



STATE OF WASHINGTON

GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ISSUES AND EMPLOYMENT

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New Member Orientation – Agenda

March 15, 2023

2:00-4:00 pm

2:00 pm **Welcome, Presenter and Staff Introductions, Housekeeping Information** (10 minutes)
Megan Mason-Todd, Chair, GCDE Membership Subcommittee
Elaine Stefanowicz, GCDE Staff, Program Coordinator

Meeting called to order by Megan at 2pm, said folks could catch up as they joined, and thanked people for joining. She welcomed all and said that Elizabeth and Damiana could not be present. She let folks know that we are adjusting as best we can last minute and pitch in. We are excited. The agenda was reviewed, and it was noted that folks can raise their hands for questions at any time. People were asked to state their name before speaking for the accommodations providers. Emily let Elaine know that she can mute folks as the host if needed, and reminded people to please turn off their cameras if not speaking.

Elaine introduced herself and her role as staff, echoed the excitement, and asked people to say their name prior to speaking. Ryan was asked to introduce himself.

Ryan said he was happy to meet folks and welcomed them also. He shared his role on staff, and that he is responsible for Awards and Community Outreach. He also shared that he identifies as Deafblind and will be using interpreters today.

Emily welcomed all, thanked folks for their participation and patience with

2:10 pm

New Member Introduction (5 minutes)

Include: Name, pronouns if you are comfortable, affiliation with the disability community, and a fun fact about yourself

Megan Mason-Todd, Elaine Stefanowicz

New Members

Damiana will be reaching out to you all shortly for a meeting and greet, per Megan, since she could not be here today.

Megan has been here for 4 years, started in person, and of course things have been different now. She chairs Membership and is excited for people to be here.

Warren was asked to introduce himself. He is the Vice-Chair and Chair of AC, and is filling in for Damiana in her absence today. He has been here 5 years so far and is in his last year due to term limits. He has profound hearing loss and will be using captions today. He has a long history of being involved in the local disability community, as well as in international and local banking, before that.

It was noted that there was a popup on the PPT. Clarence also and Kristin were asked to introduce themselves as well. Clarence is looking forward to working with and meeting everyone. He is in his second term on GCDE and has a mobility disability.

Kristin apologized for being unmuted by Zoom default inadvertently. She shared that it is her second year on GCDE, and she serves as Legislative Lead and YLF Vice Chair, and is a relatively new NW transplant during COVID due to a job change.

Matt was asked to introduce himself as well. He is on his second term also and is Vice-Chair of the Employer Awards subcommittee, as well as serving on Community Outreach and Membership, and hails from Tri-Cities. With that, new members were asked to introduce themselves, after getting a sense of

how the staff and leadership roles work. We share the PPT so folks have the questions, and you can turn your camera on while speaking if Desired.

Leslie from Kingston with the Port Gamble Tribe started, and shared that she loves to run 5k's, including mud runs with obstacles (3.1 miles, with a treat at the end occasionally).

Simon went next and shared that he is a children's book Author (Frank and Mustard for disability representation including a power wheelchair users to share his story), he is interested in YLF, and is a motivational speaker talking to kids in schools and wants to help create an empower the future of youth.

Autumn went next and shared her she pronouns with the city of Seattle, apologized for the background noise, and said she likes to coach soccer and basketball for youth among other things.

Steve went next and is from Seattle for 30 years, he uses he pronouns, and has a spinal cord injury with a manual wheelchair. He will share a fact if it comes to him.

Dave uses he pronouns, also uses a wheelchair due to spina bifida, enjoys adaptive sports, and also writes books, speaks to kids, and does social work around independent living.

Ivyanne uses she pronouns, and shared that a fun fact about her is that her middle name is Jellybean, which people thought was awesome.

We got everyone and are 5 minutes behind. Kristina was not present today.

