



ARIZONA

GOVERNOR'S

COUNCIL ON SPINAL
AND HEAD INJURIES

MISSION

Increase awareness and understanding of traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, strengthen services and supports for those who have sustained injuries and their families and promote prevention to enhance quality of life.

Governor's Council on Spinal and Head Injuries
Full Council Virtual Meeting
Wednesday, September 9, 2020
Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Voting Council members present: Tammy Abbott-Thiel, Kristen Bishop, Georg Hishaw, Michael Lavoie, Jonathan Lifshitz, Tara Pepiton, James Sieffert, Evan Werk, Kay Wing, Keith Watt, Oliver Bryan

Voting Council Members Not Present: Benjamin Gross; James Ledgewood

Non-voting Council members: Kristen Mackey, Tim Flood

RSA Staff and contractors: Ann Tarpy, Sylvia Aguilar, Jesse Deaver, Carrie Collins-Fidell, Shannon Carter, Carol Lopinski, Brandi Coffland, Lindsey Powers, Tiffany Wilkinson

Guest Speaker: Matthias Linke

Minutes

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Dr. Jonathan Lifshitz, Acting Chair, opened the virtual meeting at 1:02. He welcomed the participants and invited the Council members, staff, and guests to introduce themselves.

2. Vote to approval draft Minutes of meeting on May 13, 2020.

The draft Minutes from the meeting on 5/13/2020 were made available to the Council members for review prior to the meeting. Acting Chair Lifshitz called for a vote to approve the draft Minutes; Keith Watt so moved, and Tammy Abbott-Thiel seconded the motion. Unanimous approval. Ms. Tarpy will change footer in the Minutes from draft to approved with the date and have them posted on the Council website.

3. Updates on Council budget information for SFY 2020 and SFY 2021

Sylvia Aguilar, Financial Analyst in the Finance and Budget Operations Administration (FBOA), provided an update on the status of the finalizing the SFY 2020 budget and the proposed budget for FY 2021. Ms. Aguilar advised that FBOA is proposing the Council operate under the same budget in SFY2021 as we did in SFY2020. The only change to the SFY2021 budget is the inclusion of match monies in the Professional and Outside line item for the match for the application for the RFP that should be coming out in early calendar year 2021 from the Federal TBI Program. Ms. Tarpy shared that it is anticipated that the Federal TBI Program will be putting out an announcement in early calendar 2021 for an RFP for applications for grants. Ms. Tarpy advised that she attended the first of the "listening sessions" offered by the Federal TBI Program and limited information is available to date. Based on what is known to date and from the previous RFPs from the Federal Program, Ms. Tarpy is recommending that the Council anticipate: that the grant amounts would be \$150,000: the awards would be around April 2021; from the SFY 2021 budget, only a match for the fourth (4th) quarter would be required (estimated \$12,500). The Council members discussed with Ms. Tarpy the pros and cons of considering other options for the match. Ms. Tarpy shared that

all of these options could be fully explored with the Council members once the actual RFP becomes available. In the meantime, the Council's approval of the proposed SFY 2021 budget just authorizes the Council to use SHIF dollars for the match for the application, if needed. Ms. Tarpy will keep the Council members advised as information becomes available about the upcoming grant application and include an update for the November 2020 Council meeting. Council members expressed their preference for the grant to cover activities for individuals with brain injuries and spinal cord injuries. Previous grants from the Federal TBI Program has provided funding related to persons with TBI that includes those diagnosed with TBI and SCI. Tara Pepiton motioned to approve the SFY 2021 Budget. Tammy Abbot-Thiel seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Update on the SHIF

Sylvia Aguilar stated the SHIF had decreased by 10% from 2019 to 2020, consistent with information the Courts have provided in annual meetings. Acting Chair Lifshitz inquired whether the decrease could affect the budget. Ms. Tarpy advised that in the prior several years, FBOA has needed to use funds in the Excess Balance to meet the budget. We only have two (2) months of information for SFY 2021 for collections for SHIF so we don't know yet if we are on a trajectory to collect sufficient funds to meet the SFY 2021 budget. FBOA will schedule the annual meeting with the Courts for an update on the projections for our funds source and the factors impacting the collections. If the meeting is able to be scheduled before the November 2020 Council meeting, we will provide a report as well as an update on the status of the collections for SFY 2021.

