

MINUTES

Senior & Disabled Services
Disability Services Advisory Council
S&DS' Eugene Office, Luczycki Conf, Rm. – 1015 Willamette, Eugene

September 23, 2005

Members Present: L.M. Reese, Chair; Dan Arkin, Kathy Jenness, Ed Necker, Kevin O'Reilly, Darlene Puls, Michael Thomas, and Laura Weil.

Members Excused: Luther Beecroft, Joann Scheck.

C.R. Member Present: James Dean, Maureen Wadst.

Staff Present: Patti Little, Kay Metzger, Ted Stevens.

1. CALL TO ORDER

L.M. Reese, DSAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M. He welcomed newly appointed members to the Council. Persons present introduced themselves.

2. CONSIDERATION OF THE MEETING AGENDA

Several members requested permission to give reports under Agenda Item #7, Other Reports and Announcements.

Action: Without objection, the Chair ruled that the agenda for the meeting be approved, as presented, with the understanding that several reports will be presented under Agenda Item #7.

3. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 2005 DSAC MEETING

Motion: Moved by Ed Necker, and seconded by Kathy Jenness, to approve the Minutes of the June 2005 DSAC meeting, as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

4. LCOG REPORTS

a. Senior Services Advisory Council

Ted Stevens reported on the August Senior Services Advisory Council meeting. He shared that the Council organized itself for Program Year 2005-06, appointing members to the Standing Committees and Jane Boren as liaison to the DSAC. Regarding the other items considered at the SSAC August meeting, Ted reported that all of them will be addressed by the DSAC later in this meeting.

b. LCOG Board of Directors

Ted Stevens informed the Council that the Board met had twice since its June meeting. He explained that the Board's July meeting was the body's annual planning meeting. Its purpose was to identify and prioritize the topics to which it will give special attention during the balance of 2005 and throughout 2006. Ted noted that none of the topic which emerged from the session dealt with human services. Ted also shared that the Board held its September meeting the day before the DSAC meeting. At that meeting, staff presented an end-of-session legislative report and shared information on upcoming program and staffing reductions.

5. ACTION ITEM – Organization of the Council for 2005-06

a. Appointments to Standing Committees

L.M. Reese reviewed the process followed to develop the recommended appointments to Standing Committees. Next, he presented his recommendations for appointments. Discussion followed. Ted Stevens was asked if there were sufficient members for each committee. He responded that the Nominating Committee could use additional members, if people wished to volunteer. After some discussion of this matter, two members expressed a willingness to serve on this committee, Laura Weil and L.M. Reese.

On another matter, Dan Arkin noted the low attendance of new members. He opined that the long summer break may have dampened their interest in membership on the Council. This observation prompted an extended discussion. Ted Stevens offered two comments: 1) S&DS provided an orientation to newly appointed Advisory Council members during the summer, so the absence of contact with new members was not as long as it may have seemed, and 2) the selection of the membership year defined in the Council's Bylaws is open to

modification, based on local needs. Regarding this latter point, he suggested that the Council think strategically prior to amending its operating year. Specifically, he urged it to pay attention to the meeting schedule of the LCOG Board of Directors so as to minimize the lag time between the appointment of new members and their engagement in the work of the Council. (The meeting schedule of the Board is as follows: January – annual appreciation dinner [no routine business addressed]; February [4th Thursday] – regular business meeting; April [4th Thursday] – regular business meeting; June [4th Thursday] – regular business meeting; July – annual planning meeting [no routine business addressed]; September [4th Thursday] – regular business meeting; and December [2nd Thursday] – regular business meeting.)

Motion: Moved by Ed Necker, and seconded by Kathy Jenness, to confirm the appointments, as amended by the additions to the Nominating Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Given this action, the following DSAC members shall serve on the following Standing Committees during Program Year 2005-06:

Advocacy Committee:

- Core Members: Dan Arkin, Tim Baxter, Kathy Jenness, Wanda Jo Lang, and Ed Necker.
- At Large Members: Mary Otten, Leslie Relle, and Maureen Wadst.

Long Term Care Committee: Darlene Puls, Joann Scheck, and Laura Weil.

Nominating Committee: Dan Arkin, Kathy Jenness, Ed Necker, L.M. Reese, and Laura Weil.

