



# Council Meeting Minutes

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March 3, 2023

**Council Members Present:**

Kimberly Boyd\*  
Roddey Coe\*  
Kezia Cox\*  
Sarah Cripps\*  
Will Edwards\*  
Alicia Hall\*  
Chrissy Hood\*  
Clancey Hopper\*  
Sarah Miller\*  
Edward Mitchell\*  
Tecia Puckett Pryor\*  
Brigham Scallion\*  
Bliss Welch\*  
Martez Williams\*  
Alison Gauld, Dept. Special Education  
Tiffany Ramsey, Voc. Rehab. Services  
Carrie Brna, Dept. of Intellectual and  
Developmental Disabilities  
Shannon Nehus, TennCare  
Bruce Keisling, UT Center on  
Developmental Disabilities (UTCDD)  
Ben Schwartzman, Vanderbilt Kennedy  
Center  
Ryan Ramsey, Tennessee Commission on  
Aging and Disabilities  
Mark Liverman, Dept. Mental Health &  
Substance Abuse  
Zoe Jamail, Disability Rights TN  
Don Watt, THDA

**Staff Present:**

Lauren Percy  
Lynette Porter  
Alicia Cone  
Cathlyn Smith  
Jolene Sharp  
Emma Shouse Garton  
JoEllen Fowler

**Guests Present:**

Gabriela Mjekiqi (Partners Grad)  
Albert Mjekiqi (Son)

**Council Members Absent:**

Shontie Brown\*  
Alison Bynum\*  
Ryan Durham\*  
Diamond Grigsby\*  
Lisa Johnson\*  
Brent Wiles\*  
Rusette Marcum-Embry,  
Tenn. Commission on  
Children & Youth  
Allie Haynes, TN Rural  
Health Association  
Jacqueline Johnson, Dept.  
of Health

**Staff Absent:**

Ashley Edwards  
Mildred Sparkman

*\*denotes Governor appointed citizen*

## **8:30 a.m. Introductions, Opening & Agenda Review**

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Council Chair, Tecia Puckett Pryor, welcomed everyone and facilitated introductions of members and staff.

Tecia had members and guests introduce themselves to the full Council and share their connection to disability. Tecia then called the meeting to order after ascertaining there was a quorum at 8:50 a.m.

Tecia then reviewed the agenda.

## **8:50 a.m. Business Items**

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### **Approval of September 2022 Minutes and March Meeting Agenda**

The September 2022 Council meeting minutes were emailed to all the Council members prior to March 3, 2023, to give members an opportunity to review before the Council meeting. Tecia asked if there were any amendments to the agenda or September 2022 minutes. Sarah Cripps, Upper Cumberland Development District, provided three edits to the September 2022 minutes. **Sarah Cripps moved to accept the March 3, 2023, agenda and the September 2022 minutes as amended. Roddey Coe seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion carried.**

### **Executive Committee Report**

Tecia Puckett Prior, Council Chair, shared the Council is level funded this year and the Executive Committee voted to continue three contracts with: United Cerebral Palsy of Middle Tennessee for Partners in Policymaking and the Scholarship Fund, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Pathfinder's disability and information referral office, and University of Tennessee Center on Developmental Disabilities for evaluation of our Council's leadership program.

Tecia also reported that for FY24 we will be focusing on celebrating 30 years of the Partners in Policymaking Leadership Institute. The Council will engage Partners graduates to help reflect on the program's history and make improvements to the program in the future.

### **Budget Report**

Lynette Porter, Deputy Director, gave an update on our 2 active federal awards. The FY22 award runs through September 2023 and is fully obligated. The FY23 award was under continuing resolution until February of this year; we have since received our award notice. We are level funded. The award that runs through September 2024 is fully obligated except for approximately \$60,000. She then reported on highlights from our state budget process. The Governor presented the Council's FY24 budget to the legislature in early February. The state budget is the approved operational plan for how we spend our federal dollars. We submitted no requests for additional spending, in line with our federal award status. The Council's state budget is finalized when the legislature passes the state budget.

## **Audit Committee Report**

Audit committee chair Alicia Hall reported that in December, the committee reviewed the documentation of the agency's annual risk assessment and found agency controls to be adequate. The assessment was submitted ahead of the deadline. She reminded the Council and staff of the responsibility to report concerns of fraud, waste, and abuse and that a notice of the process of reporting concerns was sent to members and staff earlier. The notice will also be distributed with the minutes of the meeting.

