

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – March 4, 2026

Meeting Attendance

Board Attendees	Board Members Absent	Staff Attendees
Allison Coles-Johnson Conner Cummings Jennifer Greene Karen Grizzard Nadia Rauhala Mick Sladic Erika Rogers Shay Ruff Non-EC Board Members: Kristie Bowie-Young Alexander Campbell Adrian Frierson Richard Kriner Thomas Leach Rachel Loria Kate Olson Deanna Parker Eric Raff Melanie Rice Mary Vought	Matthew Shapiro	Anita Ayres Eric Beidel Tara Bethea Christine Germeyer Nia Harrison Jennifer Krajewski Teri Morgan Linh Nguyen Penni Sweetenburg-Lee Kellie Vanella Jason Withers

Call to Order/ Opening Remarks

Ms. Allison Coles-Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Teri Morgan, Executive Director, reviewed the Zoom meeting protocols.

Review of Executive Committee Meeting Agenda

The Chair greeted and welcomed Board members and staff and did a roll call.

Approval of December 3, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

The Chair asked committee members if they had a chance to review the minutes. The Chair asked if there were any edits or changes to the December 3, 2025, meeting minutes. Hearing none, Ms. Coles-Johnson called for a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** December 3, 2025, meeting minutes. Mr. Mick Slavic made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE**, and Ms. Erika Rogers seconded it. The **MOTION** passed unanimously.

Board Member Attendance

Mr. Jason Withers, Director of Administration, noted the attendance tracking attachment EC 3-1. Mr. Withers provided a summary of the Board attendance tracking form and noted that there were no concerns with the Board attendance and no consecutive absences from any of the Board members.

Executive Director's Update and Questions

Ms. Teri Morgan briefly summarized key activities from November 6th to February 5th. Ms. Morgan referenced EC 4-2 and reported on special initiatives and workgroup participation, policy work, agency administration and Board operations, communications, grants and contracts, and training and alumni development programs. Ms. Morgan noted that the General Assembly has been very busy and stated that staff have been providing comments on bills, working with stakeholders, and participating in several meetings. Ms. Morgan stated that Ms. Jennifer Krajewski, Deputy Director, will present a General Assembly update at the full Board meeting. Ms. Morgan briefly discussed the onboarding of Mr. Jason Withers, Director of Administration, and the recruitment process for a new Grants & Contracts Administrator. Ms. Morgan briefly discussed the submission of the annual Program Performance Report to the federal government and the successful launch of the Resource Fridays Facebook campaign and the Bill of the Week.

Agency Fiscal Report

Mr. Withers summarized the agency's fiscal report and provided the balances. He stated that the state fiscal year 2026 budget totaled \$1,901,516 and that the agency has spent \$1,166,310 as of February 19, 2026. Mr. Withers noted that \$735,206 was unspent and noted that the agency was on track with spending. Mr. Withers summarized the 2026 anticipated federal award.

Update on New Board Meeting Venue & Dates

Mr. Withers discussed that the agency's contract with the Hilton Hotel has ended. Board staff reached out to several venues to determine if they could meet agency needs for Board meetings in 2026 and 2027. After reviewing proposals, the Four Points by Sheraton was selected as the Board meeting venue. Mr. Withers stated that the Four Points Sheraton has been updated and has all the 2026 and 2027 Board meeting dates available. He also stated that they have comparable per diems with buffet breakfast, lunch and snacks. The 2026 Board meeting dates are: Wednesday, June 3, 2026, Wednesday, September 9, 2026, and Wednesday, December 2, 2026.

Recruitment for New Executive Director

Ms. Allison Coles-Johnson acknowledged the retirement of the Executive Director, Teri Morgan. Ms. Coles-Johnson shared that the recruitment process for a new Executive Director will begin in April and it is anticipated that interviews will take place in early May. The goal is to fill the position shortly thereafter and onboard the new director with some crossover before Ms. Morgan's departure in July.

Ms. Coles-Johnson stated that the Chair and several other Board members will be on the interview panel. Her goal was to convene a diverse interview panel consisting of self-advocate, family member, and agency representatives. In addition, the executive director position description is being updated for accuracy and clarity, including responsibilities and required skills.

Committee Agendas

Committee Chairs Ms. Jennifer Greene, Ms. Karen Grizzard, and Mr. Jason Withers, Director of Administration, provided a brief overview of committee meeting agendas.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The Chair called for a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Karen Grizzard made the **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Shay Ruff seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** passed unanimously. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:48 a.m.