Planning and Budget Committee: James Dean (CR), Terry Parker (CR), L.M. Reese, and Kevin O'Reilly.

b. Appointment of a Liaison to the Senior Services Advisory Council

L.M. Reese asked for a member to volunteer to serve as liaison to the Senior Service Advisory Council. Darlene Puls volunteered.

Action: L.M. Reese, DSAC Chair, appointed Darlene Puls to serve as DSAC liaison to the Senior Services Advisory Council for Program Year 2005-06.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Chair's Report

DSAC Chair, L.M. Reese, reported on LTD's efforts to sign up seniors and people with disabilities for participation in its new "EZ Access" program. As part of this report, he provided details on eligibility for participation in the program and reported on the assistance he provided to LTD during its promotion campaign at the Lane County Fair. In response to a question, L.M. stated that over 2,000 people have already signed up for EZ Access benefits.

b. Committee Reports

(1) Advocacy Committee

Ted Stevens reported on September 16th meeting of the Advocacy Committee. He stated that the Committee decided to cancel the Legislative Wrap-up Event scheduled for September 29th due to the limited availability of State Legislators. Notwithstanding this decision, Ted reported that the Committee plans to continue to hold four "conversations" with smaller groups of legislators between October 2005 and February 2006. Each "conversation" will occur during a portion of the Committee's regularly scheduled monthly meeting. Only three legislators will be invited to each meeting, the senator and the two representatives from the senator's district. The length of each meeting will be expanded to two hours, with 30 minutes devoted to regular business and 90 minutes allocated to a somewhat structured conversation with the legislative guests. The first such meeting will be held on Friday, October 21, in Florence. Senator Verger and Representatives Roblan and Brown will be invited. Committee members plan to journey to Florence in the morning, have lunch in Old Town, and attend the Committee meeting from 1:30 – 3:30 PM, at the Florence Events Center.

At the conclusion of this report, an invitation to attend the October Advocacy Committee meeting was extended to other DSAC members. L.M. Reese and Darlene Puls expressed an interest in attending. With two additional wheelchair users expressing interest in attending the meeting, the conversation turned to the means of transporting members to Florence. Ed Necker reported that he had spoken with Terry Parker, LTD, about the possibility of using a RideSource van to transport people to Florence. According to Ed, Terry stated that it was not possible, since RideSource would be taking away revenue-generating business from the private sector. Several members of the Council expressed displeasure

with the position expressed by Terry. Dan Arkin suggested that the issue of securing transportation for DSAC members to attend out-of-area meetings be a topic for a future DSAC meeting.

(2) Long Term Care Committee

Laura Weil reported on the September meeting of the Long Term Care Committee. She shared that she was elected to serve as Chair of the Committee for Program Year 2005-06. In addition, she reported that the Committee reviewed and accepted July Customer Service Reports and discussed Committee priorities for the program year. Regarding this latter item, she stated that the Committee wishes to focus on staff reductions at S&DS and their impact on client services, with the priority being the minimization of their affect on clients. To this end, the Committee plans to meet at S&DS' Eugene office in October, tour the facility, and begin to study how people access and move through the agency's services system.

c. Staff Reports

(1) Legislative Report

Ted Stevens reviewed in some detail a four page "End of Session" Status Report. He responded to numerous questions posed by Council members.

(2) Update on Medicare Part D

Ted Stevens described recent developments regarding the implementation of Medicare Part D. He talked about the two-part decision process for most people with disabilities who are Medicare beneficiaries (whether to enroll, as participation is voluntary and, if one decides to enroll, which prescription drug plan to select). Regarding people with disabilities who are enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid ("dual eligibles"), Ted reported that these individuals will be "auto-enrolled" in Part D and "auto-enrolled" in a prescription drug plan. With funding provided by the State Legislature, S&DS will hire temporary staff to assist these individuals determine whether the plan to which they are assigned is a good fit for them and, if not, to assist them in switching to a more appropriate plan. Ted also stated that S&DS is working with other agencies and organizations in the community on plans for the recruitment and training of volunteers to assist general Medicare beneficiaries learn about their options for drug coverage under Part D. He asked DSAC members to consider volunteering to assist with this enterprise. L.M. Reese expressed interest and asked for information on a training session for

staff and volunteers being held on November 1st.