2:15 pm **GCDE History, Mission & Vision Statements** (10 minutes)
Warren Weissman, Vice-Chair, GCDE

Warren reviewed the topics above using slides from Elizabeth and asked people to bear with him in her absence. Est. in 1983

by then Gov. Booth Gardner with an EO, due to the high unemployment for PWD at that time, so that was a big focus at the time and we've since incorporated other things. Our main objective is to create opportunities and quality for PWD in a variety of aspects that he won't review in detail due to time constraints, but read the mission and vision statements. A lot of time was spent on these concise statements, but there's a lot more that we do, and folks often have the misconception that we are more connected to the Governor when really we more have an advisory role regarding the items in our mission statement and are somewhat plugged in without a direct line, but we do participate with other disability organizations in an advocate capacity as well. We're involved in the legislative effort which we will hear about from Kristin later. Core values are: empowerment/self determination for PWD, independence, employment, enhancing equity. Otherwise, we are housed for a long time under ESD due to our original focus, but are an independent commission where ESD provides our staff support. Aside from that, ESD has some bearing on what we do, but our mission is to represent the disability community rather than participating in ESD's work. Later on we will discuss funding and administration. We will stop here and hold for questions at the end to get us back on time, we can always add on later if needed.

2:25 pm **Stretch Break** (5 minutes) – postponed until 2:33

2:30 pm **GCDE Org Chart, Coordinating Committee** (10 minutes)
Warren Weissman, Vice-Chair, GCDE

Warren will be covering the next few slides. He reviewed the Org chart on the screen. Damiana is Chair, Elizabeth Director and has a key role in advocacy and staff direction, Warren Vice-Chair, our Coordinating Committee meets regularly and is comprised of the subcommittee chairs and at-large members. Its purpose is as a steering committee, essentially. It is a long-standing rule that folks have been with GCDE for at least a year prior to serving in this capacity. We will review each of the subcommittees later.

2:40 pm **GCDE Funding and Budget** (10 minutes)
Warren Weissman, Vice-Chair, GCDE

Warren covered this and wanted to make sure we were on track. Megan felt we were okay on time and could forgo the break if needed. Our funding is different. We are part of state govt, but are not funded through regular leg. appropriations, but rather by the other departments and state govt. agencies (38). Percentages for that are longstanding. ESD and DSHS provides the most funding due to our aligned mission, but we also receive small amounts from other agencies. Each subcommittee is funded slightly differently. AC will be reviewed later, but is funded through a different process, where GCDE receives a portion of the parking fines for folks inappropriately parked in accessible spaces. YLF is funded through a DVR contract. Community Outreach falls under the regular GCDE budget, as is Awards, but Awards also gets funding from ongoing recruited sponsors. The main purpose is to pay for staff, admin expenses, and projects. ESD is not responsible for paying all of that. Elizabeth annually reviews the budget to decide on the overhead, and what's left over for our various projects. It's worth saying that it has been a long time since we've received a budget increase despite inflation, which is a constant struggle somewhat. More information will be provided later in the subcommittee presentations as needed with regards to funding. Great job Warren says Megan. A pause was taken for questions. Hearing none, a 5 min break was taken. Not all of our chairs were necessarily present, and asked if folks were missing. Elaine will be covering YLF for Candance since she's unwell. We don't talk during breaks, as a reminder, so that the interpreters get a firm break as well. 2:38 to be back, ahead of schedule.

After break, Megan shared a fun fact that art causes her anxiety, and Elaine shared that she is a manual wheelchair user who once won a Women's Downhill Skiing Contest.

2:50 pm **Programs and Projects** (35 minutes)

- **Overview of Programs and Projects – Megan Mason-Todd**

Megan said this is exciting, so that folks could feel free to ask questions, and should think about where they might want to be involved.

- **Community Outreach – Marsha Cutting, Chair (Ryan)**

Marsha was asked to discuss Outreach and introduce herself before we open the floor to members. Marsha has been here for 1 term and lives in Kitsap Co. If you are interested in finding new ways to empower PWD, CO might be one of the committees for you. We visit statewide communities, hear about their challenges, and work to find solutions. This year we are intentionally focused in involving local people with disabilities in the planning process and solutions. Were in the early stages of planning in Clark County, so let us know if you want to help. Two meeting formats with town hall and leadership planning was reviewed. Commitments are key by the end, and we hope that the folks involved can become the nucleus of an ACAC where applicable. In the past there were 2 events per year, and the pandemic wasn't optimal. Planning will likely be virtual, but we are hoping for an in person or hybrid approach, and are trying a new approach. So, ambiguity is happening right now. But empowering PWD to ID and address challenges is key. Dave had a question. He lives in Clark County and is active there, so was asked to possibly lend a hand. We hope to ID a specific area in the county to focus on (Ridgefield is quickly developing and may not have the same services as elsewhere, but have not decided). Dave lives in Vancouver, but there is a lot of smaller towns that are often overlooked. We typically avoid major areas for that reason. Next meeting after yesterday is 1 month later on April 11 Tuesday at 4pm and people can visit. We'll get everyone the list. It is also on our website (yearly calendar including links). She will send it out to people.