Board Meeting Minutes – March 4, 2026

Meeting Attendance

Board Attendees	Board Members Absent	Staff Attendees
Marcus Allen Ann Bevan Alexander Campbell Tim Capoldo Allison Coles-Johnson Ginny Conroy Conner Cummings Parthy Dinora Cesar Dulanto III Cathy Edwards Adrian Frierson Jennifer Greene Karen Grizzard James Hall Melinda Hanko Samantha Hollins Kyle Jones Amaan Karim Jeffrey Katz Richard Kriner Thomas Leach Amber Lee Rachel Loria Rick Mitchell Kate Olson Deanna Parker Lindsay Pearse Eric Raff Nadia Rauhala Melanie Rice Erika Rogers Shay Ruff Matthew Shapiro Mick Sladic Dana Taormina Mary Vought Kristie Bowie-Young	Amanda Forry-Fino Jen Kelly Cynthia Pettus	Anita Ayres Tara Bethea Eric Beidel Christine Germeyer Nia Harrison Jennifer Krajewski Teri Morgan Linh Nguyen Penni Sweetenburg-Lee Kellie Vanella Jason Withers



Call to Order/ Opening Remarks

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities met virtually on March 4, 2026, for the Quarterly Board meeting.

The Chair, Ms. Allison Coles-Johnson, called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. She greeted and welcomed Board members and staff.

Ms. Teri Morgan, Executive Director, reviewed Zoom meeting protocols with Board members.

Introductions

The Chair asked Board members and staff to introduce themselves. She asked Board members to include their names, where they live, and the seat they fill.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Chair asked whether there were any changes to the December 3, 2025, Board Meeting minutes. Hearing none, Ms. Nadia Rauhala made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the minutes, and Ms. Rachel Loria seconded the MOTION. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

General Assembly 2026 Update

Ms. Jennifer Krajewski, Deputy Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, provided an overview of legislative highlights from the 2026 General Assembly session. She noted that the session was a long and busy one, running from January 14 through March 14, 2026, and that the General Assembly will reconvene on April 22, 2026, for the reconvene session.

Ms. Krajewski reported that Board staff testified at 15 committee meetings during the session and provided both informal and formal agency comments on legislation as needed. She also noted that staff collaborated with advocacy partners to educate legislators on specific pieces of legislation.

She highlighted the Board's "Bill of the Week" series, noting that it has been very popular on the Board's Facebook page with around 15,000 views per post.

Ms. Krajewski also discussed several key bills and budget amendments adopted during the session, including increased funding for special education, personal care/respite services, and minimum wage increases. She also noted legislation related to school discipline reform that requires schools to consider at least one evidence-based restorative disciplinary practice. Ms. Krajewski also summarized several bills that passed relating to community support. Questions were asked and answered.

Discussion of 2027-2031 State Plan Public Comment



Ms. Nia Harrison, Director of Planning, Research, and Evaluation explained that the Board was at the final stage of finalizing its goals and objectives for the next five-year State Plan. She noted that staff were seeking Board approval to submit the goals and objectives to the federal government. Ms. Harrison reminded members that at the December meeting, the Board approved the draft goals and objectives for release for public comment. She clarified that the Board members are not required to make any changes in response to public comment.

Ms. Harrison then summarized the 12 public comment submissions that were received. Ms. Harrison reviewed substantive recommendations that can be addressed through activities and do not require changes to the goals or objectives. Ms. Harrison also reviewed clarifying edits staff made to the goals and objectives in response to public comment.

Ms. Rachel Loria expressed support for revising Objective 2-2 to clarify the inclusion of career and technical education. She noted that there is often confusion about whether post-secondary education includes technical education, and that this clarification is important.

The Chair asked if there was any further discussion. Hearing none, the Chair called for a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the goals and objectives as amended. Ms. Kristie Bowie-Young made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the goals and objectives as amended, and Mr. Kyle Jones seconded. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

Appointment of Nominations Ad Hoc Committee

The Chair stated that the Board will convene a Nominations Ad Hoc Committee and noted that at least three Board members are needed to serve on the Nominations Committee. The Chair reminded members that, according to the Board's bylaws, members of the Nominating Committee may not serve on the Executive Committee.

The Chair provided a summary of the Nominating Committee's responsibilities and invited Board members to volunteer. Ms. Deanna Parker, Mr. Kyle Jones, Mr. Alexander Campbell, and Ms. Rachel Loria volunteered to be on the committee. The Chair thanked the Board members for volunteering.

