

Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE)

Awards subcommittee meeting

May 12, 2023, | 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Minutes

1. **Welcome** – Yvonne noted she was having technical difficulties today and could not see folks unless they had their camera on. She opened the participants list to fix it. We can discuss moving our meetings if needed due to the two GCDE subcommittee meetings being next to each other. Ryan would prefer not to. Called to order by Yvonne at 11:07am.
2. **Roll Call** – Tammy and Kevin excused early. Damiana is here but does not have video access. Cullynn will be listening in the background. Ryan is here. Also present were Amy, Emily, ASL interpreter, Matt, Amy, Elizabeth, and Lucas.
3. **Housekeeping Rules** – ID yourself prior to speaking, raise your hand to be acknowledged.
4. **Approval on Minutes from April 28, 2023** – No additions heard to the agenda aside from a clarification that we will not be recording the meeting. Folks reviewed the minutes. No discussion items heard; Amy moved to approve. Kevin seconded. Motion passed and carried.
5. **Sponsorship Update** – Ryan spoke to this. First he let folks know that he may need to jump off for a moment at some point, Emily can fill in if needed. So far we have collected \$23k, so we have made the request to stop soliciting sponsorships at this point, as that should cover our budget for this year. That's good news and concludes the update at this point.

Yvonne had a question. She was contacted by two different agencies wondering about if GCDE could pay for hotel rooms for nominees. Emily let

her know that this has not been done historically.

Elizabeth noted that we have not done so because we can't pay for everyone, so if we decided to pay for certain folks and not others, it could feel inequitable. She wants to hear the groups thoughts or input for consideration if we are thinking about changing that. The majority of attendees are nominees, so it could be a large cost, but Elizabeth is open to discussion on that. Yvonne opened the floor.

Amy mentioned that she can understand what Elizabeth said. We may not always have the same level of sponsorships. She wondered if there was a way to provide a stipend or solicit donations to help do that. It is a long way to go, especially if you are not a recipient. It may be a first step if allowable.

Yvonne mentioned that some events have a scholarship process for those that don't have funds to attend.

Matt echoed Elizabeth and Amy. We could be setting a precedent. He also wondered if there were any rules related to paying folks not affiliated with GCDE or state employees, it could be opening it up too broadly.

Ryan concurs about setting expectations.

Kevin deferred to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth mentioned that Matt brings up a good point, she would need to look into whether it is allowable, she appreciates that mention.

Kevin wondered if subcommittee members will have a block of rooms, and could add a couple of extras, he thought this may be a reasonable ask. Yvonne appreciated the thought.

Tammy mentioned that it could be beneficial in the future to have some sort of procedures documented on that since it does set a precedent. If you have the sponsorships to cover it, perhaps folks could apply, and it could be

determined on a case-by-case basis, but it could be a problem if word gets out that some folks were paid for and others not – especially without documentation.

Yvonne thanked folks for the comments.

Ryan wanted to respond to Amy's comment about donations. He knows that GCDE cannot accept donations from individuals (organizations can do sponsorships).

Elizabeth clarified that it is fine to get individual donations, but we don't seek them for this event. Earlier there was conversation about asking members. There's nothing that says we can't, it's just not really appropriate to go out and solicit those. We are able to accept donations from wills and trusts, etc., but generally don't go out and seek individual donations in the same way a non-profit would.

Cullyn agrees on principle that helping people to arrive and stay is a great idea, would like to see it explored more, doesn't have a great answer. Hotels have gotten so expensive. Sees the potential for a cost barrier that there may not have been in past years.

Yvonne mentioned that 1 recipient from last year traveled very early since they could not stay, for example.

Kevin believes in donating our time, talent, and treasure – which can be a difficult one – but does feel that the amount contributed doesn't matter but the thought behind it. He knows Elizabeth has a different approach and will leave it alone. He does believe we should support people's attendance in any way we can, hence the couple of additional rooms in the hotel block he suggested.

6. **Nominations Application Packet Update** - Emily reported that there are 7 nomination packets in process already. 103 people clicked on the nomination form link from the press release from earlier this week.

7. **New Marketing Workgroup Update** – Yvonne mentioned that there is a small workgroup working on this. Nominations were launched last week. The small workgroup has been continuing to discuss further.

Emily mentioned that Cullyn had indicated their interest in participating next week if needed (Cullyn confirmed). Share that we have adjusted the timeline and are working on the language for our next reminder.

