

**WASHINGTON STATE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
COUNCIL**

**Public Policy Committee – Meeting Minutes**

**October 16, 2025**

**Port Angeles, WA & Zoom Hybrid**

**Present:** Julie Clark, Chair, Riley Daugherty, Robert Wardell, Alex Koval, Melissa Dodge, Leigh Spruce, Dana Floyd, Katie Nash, Sandi Gruberg, Monica Burke (DOH), Mark Harniss (UCEDD), Noah Seidel (DRW)

**Staff:** Emily Rogers, Christie Chiles, Phillip Rasmussen

**Welcome**

Julie opened the meeting at 2:15 PM and welcomed both in-person and online participants. Emily noted that the agenda was intentionally short to allow the committee to complete the legislative priority video recording while everyone was together, and to give members some extra downtime before evening activities.

**Approval of Previous Minutes**

Emily introduced the first item—approval of the July 10, 2025 and August 26, 2025 committee meeting minutes. Both sets were included together in the packet.

Alex made a motion to approve the July and August minutes, and Riley seconded. There were no discussions, no abstentions, and no objections. The motion passed unanimously. Emily thanked members for keeping the approval process efficient.

**Review of Today's Agenda**

Emily briefly walked through the agenda. The main tasks were:

- Approving the previous minutes

- Discussing upcoming legislative forums
- Organizing and recording the legislative priority video
- Identifying anything important coming up in the next few months

She explained that reorganizing the agenda allowed the committee to complete the video in one place rather than coordinating individual recordings after the meeting.

### **Legislative Forums and Community Events**

Emily opened the floor for members to share any legislative forums, coffees, or advocacy gatherings happening in their communities.

Leigh reported that The Arc of Snohomish County, together with self-advocates, has been organizing a series of legislative coffees with district legislators. One took place earlier that day, and more are scheduled next week. She noted that these have been well attended and successful. Snohomish County has been hosting these events since around 2017–2018. Every other year, during the longer legislative session, they host a large Legislative Forum, which draws significant community participation.

Emily added that the King County Developmental Disabilities Legislative Forum is scheduled for November 13 in Tukwila. She shared a brief personal reflection about attending the forum for many years with her father, which served as a reminder of the ongoing importance of community advocacy.

No new updates were shared for Clark County or other areas. Emily mentioned that it would be helpful if all counties' events were tracked in a shared calendar so committee members could attend when possible.

### **Update on the Lakeland Village Records Project**

Before shifting to the legislative video work, Emily requested time for an important update. She invited Mark to brief the committee on the Lakeland Village records project.

Mark explained that a trove of historical records was recently discovered at Lakeland Village, some dating back to the 1890s. Roughly 80 percent of the material consists of resident case files, containing extremely detailed historical and personal information. These records were reviewed as part of a legislative proviso directing the State Archives, DSHS, and the University of Washington to assess preservation options.

The State Archives conducted a full inventory. The project ultimately produced two reports: the official report drafted by the Archives, and a companion report from UW. The groups could not agree on recommendations, especially regarding what should happen to the resident files.

The State Archives recommended applying standard state retention schedules, which would mean destroying the case files. UW and disability advocates strongly objected, stressing that the records are historically unique and invaluable for understanding the experiences of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout Washington's institutional history.

Mark explained that the immediate priority is securing a moratorium on destruction, which could be done through a "four corners letter" signed by bipartisan House and Senate leadership. Such a letter would temporarily prevent destruction while a broader public conversation takes place.

He also described the complicated legal barriers. Washington State privacy law is stricter than HIPAA, and DSHS believes the records can never be opened to the public. Discussions about whether records could ever be made accessible—such as 75 years after an individual's death—or whether families should have the option to reclaim ("repatriate") records are still in early stages. The topic is

delicate but significant, and committee members expressed that losing the records forever would be devastating.

Mark will continue updating the committee and will share both reports.

### **Legislative Priority Video Project**

Emily transitioned the committee into the legislative priority video work. The goal is to record short video clips from members explaining the Council's legislative priorities and why legislative advocacy matters. These clips will be combined into a short video for use during the 2026 legislative session and other outreach.

Emily distributed printed sections of the legislative priorities to in-person participants. Each participating member would:

1. Introduce themselves
2. Read their assigned priority section
3. Answer the question, "Why is legislative advocacy important?"

Christie coordinated the filming in the hallway. This approach allows the Council to complete the project without needing to schedule follow-up recordings after the meeting.

Online members were asked to indicate whether they wanted to participate. If needed, Julie and Christie will follow up individually to gather additional video clips.

### **What's Coming Up?**

Emily invited members to share anything coming up in the next few months that should be added to the committee's future agendas. No new items were raised.

Members were reminded of:

- The evening movie outing (meeting at 5 PM in the lobby)
- The earlier meeting start time the following morning (8:00 AM)

## **Adjournment**

With no further business, Julie adjourned the meeting early. Members who volunteered to participate in the legislative video stayed behind for filming. The recording wrapped up at about 4:00 PM.