Appointment of Board Assessment Review Ad Hoc Committee

The Chair announced that volunteers were needed to serve on an Ad Hoc Committee to review findings and recommendations from two Board policy assessments. The Chair explained that the Committee will review the assessment findings and draft recommendations to bring to the Full Board for consideration at the June Board meeting.

The Chair briefly summarized the duties for the Ad Hoc Committee and the focus of the two Board policy assessments: 1) support for family caregivers of adults with DD, and 2) barriers to navigating developmental disability waiver waitlist.



The Chair noted that 5 Board members were needed to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee and invited volunteers. Ms. Kristie Bowie-Young, Ms. Karen Grizzard, Mr. Richard Kriner, Ms. Dana Taormina, Ms. Jennifer Greene, Ms. Erika Rogers, and Ms. Nadia Rauhala volunteered to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee.

Presentation: What Works: Employer Strategies for Disability Employment Board Activity

Ms. Jennifer McDonough of the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation and Training Center provided an overview of the Center's work supporting employment for individuals with disabilities, including training employment specialists and partnering with businesses to promote inclusive hiring. She also highlighted a supported employment manual developed to help job coaches build effective relationships with employers.

Mr. Joe Williams of Altria discussed the company's partnership with VCU to develop a neurodiversity hiring initiative. He noted that Altria reviewed its hiring processes to remove barriers and expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The Board engaged in discussion with the presenters, and questions were asked and answered.

Lunch Break

The Board adjourned for lunch at 12:00 p.m.

Reconvened

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

Standing Committee Reports

Report of the Investment Committee: Mr. Matthew Shapiro, Chair of the Investment Committee, reported that the committee was bringing several items forward for Board consideration. Mr. Jason Withers, staff to the committee, presented the report on behalf of the Chair.

Mr. Withers first presented a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). He explained that the RFP is intended to support one or more grant projects advancing the recommendations from the Board's FFY 2025 assessment on improving access to Pre-ETS through the special education transition process. Mr. Withers reviewed the key elements of the RFP, including project examples, funding amounts, and timelines. He noted that committee members recommended several revisions, including clarifying that proposed enterprises be led by students with developmental disabilities and encouraging creative, high-quality, work-based learning experiences appropriate for school settings and developed in collaboration with relevant partners.

Following the presentation, the Chair asked if there was further discussion. Hearing none, the Chair called for a **MOTION** to approve the Pre-ETS RFP as amended. Ms. Samantha Hollins



made a **MOTION** to approve the RFP with amendments, and Ms. Kate Olson seconded the **MOTION**. Mr. Tim Capoldo abstained. The **MOTION** passed.

Mr. Withers next presented a Self-Advocate Scholarship funding request from the Come As You Are organization (Attachment BD-3). The request sought \$2,000 to support five self-advocates participating in an introductory workforce readiness program for neurodivergent young adults preparing for volunteer roles, internships, or part-time employment. The program will take place April 13–May 21, 2026, at Virginia Wesleyan University.

Following the presentation, the Chair asked if there was further discussion. Hearing none, the Chair called for a **MOTION** to approve the Self-Advocate Scholarship funding request. Ms. Parthy Dinora made the **MOTION**, and Mr. Kyle Jones seconded. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

See Investment Committee meeting minutes for additional details.

Report of the Advocacy, Outreach, and Training Committee: Ms. Jennifer Greene, Chair of the Committee, reported that the Committee welcomed two new members, Ms. Kate Olson and Mr. Alexander Campbell. Ms. Olson previously served on the Board and Mr. Campbell is a graduate of the Youth Leadership Academy.

Ms. Greene reported that the committee received an update from Dr. Penni Sweetenburg Lee on the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA), including the development of a new re-engagement initiative to increase involvement from past YLA participants. She also highlighted the “Shining the Spotlight on Youth Leaders” initiative, which features youth leaders, their accomplishments, and their advocacy work, which may be shared on the Board’s Facebook page.

Ms. Greene noted that the Board’s educational webinar series continues to be well-received. A recent mental health and disability workshop was highly attended, and a follow-up session is planned.

Ms. Greene also reported that planning for the 2026–2027 Partners in Policymaking program is underway, with approximately 25 participants expected. In addition, two additional educational sessions are scheduled, including a March session recognizing Developmental Disability Awareness Month and an April session recognizing Autism Awareness Month.