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## **9:20 a.m. Executive Director Report: Mid-Year Review**

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Lauren Percy, Executive Director, shared updates on the Council's work over the last several months. Since the November retreat, Council members shared questions and feedback on "new and notable" programs that were presented during the meeting. The Council's e-newsletters have included articles on those same programs, including answers to members' outstanding questions.

Lauren also previewed the work of upcoming Council committee meetings. Committees are the primary vehicle for Council members to receive progress report. This will help them be prepared to formally determine progress toward the Council's state plan goals annually. Lauren shared four ways the Council is acting to ensure committees are equipped to make the most of their time together at meetings:

- Materials are sent ahead of the meeting, with the expectation that members are already familiar with the materials when committees meet. This will create more time for discussion during committees.
- Materials are sent in multiple formats. For example, a video was sent to members last week, explaining highlights from the printed materials.
- Report-out activities from committees will become more interactive, offering more time for discussion about each committee's work.
- Committees will start offering ideas to help members engage between meetings. This is in response to feedback from Council members asking for more concrete ways to take action on the Council's work.

Finally, Lauren reported on the vision she has set for this year as the Executive Director. A primary focus will be deepening a team-based approach across work areas – sharing responsibilities across all staff roles. This goes hand-in-hand with a continued focus on connecting as a team, understanding each other's work, and seeing the "big picture" together. Lauren thanked Council members for their support during an unexpected staff vacancy and extended special gratitude to Emma Garton for stepping in to support public policy efforts behind the scenes.

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## **9:45 a.m. Public Policy Report**

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Zoë Jamail, Public Policy Director from Disability Rights Tennessee, presented on key legislation currently in the General Assembly.

**Student Behavior Bills:**

- [SB141/HB127](#) (Sen. Watson, Rep. Greg Martin) - Allows a school resource officer, school security officer, or other law enforcement officer who is trained and certified for completing a behavior intervention training program to use a **mechanical restraint** on a student receiving special education services in an emergency situation. (Note: "mechanical restraint" typically refers to handcuffs.)
- [SB582/HB453](#) (Sen. Pody, Rep. Moody) - Provides that, in addition to criminal penalties, a civil cause of action, i.e., a claim seeking money to reimburse for costs and other damages associated with an injury that is filed in a civil (not criminal) court, exists for an **intentional assault upon educational personnel** by any person on school grounds or in vehicles owned, leased, or under contract by the Local Education Agency and used for transporting students or faculty, even if such assault occurs outside of school hours or school functions.

**Juvenile Justice Bills:**

- [SB1159/HB1029](#) - Notice regarding hearing to transfer juvenile to adult court (Sen. McNally, Randy; Rep. Sexton, Cameron) - Increases the period in which a juvenile and the juvenile's parents must receive notice of a hearing to transfer the juvenile to adult court from 14 days prior to the hearing to 15 days prior to the hearing. Broadly captioned.

**Federal Education Funding:**

- [HB 1249 / SB 1507](#) (Rep. Cameron Sexton, Sen. Bill Powers) – This has been presented as a caption bill. More information will be forthcoming.

**Managed Care organizations:**

- [HB 1215 / SB 1339](#) (Sen. Jack Johnson, Rep. Cameron Sexton) - Prohibits any managed care organization that contracts with the bureau of TennCare to provide medical assistance from providing reimbursement or coverage for a medical procedure if the performance or administration of the procedure is for the purpose of enabling a person to identify with, or live as, a purported identity inconsistent with the person's sex, or treating purported discomfort or distress from a discordance between a person's sex and asserted identity.

Council members engaged in robust discussions about opportunities to educate legislators on the impact of each bill on Tennesseans with disability.

**10:45 a.m. Adjournment to Committee Meetings & Break**

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**12:15 p.m. Lunch**

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**1:15 p.m. Committee Report Outs**

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*Minutes from committees are attached to these minutes.*

- Leadership Development Committee (Lisa Johnson, Chair)
- Public Policy Committee (Sarah Cripps, Chair)
- Communications Committee (Edward Mitchell, Chair)

**1:50 p.m. Wrap Up**

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Tecia Puckett Pryor reminded members to complete the evaluation and travel forms before leaving today, which are in member folders. The next Council meeting will take place on Friday, May 5, 2023, at the Embassy Suites Nashville Airport.

**1:55 p.m. Public Comment**

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Visitors to the Council meeting were invited to make public comment. There was no comment.

**1:58 p.m. Adjournment**

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**A motion for adjournment was made by Roddey Coe and seconded by Chrissy Hood. The motion carried and the Council meeting was adjourned at 1:58 p.m.**