(3) Network of Care Project

Information on this project was provided to DSAC members in advance of the meeting. During the meeting, Ted Stevens provided a brief overview of the project. He stated that the launch of Oregon's Network of Care web site is scheduled for late October. Once the web site is operational, he stated that it would be desirable for it to be "showcased" to the Council at an upcoming meeting.

(4) S&DS' 2004-05 Annual Report

Ted Stevens announced that copies of the division's 2004-05 Annual Report were distributed to members in advance of the meeting. He welcomed questions. None were posed.

(5) Service and Personnel Cuts

Ted Stevens distributed a two page memo initially shared with members of the LCOG Board entitled, "S&DS' Funding, Personnel, and Service Cut-backs." He reviewed its contents with the Council, focusing on three things:

- The termination of the General Assistance Program on September 30, 2005,
- The elimination of Disability Employment Initiative services on the same day, and
- The impact of static caseloads on the funding of S&DS staff engaged in the provision of public assistance services (e.g., Medicaid, Food Stamps, etc.) to seniors and people with disabilities.

Given these factors, Ted announced that S&DS anticipates a 15% cut in its funding for staff. In response, Ted reported that the agency has instituted a hiring freeze, promoted early retirement and job-sharing opportunities, and plans to lay-off ten employees at the end of October. In preparation for reduced staffing, Ted also shared that the agency will modify its public service hours in its Eugene Office on October 1st, moving from being open to the public 7.5 hours/day to 6 hours/day (9:00 AM to 12 Noon, and 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM). He explained that this switch will give employees an additional 1.5 hours per day to attend to the completion of paper and computer work.

Finally, Ted announced that S&DS is about to begin recruiting for several temporary employees who will assist clients with the implementation of Medicare

Part D. He stated that regular S&DS employees who are being laid off will be given first consideration for these temporary jobs.

7. Other Information

a. Brain Injury Walk-a-Thon

Ed Necker announced a fund raising event, the “Brain Injury Walk-a-Thon,” scheduled for September 24, 11 AM – 2 PM, at Hilyard Community Center, Eugene. He stated that the proceeds of the event will benefit ShelterCare’s Uhlhorn Program. He urged DSAC members to participate and/or donate.

b. October is Disability Awareness Month

Patti Little announced that October is designated Disability Awareness Month and, in response, S&DS has been invited by Lane County to supply disability relating information for posting on an informational bulletin board located in the basement of the Lane County Public Services Building. Patti asked DSAC members for help organizing materials to post on the board. A couple members stated that they would furnish materials to Patti.

c. Dan Arkin’s Announcements

(1) **DHS Leadership:** Dan observed that a number of key leadership positions at the Oregon Department of Human Services are occupied by interim appointees. He lamented this situation, but opined that it may not improve until after the 2006 gubernatorial election.

(2) **Region 2050 Study:** Dan stated that he has become involved in the local long range planning study known as “Region 2050.” He reported that he is endeavoring to get those involved to focus on disability access issues.

(3) **Peace Prize Monument at Alton Baker Part:** Dan reported that he continues to be involved in the planning for a Nobel Peace Prize monument at Alton Baker Park, Eugene. He stated that his interest is assuring that the monument is disability friendly.

(4) **University of Oregon Disability Studies Program:** Dan reported that a group is already beginning to plan next spring’s Disability and Arts Festival.

(5) Accessibility to Medical Services for People with Disabilities: Dan observed that the local medical and dental communities are not working very hard on accessibility issues for people with disabilities. He stated that this could be an area for future work by the DSAC.

(6) United Way's 100% Health Care Access: Dan reported that he continues to participate in the Prevention and Chronic Conditions work group of United Way's 100% Health Care Access project. He opined that this work group is still off-target regarding chronic disease management issues.

(7) Politics: Dan observed that the political campaign season for 2006 is just around the corner. He encouraged DSAC members, on their own time, to support candidates who are disability friendly.

7. REMINDER OF NEXT MEETING/ADJOURN

L.M. Reese reminded members that the next DSAC meeting will be held one week earlier than normal, on Friday, November 4, 2005, 1:30 – 3:00 P.M., at S&DS' Eugene Office. The meeting adjourned at 3:10 P.M.

(Recorded by Ted Stevens)

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