Ms. Greene highlighted ongoing communications efforts, including the weekly “Friday Resources” posts on the Board’s Facebook page and Black History Month features recognizing the contributions of people with disabilities. She noted that the Communications team also supported promotion of the “Bill of the Week” series, which generated more than 100,000 views and shares. Communications is also preparing content for the Developmental Disability Awareness Month social media campaign under the theme “We Are Here: Then, Now, and Always.”



Finally, Ms. Greene reported that the committee's featured speaker was Mr. Kevin McCloskey, Senior Director of Leadership and Workforce Development at Disability Belongs, who spoke about workforce inclusion and changing societal perceptions of people with disabilities.

See AOT meeting minutes for additional details.

Report of the Policy Advisory Committee: Ms. Karen Grizzard, Chair of the Committee, provided the committee report. She noted that the committee reviewed and approved the December 3, 2025, minutes.

Ms. Grizzard reported that Ms. Jennifer Krajewski provided an overview of the Executive Committee meeting held earlier that morning. Rather than a guest presentation, Ms. Krajewski facilitated a very robust discussion with PAC members, including self-advocates, agency representatives, and family members, regarding two upcoming policy assessments.

Ms. Grizzard noted that the first assessment will examine the needs of family caregivers supporting adults with developmental disabilities, including issues related to aging, caregiver burnout, and long-term planning. The second assessment will focus on barriers individuals and families experience while navigating the DD Waiver waitlist and will explore recommendations to improve access to information, support, and interim services.

Ms. Grizzard noted that the committee had a robust and interesting discussion and thanked Ms. Krajewski for leading the conversation. Ms. Krajewski also provided a brief update on liaison activities before the committee adjourned.

See PAC meeting minutes for additional details.

The Chair thanked Ms. Greene, Ms. Grizzard, and Mr. Shapiro for their reports and leadership. The Chair asked if anyone had any questions regarding the Executive Committee meeting this morning.

Mr. Withers stated that he wanted to mention that the Investment Committee did have a presentation from Mr. Kriner with DARS on customized employment. The presentation was cut short, and the slides would be emailed to committee members.

Other Business

Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee suggested that staff be given an opportunity to meet candidates or finalists during the search process for the next Executive Director. The Chair acknowledged the suggestion and stated that it would be taken under advisement.

Adjourn

The Chair called for a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Thomas Leach made the **MOTION** to adjourn, and Ms. Nadia Rauhala seconded the **MOTION**. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:36 p.m.

AOT Meeting Minutes – March 4, 2026

Meeting Attendance

Board Attendees	Board Members Absent	Staff Attendees
Greene, Jennifer Campbell, Alex Cummings, Conner Dulanto, Cesar Edwards, Cathy Hanko, Melinda Loria, Rachel Olson, Kate Ruff, Shay Rauhala, Nadia	Forry-Fino, Amanda Kelly, Jen Pettus, Cynthia	Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee Anita Ayres Eric Beidel Christine Germeyer Kellie Vanella

Call to Order/ Opening Remarks

The Advocacy, Outreach, and Training Committee met virtually on March 4, 2026. Ms. Jennifer Greene, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:48 p.m. A quorum was met. The Chair asked for introductions from the attendees. Ms. Greene also welcomed new Board members Kate Olson and Alex Campbell.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Jennifer Greene asked for approval of the December 2025 meeting minutes. Ms. Shay Ruff made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the December 2025 AOT meeting minutes, and Ms. Nadia Rauhala seconded. The minutes were **APPROVED** unanimously.

Executive Committee Update

Ms. Jennifer Greene gave a summary of the Executive Committee meeting, which included a General Assembly update and an update on the HHR and Board-sponsored training for writing in clear/plain language for people with IDD and extreme low literacy. Recruitment is underway for the vacant Grant & Contracts Administrator position formerly held by Mr. Jason Withers. VBPD also submitted its annual Program Performance Report on time. The Resource Friday and Bill of the Week social media campaigns were highlighted, and Ms. Greene encouraged members to follow the VBPD on Facebook. VBPD also distributed two legislator education guides on services rates and the term “developmental disability.” Finally, Ms. Greene reminded Board members that recruitment will soon begin for a new VBPD Executive Director, as Ms. Teri Morgan is retiring in July 2026. A hiring panel has been selected to interview for her position and should conclude their search in May. This panel includes Board members and representatives from organizations that work closely with Ms. Morgan. Ms. Greene concluded



that June will be a sad but powerful meeting, at the Board's new meeting location, the Four Points by Sheraton near Richmond Airport. Questions were asked and answered.