Amy had a question about sharing the news release with local media, and some folks from last year who would be great nominees but did not have time to submit last year. She wondered if it was inappropriate for her to personally contact local groups about nominating or if it was okay as long as she did not participate in the judging.

Yvonne asked Elizabeth to correct her if she was wrong, but understands that it's okay for us to send the packets out, and encourage people to nominate themselves or others, but cannot coach them on the process or advocate for them specifically.

Elizabeth said we always receive a lot of nominations from the committee. When we get to the point of reviewing, if you participated in the nomination of an organization or individual, you could recuse yourself. Emily will assign the groups accordingly when the time comes. Please spread the word.

Yvonne appreciates the clarification and has been spreading the word in her network. Thinks the more exposure we can have within our networks, the better. Perhaps we can give folks some worthy recognition. It is a quarter to 11. One agenda item remaining aside from next steps.

8. **Hotel room Block Discussion** – Started during agenda item #5 by Ryan. Ryan called the hotel by the conference center and talked to the General Manager, they said we cannot reserve a block of rooms at the govt. rate. They don't do that. They can reserve room blocks at the regular rate. He emailed for more information and has not received a response. He also

called back and left a message. The reservation doesn't show the govt. discount. But he knows that there are a lot of people going there that weekend for Oktoberfest, so maybe they are not accepting the govt. rate for that specific weekend at all, but he needs to find out more and is continuing to work on it.

Yvonne thanked him for the info.

He mentioned that the state does not allow us to reserve a block in advance. That would mean that we would have to pay and be reimbursed individually.

Yvonne confirmed that was correct. Most hotels will hold a block of rooms without expectation of payment, since the state can't pay in advance. But it sounded to her that the hotel isn't willing to hold a block of rooms at the state rate for our event.

Ryan said they could only do one at the regular rate. He does not know why, but they declined.

Amy quickly followed up and circled back since she may not have been clear earlier. She liked Kevin's idea that we all contribute to the event, even if it is a small amount. She wondered if the organizations sponsoring could check a box to earmark their funds towards certain costs, such as a scholarship fund for nominee attendance costs, and let nominees know that they would be open to apply up to a certain amount or something. She agreed with Tammy's thoughts about having a policy in place.

Yvonne looked on the website to check on the rates, and she does not even see that they offer the state rate, so that could be the issue. They have some other rates, but she did not see the state rate.

Kevin did not mean to open a can of worms, but feels strongly about asking ourselves, before asking others (within the law). He put it out there and would defer to Elizabeth or others such as the Attorney General. It would

be nice to involve us, but will step aside on this one.

Elizabeth said that whether it's specifically illegal or not, a part of her feels uncomfortable as a program funded by tax dollars, going to people asking for additional funding when they're already donating their time. It doesn't feel like the right thing to do, whether or not it's prohibited. She can research more about if it's allowable and get back to folks. It feels like we're asking people to give when they already are giving (their time). She noted that consulting the AG's office is an expensive endeavor, so we likely won't go that route, it is not a quick process.

Kevin feels strongly about it.

Elizabeth hears him. She has been in this position before, but there is definitely a lot of ethics around being a public servant that make it a little bit different than a non-profit, so she will go back and look.

Yvonne read Lucas' comment in the chat about looking at GCDE policies for travel reimbursement.

He suggested looking at WAC 52 in regard to accepting donations. Most state employees cannot do that is his understanding.

Elizabeth will look at it. Boards and Commissions do run slightly differently than state agencies.

Yvonne appreciates the discussion and believes we can bring it back to our next meeting after Elizabeth does some more research.

Ryan says the tech will be here shortly. Emily will back him up.

Moving on to the next topic per Yvonne.

- 9. Photo Event with the Governor with 2020-2022 Award recipients and their employers Update** – Tabled in Ryan's absence as Emily, Elizabeth, and

Yvonne did not have any updates.

10. **Next steps** – Continue working on marketing and promotion, Elizabeth to research some of the travel and hotel parameters.

No other next steps heard.

No other business heard.

Folks were glad Elizabeth is back. We greatly appreciate her expertise.

Hearing nothing else, Yvonne called to adjourn at 11:47, see you at the next meeting. Enjoy the weekend weather.

11. *Next meeting date and time: **Tuesday**, May 23, 2023, at 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.*

Important Note:

31st Annual Governor's Employer Awards

Friday, October 6, 2023

Wenatchee Convention Center

121 N Wenatchee Ave

Wenatchee, WA