hosting an in-person Council retreat in late December. Scott Lindbloom stated that he is traveling over the holidays, but he anticipates being available in late December. Wendy Swager stated that she will be out of the country and will not be available for an in person meeting in December. None of the other AZSILC Council and Staff members present stated that they were hesitant to attend an in-person event in December 2020. Sara Ann mentioned that she believes AZSILC has a good plan to mitigate the risks of exposure to COVID-19 since AZSILC would be monitor case rates in Arizona and could cancel or postpone the event if Arizona was to have a significant increase in COVID-19 cases. In addition, AZSILC would be making the event available on the phone and online for those who need greater physical distancing. Mellie Santora stated that she would work on making arrangements for a December Council retreat.

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### **Report of the AZSILC Staff:**

#### State Administrator Report

Mellie Santora, former Director of Innovation, and current State Administrator, presented the State Administrator Report. Mellie reported that seven weeks ago today she had spinal fusion surgery. Due to Sarah Kader's resignation, Mellie returned to work early from medical leave and has spent most of her time on Director of Operation responsibilities and concluding the Partners in Preparedness Summit Series while Sara Ann was also on unplanned medical leave. Mellie worked with Diverse Ability Incorporated to conduct four 5-day virtual youth leadership forums and one 10-day statewide capacity building conference. Mellie stated that the turnout was smaller than previous years, but she believes this is due to uncertainty posed by COVID-19. The forums were successful and those who did participated demonstrated new skills and developed new relationships similar to those who participated in previous in-person youth leadership forums. The elected leadership team represented great diversity in both disability and geography, with one youth from Hopi Nation, and two youth from Tucson being elected.

Mellie thanked the AZSILC Board, Council, and Staff for being resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic and staff changes. She has been grateful that the Personnel Committee and Board have been able to convene several times in order to make time sensitive decisions.

#### Disability Access Educator Report

Sara Ann Joehnk, former Disability Integration Specialist, and current Disability Access Educator, shared the Disability Access Educator Report. Sara Ann thanked Melissa Ann "Mellie" Santora and the AZSILC Board and Council for being supportive and understanding during an unexpected and prolonged absence during August and September 2020. Sara Ann stated that her health has dramatically improved and she is enthusiastic about her return to work which started yesterday, September 28, 2020. She reported that the Partners in Preparedness Summit Series was successful. She organized two workshops for the National Council on Independent Living Conference which had high attendance and great feedback. She regrets that the summer internships concluded without having any in-person meetings, due to COVID-19 precautions. Sara Ann stated that the two interns were a great help during the Partners in Preparedness Summit Series, and she believes they both learned a lot about emergency preparedness from their experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Susan Molloy asked if there are currently only two staff members at AZSILC. Mellie explained there are currently two full-time staff members at AZSILC, and they are looking to hire for a new full-time position this month. In addition, AZSILC is bringing on an Initiative Support Consultant under a one-year contract. Mellie also indicated that there may be another staff position created to coincide with a prospective new contract offered by the Arizona Department of Health Services, for COVID-19 specific work. Susan Molloy asked if there was opportunity to continue to address the needs of people who have environmental sensitivities during COVID-19, since the webinar on this topic that was scheduled to be part of the Partners in Preparedness Summit

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Series was canceled due to Sara Ann's unexpected leave of absence. Sara Ann stated that barriers faced by the multiple chemical sensitivity community will still be included in the Partners in Preparedness Summit Series report and the issue is still an ongoing priority. Scott Lindbloom asked how many individuals attended the first all day Partners in Preparedness Summit Series event. Sara Ann stated she estimated two hundred people, but she would have detailed numbers in the report.

Nikki Cotton stated she anticipated the need for monthly AZSILC Board meetings will decrease when the new hires are comfortable with their job duties. Scott Lindbloom stated that he preferred quarterly meetings and that quarterly meetings were more accessible for individuals who are working. Scott Lindbloom thanked Mellie for doing two jobs these past few months. He stated that having a Council retreat seems important due to the new hires and upcoming changes to the Council membership.

### **Report of the AZSILC Committees:**

Scott Lindbloom expressed his desire to continue to lead the Emergency Preparedness Committee, which has not had a meeting since the last Council meeting on June 3, 2020. Mellie stated that this was anticipated with the high workload during the Partners in Preparedness Summit Series. Mellie indicated that since the Summit Series has been concluded, there will be an Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting scheduled shortly.

Audra Paletta, SPIL Evaluation Committee Chair, read the report made at the last SPIL Evaluation Committee meeting on August 17, 2020. There were no additional questions.

### **Report of the AZSILC Partner Agencies:**

Laura Duval stated there was an IL Network meeting the on September 28, 2020. Four out of five Arizona's Centers for Independent Living were able to attend the IL Network meeting. Ability360 has reopened their Sports and Fitness Center, but other services by Ability360 and the other Centers are being provided virtually. The IL Network meeting participants discussed electronic information gathering and data collection methods and modalities, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Report was provided by Scott Lindbloom. Scott had no new updates to report. Both Scott Lindbloom and Nikki Cotton plan to attend the SRC meeting in November.

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### **Announcements:**

Shawnique Cotton called for announcements. There were no announcements at this time.

### **Call to the Public:**

AZSILC Chair, Shawnique Cotton, called for public comment. No public comment was received.

### **Adjournment:**

Scott Lindbloom moved to adjourn the meeting. Randy Russell seconded the motion. Shawnique Cotton adjourned the meeting at 2:21 pm.