Training & Alumni Development Programs Update

Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee opened her presentation by recognizing Ms. Christine Germeyer and Ms. Kellie Vanella's collaboration and contributions. She also recognized her unit's relationship with the Communications team.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee first gave an update on Youth Leadership Academy. Every Friday, the Training & Alumni Development Programs Unit shares information and resources with alumni via email. To re-engage YLA alumni, Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee said her unit will begin a new feature called "Shining the Spotlight." This column will highlight a YLA graduate, including their school's name, class year, recent accomplishments, and any advocacy/volunteer work they are doing. Her unit will also look at identifying statewide continuing education workshop topics that are more relevant to young people. One 2025 YLA graduate said workshops should happen during school breaks, so that students can attend these sessions. YLA alumni also recommended that VBPD connect with them via text and Instagram. Finally, Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee shared samples of upcoming "Shining the Spotlight" columns, featuring three inspiring self-advocate students.

Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee next gave an update on Partners in Policymaking. The program kick off will take place in person on September 11, 2026, followed by four consecutive sessions online in October, November, January, and February. The final two sessions will take place in person in March and April. For the in-person sessions, Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee's unit visited four hotels to examine each facility's accessibility and discuss quotes. They submitted four bids and feel positive that the Delta Hotel in downtown Richmond will be selected, as the hotel acknowledged the state's per diem rate, has sufficient room, and is available for all the in-person session dates. PIP has also previously taken place at this venue. 25 students have been accepted into PIP and were sent congratulatory packets. Two students were accepted in the alternate pool and have been invited as well, as other students may drop out throughout the program due to life circumstances. These invitations were sent out a month ago, and participants have until Friday, March 13, to confirm their participation. To date, of the 27 that were invited, 11 have returned complete packets. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee also acknowledged that Ms. Christine Germeyer has sent electronic reminders to participants and is available to assist them as needed.

Finally, Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee reported that since December, the Training & Alumni Development Programs Unit has hosted two continuing education workshop sessions. VBPD Board Member Marcus Allen, who serves as Director of the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Unit at VDH presented, along with Christen Crews. 146 people registered and 93 attended. The Facebook livestream received 501 views, and the YouTube recording had 28 views. Attendees said the session provided a great overview of services. Dr. Sweetenburg-



Lee also commented that during the last AOT Committee meeting, Board members had had a heartfelt discussion about suicide prevention and the need as a DD Council to address it. Training Alumni also felt strongly about this topic, as well as a sense of urgency, so on February 20, her unit organized a workshop on Suicide Prevention for People with IDD. The session was informative and well received. The team added a question to the session's feedback survey asking whether participants would be interested in a second part of the training, and 195 participants responded affirmatively. This session was presented by the Executive Director of the Virginia Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and an Assistant Professor from Florida Atlantic University, Dr. Alex Fields. 693 people registered for the session and 407 attended, setting records for the highest registration and attendance of any session since workshops began in 2020. The final two sessions for this state fiscal year will take place on March 20 and April 17. To celebrate DD Awareness Month and Women's History Month, Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee has invited speakers from the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, which VBPD is a member of, and Disability EmpowHER Network. The final session in April will honor Autism Acceptance Month.

Ms. Jennifer Greene complimented Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee and her team on their phenomenal work. Mr. Alex Campbell echoed this sentiment. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee added that Mr. Campbell himself is an outstanding YLA alumnus and self-advocate in the Commonwealth.

Ms. Jennifer Greene asked for a recording of the most recent workshop session, and Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee's team let her know they will send a link by email.

Communications Activity Report

Ms. Anita Ayres began her report by citing social media analytics. She complimented Mr. Eric Beidel on his work researching and planning social media content. Each Friday, he has featured a timely and helpful resource through Resource Friday posts. Throughout Black History Month, he also featured several disability rights and civil rights leaders. Finally, Ms. Ayres commented on the overwhelming success of the Bill of the Week posts, which have cumulatively received over 100,000 views on Facebook. Since the beginning of the year, VBPD has gained over 300 new followers on Facebook, with spikes in new followers following each Bill of the Week post, demonstrating the value of these digestible, legislative updates. The Communications team will brainstorm how to better feature such policy updates throughout the rest of the year.