- **Accessible Communities – Warren Weissman, Chair**

Warren switched roles to talk about AC. Originated in 2010 and reviewed the establishing statute opening briefly to explain the purpose. Access focus, not just physically, but to

encompass all sorts of things. Funding already covered. 100/400 of each find, fair amount of funding coming in yearly, unfortunately and fortunately. 3 uses: grants to counties, provide technical assistance and resource provision online, and each county is required to have a DAC and is called upon to establish an AC (voting access committees required by law, AC's not, but the AC can be parallel and not related to voting, or be dual-purpose). Both models are used. 14/39 currently have AC's in counties, so there's a way to go, and some are more active than others. Grants are most of time, for lots of things, including ramps, door openers, hearing loops, as well as specialized beach wheelchairs, an equestrian ramp for fairgrounds, creating literature to raise awareness, and so on. Grants vary from a few hundred dollars to 25k, and are still refining the process and approach to maximize impact. That is the focus of the grants, the number of PWD benefitting deeply vs temporarily. Please consider joining us at 4:30 if you want to visit and learn more, you would be welcome, and can always contact Warren for questions.

- **Governor's Employer Awards –*Matt Nash, Vice-Chair***
Matt is Vice chair, covering for Yvonne. Our event is one that we've done for years, and for the last 3 years, it has been virtual due to COVID which required a pivot. We are live again this year, which is exciting. We honor small to large businesses from 10s to hundreds, city, county, state, or private. Nominations are solicited. After that, we have selection panels for recipients, which will be presented at the event. Background noise apologies from Elaine. Duties of members include (not limited to) planning for sponsorships, streamlining the nomination process, conducting outreach for nomination marketing, and some day-of event duties. We will be in Wenatchee on October 6 (east side) at the convention center there. We are excited to migrate. We will be meeting next on April 11, and folks are welcome to join us to learn more if desired. No questions were heard. Matt's fun fact is that he went 42 miles an hour down a hill during a race. Emily mentioned that the Awards are disability focused, and that our next meeting is on April 14th.

- **Youth Leadership Forum – Candace Dickson, Chair (Elaine)**

Elaine covered for Candace. It is a weeklong overnight summer camp for HS Jr/Sr with disabilities, usually held at a college campus, which was on hold for the past few years due to COVID but most recently has been at the Dumas Bay Centre in Federal Way (which is nice for those who need that due to disabilities vs a spread-out college campus, and we do tour a college campus). DVR provides funding, there is no charge to the students, and it is a great and life-changing experience for the students and staff. The subcommittee members are typically asked to attend if possible. Last year, due to COVID, you had to come once and that's it. Hopefully that can be relaxed a bit this year depending, all though some people did stay the whole time. Students come from all over the state as DVR clients, in a transition up to age 21, and can reapply after being a student as a peer counselor to receive work experience and references for their resume. This year, it is planned for the last week of July into the first week of August. It takes a lot to plan and recruit students statewide. Elaine will be attending some transition fairs to recruit soon. Friday at 10am is the meeting, new members were included on the reminder today, and would be welcomed to attend if desired. No questions were heard.

- **Legislative Workgroup – Kristin DiBiase, Lead**

Warren reviewed the org chart earlier and you may have noticed that LWG isn't an official subcommittee. LWG has not received that designation at least as of yet. The work isn't really different comparatively, it is more an internal designation, because there's a lot of things that have to take place in order to change that, and also because it causes more additional staff requirements in that case (not that the staff aren't always helpful, but it provides them more flexibility legislatively to be able to support the group without some of the added requirements of a subcommittee designation, to explain that firstly). Our goal initially by the founder and former GCDE member whose term just ended, was as a passion project, and as a PWD who wants this