5. Presentation by Dr. Linke: Insights form working with persons with SCI in the midst of COVID-19 in New York City

Dr. Linke shared a powerpoint presentation with highlights from his time in New York City completing a Spinal Cord Specialty Fellowship at Mount Sinai. His Fellowship ended up being when the COVID-19 pandemic started. He shared their response to the pandemic as well as what he learned about treating patients with SCI diagnosed with COVID-19. He provided important information that Council members and others could use to educate persons with SCI as well as professionals working with them. Dr. Linke discussed that individuals with spinal cord injuries: are a high-risk population for COVID-19; experienced many challenges during the pandemic such as: reduced maintenance of equipment and access to medical supplies; reduced interaction with caregivers and the community; having to decide how and when to interact with others while social distancing and to reach out to virtual support.

6. Reports

- a. RSA Update from RSA Administration and the VR Unit serving clients with TBI and/or SCI

Kristen Mackey, RSA Program Administrator, indicated the State Budget had not been approved, although RSA did not anticipate any budget cuts. Ms. Mackey stated that RSA was in the process of deploying laptops to staff that were teleworking and had distributed cell phones to staff as well. She stated that she had instructed staff to put a hold on closing

client cases due to clients not having the appropriate technology or access to continue their services. Even with the hold, the VR Program was able to exceed their outcome goals for the past quarter. Ms. Mackey advised the State had purchased Zoom for Government. It was determined that this platform was the most accessible platform for blind and visually impaired individuals and individuals that were deaf or hard of hearing. RSA staff had recently received licenses to use this platform and training is being offered.

Council office –

i. Council office updates

1. *Carol Lopinski will discuss her reports at the November meeting. Her Summary Report of the Interviews she conducted with Council members and the A's regarding the impact of COVID-19 is in the Padlet for the members to review. Ms. Lopinski has been working with the Council to review and update their current Strategic Plan. Her preliminary report from the Vision Survey also is provided in the Padlet for review by the Council Members. Ms. Tarpy thanked the Council Members who participated in the Interviews and who responded to the Vision survey. To continue our efforts to gather input from Council Members for reviewing and updating the Council's current Strategic Plan, Ms. Tarpy and Ms. Lopinski have prepared two separate surveys for the Values in the Plan. Those Surveys are in the Padlet if the Council Members want to respond now. Otherwise, Ms. Tarpy will be sending out the Surveys in separate emails over the next four (4) weeks. We do value and appreciate the Council members taking time to share their feedback by responding to the Surveys.*

ii. Contractor Updates

1. BIAAZ

Executive Director, Carrie Collins-Fadell, provided a powerpoint presentation on the variety of ways the BIAAZ was meeting the significant needs of persons with brain injury, their families and caregivers virtually. Staff continue to work virtually and are still providing Resource Facilitation and were taking this time to update materials and the website. Many other educational, support, and outreach events were conducted and are planned. There has been an overwhelmingly positive response. Virtual activities are likely to continue, at least through the end of the fiscal year.

2. AzSCIA

Executive Director, Shannon Carter, stated that they continued to help individuals with social isolation by offering classes via Zoom and activities such as Bingo Nights. Ms. Carter stated

AzSCIA had been awarded a grant that provided funding for special services (e.g. transportation for medical appointments, pick up prescriptions, someone to pick up groceries). As the Association has an accessible van, they were able to provide specialized services. Some of that funding was used to take all kinds of durable medical equipment and supplies from their loan closet and other needed goods to individuals that needed medical equipment. Ms. Carter stated she was contacted by the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation to help develop a grant program for opioid awareness. The Association also has received a grant for this issue as it has become more prevalent during the pandemic.

7. Council member updates and announcements

There were no announcements.

8. Next Scheduled Council Meeting – virtual – November 18, 2020

Acting Chair Lifshitz reminded the Council members of the next scheduled meeting.

9. Call to the public

The call was made, no response.

10. Adjournment

Acting Chair Lifshitz asked for a motion to adjourn. Tammy Abbott-Thiel moved, and Council Member Keith Watt seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 3:48 pm.