Ms. Ayres also reported that additionally, the Communications team provided marketing support for several VBPD initiatives, including the 45-day public comment period opportunity for the draft goals and objectives for the next State Plan, the December and February Statewide Continuing Education Workshops, the Dental RFP grant award, and the legislator education guides, which Mr. Beidel also designed. Each initiative was shared through website updates, social media, and via email through Constant Contact.



Ms. Ayres closed her report by letting Board members know that VBPD is currently running a social media campaign for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, whose 2026 theme is “We’re Here: Then, Now, and Always.” She invited Board members to visit, follow, and share VBPD’s social media accounts. Questions were asked and answered.

Presentation: Disability Belongs

Ms. Jennifer Greene welcomed Mr. Kevin McCloskey, Senior Director of Leadership and Workforce Development at Disability Belongs. With over ten years of experience, Mr. McCloskey collaborates with partners to build inclusive work environments and specializes in sustainable talent acquisition and retention strategies for people with disabilities. His expertise has driven results for companies like Pepsi Beverages, Frito-Lay, and Synchrony. Mr. McCloskey also oversees Leadership Programming at Disability Belongs, training future leaders dedicated to disability advocacy across entertainment, policy, communications, accessibility, and nonprofit management.

Mr. McCloskey began his presentation by sharing more about Disability Belongs, a national organization that has existed for 12 years. He was drawn to the organization due to their impact on workforce, entertainment, policy, and other areas that can help create a more inclusive society, by redefining narratives on disability and driving opportunities. Mr. McCloskey shared that when he begins relationships with employers, he starts with education to dispel fears and stigmas, especially in the workplace. He first broke down the ADA definition of a disability, and then shared that in the United States, roughly 1 in 4 adults have a disability. This includes temporary and permanent disabilities, apparent and non-apparent disabilities, and disabilities from birth or that are acquired later. He also shared that roughly 70% of all disabilities are non-apparent.

Mr. McCloskey then shared that employers tend to have three reasons for hiring people with disabilities, and he tries to move employers away from a charity, or “nice to do” reason, or a compliance, or “have to do” reason, to a strategic “smart to do” reason. He added anecdotally that after a nine-month collaboration with Frito Lay, they began hiring more people with disabilities than people who did not have disabilities.

Mr. McCloskey then presented information about disability employment law. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs is the federal government agency that enforces equal employment opportunity laws, and Mr. McCloskey defined what a federal contractor is, and the obligations related to them. He also added that Section 503 continues to prohibit employment discrimination against people with disabilities.

Finally, Mr. McCloskey shared the benefits of hiring people with disabilities, which he described as an untapped pool of talent. Mr. McCloskey stated that only a little under 25% of people with disabilities are participating in the workforce, and people with disabilities have twice the unemployment rate as people without disabilities. The increase in remote work opportunities



during the pandemic helped address some of the previous barriers to employment. Mr. McCloskey also added that when it comes to recruiting and hiring people with disabilities, partnership development is important, to bridge the employment gap and increase the pipeline of talent by providing support. He shared his email address, KevinM@DisabilityBelongs.org, should Board members want to learn more about this work.

Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee asked if Disability Belongs was previously known as RespectAbility, which Mr. McCloskey confirmed. Ms. Jennifer Greene thanked Mr. McCloskey for his time. She commented that she was struck by the broad level of opportunities that his organization provides, especially within the entertainment industry. Mr. McCloskey confirmed that one of Disability Belongs' goals is to increase authentic representation of people with disabilities, including consulting with studios to make sure scripts represent people with disabilities well and even providing consultation on set accessibility. They also work in policy and faith/spiritual settings, trying to touch many aspects of culture.

Adjournment

Due to technical issues, all committee breakout meetings rejoined the full Board. Chair Allison Coles-Johnson adjourned all committee meetings for a break at 2:04 p.m.

Investment Committee Meeting Minutes – March 4, 2026

Meeting Attendance

Board Attendees	Board Members Absent	Staff Attendees
James Hall Thomas Leach Mick Sladic Richard Kriner Tim Capoldo Kristie Bowie-Young Adrian Frierson Dana Taormina Matthew Shapiro Jeff Katz Melanie Rice Marcus Allen Amaan Karim	Rick Mitchell	Jason Withers Nia Harrison Teri Morgan

Call to Order/ Introductions

A meeting of the Investment Committee was held virtually through Zoom, on March 4, 2026. Investment Committee Chair, Matthew Shapiro, called the meeting to order at 12:51 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Shapiro asked if there were any questions/concerns with the December 2025 meeting minutes. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the minutes, as presented. Mr. James Hall made a **MOTION** to approve the December 2025 meeting minutes, and Ms. Kristie Bowie-Young **SECONDED**. The **MOTION** was carried unanimously.