committee to take more legislative action and impact statewide. Kristin co-chaired with Bill prior to his departure and is now chair, and has tried to operationalize what he started, and wanted to accomplish. The mission is multifaceted, to track bills in the sessions that are being proposed to identify those directly targeted at disability issues or will have a large impact on them otherwise and formulate responses or take action to advocate on behalf of or in opposition to those bills as needed in an organized fashion to mobilize ourselves and others in our network towards movement. This is our first year carrying out this new charge, and is a good one to start out with. NAUWU was introduced in the short session last year to ensure that underrepresented PWD can have their voices heard in groups convened by govt. powers when those decisions will have an impact on them. The bill was defeated last session due to its narrow focus unfortunately, and the support shifted our way and expanded to include all sorts of marginalized communities that may have lived experience with a given issue, so GCDE has stepped in to provide structural support around the push to pass this bill. We're learning as we go and it has been good, but we have been tweaking things as we move along, and it has been very helpful to experience. Going forward, we will be doing this each session, with a certain small number of bills of import to the workgroup (maybe 3-5 to advocate behind). This is one large example of that. In the future, we may not be as directly involved on certain issues, so then may be able to address more secondary measures of direction action. For the remainder of the cycle, we want to focus on education of specific constituencies, including the legislators around disability issues so that they become more of a first thought and priority. Otherwise, the general populous should be educated about disability, and about us so that we can have more brand recognition and be called upon for assistance in advocacy. Meetings occur about every 3 weeks excluding holidays, generally. Next meeting is this Friday at 9 for an hour or so, depending on what else is going on. No questions were heard, but Kristin will follow up with Dave, to

get him involved. No specific assignments exist due to the structure, so anyone who is interested is always welcome as they can. Elaine shared that it is an exciting time to be involved.

- **Membership – *Megan Mason-Todd, Chair***

Megan recapped the 1-year req, and said we market for GCDE, review apps, coordinate mentors, and that it is not a year long commitment. She let folks know that they would be assigned a mentor for the first 6 months so they have someone to go to. Particularly, since COVID, that has been helpful since we aren't in person. If anyone has marketing ideas, we'd be open to them. No question were heard.

Megan posed a question after hearing from folks about our projects about which they might be interested or have skills to join.

Leslie noted AC as interesting, having dealt with that on the reservation locally to increase access as an advocate, and also YLF as someone who works with youth, and Outreach also as her top 3.

Dave re AC is a certified ADA coordinator, and wanted to clarify that the main focus of AC is writing grants. Megan shared that the county groups write grants to GCDE, who disperses the money. And the projects do have to meet ADA guidelines. So that expertise would be helpful if interested. Clark County has not established an ACAC yet. We do have to be careful about conflicts of interest if located in the county and serving on GCDE due to the fiscal aspect. This has been hard in the past with folks joining us sometimes. We will cover this more in ethics later, but in short, we don't vote on projects from our own county or the one in which we work to avoid all of that. Warren confirmed this to be the case. We do try to help counties with grant writing if needed and intervene early, since people sometimes have a hard time making their case.

IvyAnne is strong in writing, and has some grant writing on a small scale so may be interested in that, and is excited to hear about all of the committees and get involved. AC and Outreach stuck out the most probably, but she is happy to help out with any or all of them as much as possible. YLF is exciting as well, and was her introduction to GCDE, where she presented alongside a colleague and got to meet everyone and felt very welcomed for which she is grateful.

Simon is interested in YLF as he said earlier. He has participated in the past as a speaker, and also stayed for another day or two to observe also, because it was a powerful experience to work with the youth in this stage of their life. He is passionate about that, and the idea of AC, but feels as though he would be better at participating locally due to physical health challenges as of late which is a concern. Elaine shared a picture Simon with a past delegate at YLF. Simon is also interested in Community outreach, but may have to limit his involvement in too many things due to health.

Steve shared he has already been talking to Warren re: AC and wants the link for today's meeting and could attend for part of it, and is also interested in learning more and becoming involved in LWG. No one was missed.

Dave confirmed that Kristin would be in touch with him about LWG as well.

Megan gave 1 tip that sometimes, since there's 4 staff, and 25 volunteer members, so that staff can always get you any info that you need quickly and efficiently amongst themselves, so they are a good first point of contact. You likely have their emails. It can be hard to track who is who at first, so that's one recommendation, aside from this meeting. No other questions heard.