Pre-ETS RFP Review and Approval

Mr. Withers, Director of Administration, discussed with committee members a Request for Proposal (RFP) that had been developed, which focuses on the area of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Mr. Withers walked committee members through each section of the RFP, including project examples, funding amounts and associated timelines. Mr. Withers advised that the RFP aims to fund one or more grant projects that would further the recommendations in the Board’s FFY 2025 assessment of access to pre-employment transition services through the special education transition process. Committee members recommended modifications to one of the project examples included in the RFP, regarding student-led enterprises in schools. Members’ recommended changes included 1) providing clarity that the enterprises be led by students with developmental disabilities, 2) emphasizing that the Board encourage projects that are creative and “outside the box,” and 3) appropriate for a school setting. Additional discussion ensued.



Mr. James Hall made a **MOTION** to recommend that the full Board approve the release of the Request for Proposal, as amended. Mr. Marcus Allen **SECONDED**. Mr. Tim Capoldo abstained. The **MOTION** was carried.

Request for Grant Review Team Volunteers

Mr. Withers explained that Grant Review Team (GRT) volunteers would be needed in order to review applications received in connection with the Pre-ETS focused RFP. Mr. Withers provided a brief overview of the GRT process. He advised that the review team typically consists of four-five volunteers and the meeting to review applications would likely take place during the last week of April or first week of May 2026. Mr. James Hall, Ms. Kristie Bowie-Young, Ms. Dana Taormina, and Mr. Richard Kriner volunteered to serve on the GRT. Mr. Withers thanked the members for volunteering.

Approval of Self-Advocate Scholarship Funding Request

Mr. Withers discussed the self-advocate scholarship funding request application received from The Come As You Are organization, referencing attachment BD-3. Mr. Withers advised that the funding request from the applicant was for \$2,000, which was intended to support the attendance of 5 self-advocates through an introductory workforce readiness program designed for neurodivergent young adults who are preparing for their first volunteer roles, internships, or part-time jobs. The program will take place from 4/13/26 – 5/21/26, at Virginia Wesleyan University. Additional discussion ensued.

Mr. Withers called for a motion to recommend approval of the self-advocate scholarship funding request from the Come As You Are organization, in the amount of \$2,000. Mr. Richard Kriner made this **MOTION**, and Mr. James Hall **SECONDED**. The **MOTION** was carried unanimously.

Grants and Contracts Expenditure Monitoring

Mr. Withers provided updates on recent activities and expenditures regarding four grant projects, referencing attachment IC 3-1: Expanding Capacity for Customized Employment Services to Virginians with Disabilities grant with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services; From Foundation to Future: Advancing Self-Advocacy through Local Advisors grant with The Arc of Virginia; and Bienvenidos Todos: Disability Inclusion grant with the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia (ECNV).

DARS Customized Employment Presentation

Mr. Richard Kriner provided a brief overview of customized employment to committee members. Unfortunately, the presentation was cut short due to time constraints. Mr. Withers advised he would share the presentation materials with committee members.



Wrap-up & Potential Future Meeting Topics

Mr. Withers discussed with committee members that staff would like to have the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia (ECNV) present on outcomes from the Bienvenidos Todos grant project at a future Board meeting. Investment Committee members agreed to hear updates from the grantee at a future Board meeting.

Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 1:55 pm.

Policy Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – March 4, 2026

Meeting Attendance

Board Attendees	Board Members Absent	Staff Attendees
Ann Bevan Ginny Conroy Karen Grizzard Samantha Hollins Kyle Jones Amber Lee Deanna Parker Lindsay Pearse Eric Raff Erika Rogers Mary Vought Parthy Dinora	None	Jen Krajewski Linh Thi Nguyen

Call to Order & Introductions

A meeting of Policy Advisory Committee was held online on Zoom. The Chair, Ms. Karen Grizzard, called the meeting to order at 12:49 p.m. The Chair requested that members introduce themselves.

Approval of December 3, 2025, Minutes

Ms. Parthy Dinora made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Erika Rogers **SECONDED**. The motion was passed unanimously.

Executive Committee Update

Ms. Jennifer Krajewski gave a summary of the Executive Committee meeting as follows: Ms. Teri Morgan gave General Assembly session updates. Ms. Nia Harrison is continuing dental care advocacy with the Dental Association Exchange. The Board will soon rehost a clear/plain language training, led by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International, for a second and third cohort. Mr. Jason Withers is transitioning into his new role as Director of Administration. Board staff held interviews to fill Mr. Withers' previous position of Grants and Contracts Administrator. The position will hopefully be filled by April. Ms. Morgan will be retiring as Executive Director in July. The Executive Director position will be posted in April, and interviews will take place in May. The Board will resume Board meetings in person at Four Points by Sheraton Richmond Airport. Meetings will take place on June 3, September 9 and December 2.

Update on Assessments

As the 2026 General Assembly Session comes to a close, Ms. Krajewski will soon turn her focus to writing this year's policy assessments. She reminded members that the ad hoc policy

assessment review committee members have been selected. The topics for the assessments are 1) Barriers to Navigating the Developmental Disability (DD) Waiver Waitlist and 2) Support for Family Caregivers of Adults with DD. Ms. Krajewski requested that members provide input on these topics.

Discussion and PAC Member Input on Assessment Topic 1: Barriers to Navigating the Developmental Disability (DD) Waiver Waitlist

Members discussed the struggles of families who are on the wait list. Through her work at the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Center for Family Involvement (CFI), Ms. Dinora observed that many people wait a long time to ask for help. She noted that there are significant service gaps for people who are not receiving DD waiver services but still need behavioral support and other services during the day. Families spend a lot of effort on learning about the system, while still not having a comprehensive awareness of available resources. Mr. Eric Raff suggested creating a directory of organizations and services for people with DD, similar to the [Virginia Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing's \(VDDHH\) 2026 Directory of Services](#). Ms. Parker suggested that PAC have a presentation from Ms. Beth Kessler, a Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDS) staff member, on asset-based community development. Some members suggested advocacy training for family members and training on resources for staff at state agencies and community services boards.

Ms. Deanna Parker and Ms. Ginny Conroy mentioned resources that already exist to help people on the waitlist. DBHDS sends a letter to people on the waitlist, which explains the purpose of support coordinators and a list of resources. DBHDS is updating their My Life, My Community website and has also relaunched their listening sessions, in which people with disabilities and their families discuss their thoughts on a given topic and meet DBHDS staff. Ms. Ginny Conroy recommended nonprofit community groups such as Our Stomping Ground, which builds community for people with disabilities by holding events and social activities every day.

Ms. Conroy also mentioned the difficulties of post-high school transition. For example, every Arlington County high school has a transition counselor, but the student with a disability still might not be placed into a day program or support that matches their Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition goal. Ms. Rogers pointed out that rural counties don't have staff whose job duties are fully focused on transition work. Ms. Samantha Hollins explained that the 2024 General Assembly passed a bill that required every high school to appoint a person to oversee transition goals. The bill did not set aside funds for these efforts, so less wealthy counties have appointed teachers to take on this additional work. As a result, there is high turnover among teachers. She cautioned against advocating for additional training and requirements without also identifying specific funding to support the training/requirements.

Discussion and PAC Member Input on Assessment Topic 2: Support for Family Caregivers of Adults with DD

Members discussed concerns as family caregivers. Ms. Rogers talked about the difficulties of finding a personal care assistant for adult children with DD when schools and day support programs are closed. Few people want to provide care for an adult for less than 40 hours a week at a pay rate of \$13.88 per hour. Ms. Lindsay Pearce explained the difficulties of having a child with disabilities but no official diagnosis. She added that live-in caregiver payments and respite care programs that began during the COVID pandemic no longer exist, and that additional advocacy on this issue would be helpful. Ms. Amber Lee expressed concern for sibling caregivers, who will soon have to take over caregiving duties from their aging parents. Members talked about the overwhelming amount of information on existing services and that people often do not feel ready to process that information or to access existing services.

Members offered possible solutions. Ms. Conroy wondered whether traveling caregivers, occupational therapists and other specialists could support caregivers in a program that is similar to the Apex Social au pair service. She also reiterated the helpfulness of organizations like Our Stomping Ground. Ms. Dinora suggested a centralized information source that includes services that are not Medicaid-based for people who need lifelong support but do not qualify for a DD waiver.

Update on Liaison Activities

Ms. Krajewski directed members to refer to the liaison chart in the Board packet. She invited members to reach out to her with any questions.

Other Business/Discussion

Ms. Krajewski and Ms. Grizzard opened the floor for other business and discussion. No additional discussion took place.

Adjournment

Ms. Grizzard adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.