3:25 pm **Roles and Responsibilities, Position Descriptions, Member Participation (15 minutes)**

Megan Mason-Todd

Megan recapped that we are all members and have been appointed with our notarized letters, and folks were chosen for their lived experience and advocacy in their lives, roles, or work. We all want to empower PWD here. We have a responsibility to the state to be of support to GCDE in this role. It's important to attend meetings as much as possible, even though that can sometimes be hard with other life aspects, and it's also important to be on at least 1 subcommittee and participate. There isn't a ton of people to do all of our work, so it's important to devote the time to support. This was discussed during interviews, and we know from your appointment that folks want to get stuff done. If there are issues that you want to bring forward to people who understand, we are a great space for that. We've gone in certain directions on certain projects because people spoke up, so you should feel empowered to do so. Per Megan's estimate, sometimes time commitments can be all over the place, but there's definitely monthly work in varying amounts. Elaine mentioned that we'll be asking folks to choose 2 subcommittees to participate in, and that Damiana will make the official appointments as needed to share the load. We will take your preferences into account wherever possible, so it is a mutually beneficial arrangement. Clarence added that if you are reluctant to join a certain group for whatever reason, please consider it anyway, because we welcome any and all strengths from making calls, to proofreading, and so on. There's always something you can contribute. Simon asked each chair what they were most looking for.

Marsha went first and shared that she is looking for people who are comfortable moving in a new direction, and folks who are equally passionate about empowering PWD.

Warren shared that AC is looking for people who can help with the analytical work in assisting counties with their proposal, and people with lived experience of disabilities and accommodations. Clarence seconded Warren's comment and

added that fresh ideas are valued and welcomed. Recruitment help is always helpful too.

Matt said event organizing is a needed skill, since that's a lot of the detail level we're looking for, and people that have time to commit to helping with tasks at various levels. Not overly so, but in general, would be helpful.

Kristin said for YLF, it would be help in reimagining the tradition of YLF with the current generation of youth, in modernizing to make sure we're still a relevant and attractive space to learn lessons about themselves, society, and advocacy. Empowering the future leaders, really. Those who enjoy and understand youth and how to work with them. Those who are interested in lending a hand outside of meetings in the in between (for LWG too). Meetings are more for updates generally, so even if you can't attend, if you can contribute otherwise that is valued.

The operations manual that was sent has much info about roles/resp. We also have associate members representing other disability organizations, including leadership in contributing their knowledge. The chair position is a separate appointment, and may or may not be an existing member, who must go through competitive recruitment. You've all met the subcommittee chairs already. We discussed Coordinating and membership and staff. Elaine and Ryan support subcommittees, whereas Emily is involved in all of it essentially.

3:40 pm **Ethics and Conflicts of Interest** (10 minutes)
Megan Mason-Todd

Megan asked Kristin to share on the spot about how this relates to our role legislatively. AC was already covered. But generally, and particularly for LWG, there is a line that needs to be drawn to where you can tell people when ID'ing yourself during advocacy or otherwise that you're a GCDE member, but may not speak on behalf of GCDE (only yourself as an individual speaking with the lived experience that you have). It is sort of a disclaimer. LWG has additional rules, that may seem

scary regarding lobbying and so on, but as long as you stay within our preset instructions you will probably be okay as long as you aren't trying to have undue influence. That is rare oftentimes, but it's always good to know the rules, and be cognizant of. Be cautious and aware. We will remind you. But mostly, you can share your opinion, as long as you aren't financially involved. Slide shared along this line not to accept gifts, etc. for your time. Different areas where this comes up. Our meetings are open and public, be aware, as you're talking or chatting etc., there are processes we have to follow around that. Respect goes into that too. GCDE is a learning experience. Sometimes it takes a while to figure out, but can be helpful. Warren mentioned the public records act also. In theory, any emails sent even from private email accounts are technically subject to disclosure if relating to GCDE, some people make separate email accounts and some don't, and some are just careful, and you can also ask staff too.

3:50 pm **Questions** (10 minutes)

Simon asked how many lobbyists are and who they are, if so. He also wanted to know folks greatest accomplishments in service. Megan said she thought we didn't have any lobbyists, and Kristin confirmed. Megan loved Simon's question, and wanted to make sure we got through our agenda. Simon said he would get the answer another time. Megan did share that networking has helped her professionally. Also, some of the succession planning that happens with each new group of members and chairs and different ideas, has been great. Marsha is excited about the chance to walk the talk, so to speak, in Outreach specifically – hopefully to the benefit of PWD statewide. Kristin's best triumph so far aside from LWG, was the first in person YLF in a couple years, under new leadership.

We are thrilled to have you, and will get you meeting times, and can read the operations manual. You'll hear from Damiana, and get connected with a mentor. Write down questions, think about interests, we want to make sure you feel welcome and know

that this can be a bit of information overload. Thanks for your time. Elaine sent the meeting schedule. Folks were wished a good day. Meeting adjourned.

4:00 pm **Adjourn**