

Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council Membership and Governance Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: July 16, 2026

Time: 1:06 p.m.–3:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom

Members Present: Riley Daugherty, Julie Clark, Robert Wardell, Alex Koval, Melissia Dodge, Katie Nash, Connor Casseday, Monica Burke, Mark Harniss, Noah Seidel, and Leigh Spruce

Staff Present: Brandi Monts, Brian Dahl, Kevin Vargas, Linda West and Tannis Sears

Call to Order and Introductions

Riley Daugherty called the meeting to order and asked members, staff, and guests introduced themselves.

Agenda

The committee reviewed the proposed agenda. No changes were requested, and the agenda was accepted as presented.

Approval of April 2026 Meeting Minutes

Robert Wardell moved and Julie Clark seconded to approve the minutes. The motion passed without opposition or abstention.

Membership and Governance Committee Orientation

Brian Dahl and Kevin Vargas provided an overview of the purpose and responsibilities of the Membership and Governance Committee. They explained that the committee's work has two primary areas:

- Membership, including recruitment, application review, interviews, recommendations, orientation, participation, and maintaining a representative Council membership.

- Governance, including the Council's charter, policies, executive order, memorandum of understanding with the Department of Commerce, committee structure, meeting practices, and compliance with state and federal requirements.

Staff support the committee by researching issues, preparing drafts, and translating technical material into accessible and plain language formats.

The committee discussed using sub committees to review portions of major documents and develop recommendations between regular committee meetings. The Council Charter will likely require both small-group work and broader committee discussion because of its length and complexity.

The committee also reviewed its work plan as a living document used to track recurring responsibilities, including membership recruitment, development day planning, meeting dates, locations, the Council charter, the executive order, the memorandum of understanding, and the executive director evaluation.

Council Charter

Kevin Vargas and Brian Dahl introduced the current Council Charter, which was last approved in 2010. Staff explained that the charter describes how the Council is organized and operates, including membership, governance, officers, meetings, voting, committees, compensation, management, and the process for making future amendments.

Several portions of the charter are outdated. Examples discussed included:

- Language describing the Council's leadership structure, including the use of co-chairs
- Meeting procedures and the Council's current mix of virtual and hybrid meetings
- Quorum, voting, attendance, and conduct-of-business provisions
- Committee and workgroup structures
- Community compensation and other policies that have been updated since the charter was adopted
- The responsibilities of standing committees
- The process for amending the charter

Staff noted that some sections can be updated by incorporating language from operational policies the Council has already approved.

Committee members were encouraged to share ideas about the review process and possible changes. Staff reported that they had also reviewed charter update approaches used by other councils. The committee expects to begin more detailed work on the charter at the October meeting.

Executive Order

Brandi and Kevin explained that the current executive order is outdated and will need to be revised and submitted to Governor Ferguson for consideration.

The committee discussed areas that may need to be addressed in an updated executive order, including the Council's current use of co-chairs and the Council's authority to determine its own leadership structure.

Staff explained that the charter and executive order are closely connected and should be reviewed together so their provisions are consistent.

Before the next meeting, staff will organize the executive order into a more accessible, plain-language format, identify provisions required by federal or state law.

The committee agreed to include discussion of the executive order on the agenda for the next meeting.

Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Commerce

Brandi Monts explained that the memorandum of understanding, is the agreement describing how the Council and Commerce work together and what administrative support Commerce provides.

The current MOU has not been updated since 2015. Staff have been working with Commerce on a revised version. Brandi reported that progress has increased in recent months as the new Commerce leaders have become more involved in the discussions.

The committee discussed several issues being addressed through the MOU, including:

- Financial and administrative support for the Council
- Technology and the Council's website
- Travel reimbursement and advance payment of expenses

- Accessible transportation
- Removing financial barriers to participation

Staff explained that many of these issues involve agency rules and procedures rather than laws. Changes require negotiation with several levels of Commerce. The Council will review the proposed agreement and have an opportunity to raise questions or concerns before approving it.

Staff explained that the committee's role in the MOU will be different from its role in revising the charter. The MOU is negotiated between the Council and Commerce, committee members will primarily review the proposed agreement, ask questions, and identify concerns.

The committee discussed the amount of work involved in reviewing the charter, executive order, and the MOU at the same time.

Membership Pipeline and Member Experience

Linda West reviewed the Council's membership process. Council members are appointed to three-year terms and may serve two consecutive terms. Applications may be submitted to the Governor's Office throughout the year, although active recruitment generally begins in late winter or early spring before terms end on June 30.

The committee will participate in the recruitment and appointment process by:

- Helping identify and recruit potential applicants
- Selecting members to serve on an interview team
- Reviewing applications and conducting interviews
- Developing appointment recommendations for submission to the Governor's Office
- Supporting orientation for newly appointed members

Linda reported that the appointment recommendations from the most recent recruitment cycle had been forwarded to the Governor's Office and were awaiting action.

The committee reviewed the Council's current membership. Staff explained that recruitment and appointment recommendations consider several factors, including representation of people with developmental disabilities, family members, geographic areas, race and ethnicity, and lived experiences.

The committee discussed the need to expand outreach to communities that may not be well represented on the Council. Members were encouraged to share information about the Council in their communities and refer interested applicants to staff for assistance with the application process.

Staff also reviewed other membership-related responsibilities of the committee, including:

- Orienting new members
- Planning the annual Council Development Day
- Reviewing meeting dates and locations
- Maintaining and updating the Membership Handbook
- Reviewing the Council website for current and accessible information

October Meeting and 2027 Meeting Planning

Staff reviewed the initial agenda for the October committee meeting. The committee will begin detailed work on the Council Charter and review a plain-language version of the executive order. Staff will organize the discussion by topics or themes so members can consider related issues across both documents. The MOU will be added if there are significant developments that require committee review.

The October Council meeting will be held in Shelton.

Development Day will focus on the Council's work with the other DD Network partners: Disability Rights Washington, the University of Washington Center for Excellence in Disabilities, and Allies in Advocacy. The discussion will connect the work of each partner to the Council's new State Plan.

Members supported continuing the current schedule of two virtual meetings and two in-person hybrid meetings. Members generally supported keeping the January Council meeting virtual and holding Advocacy Day as a separate in-person event in Olympia. Members noted that this approach reduces travel during winter, allows greater focus on Advocacy Day, and provides more opportunities to hold Council meetings in other parts of the state.

The committee began identifying possible locations for the two 2027 in-person meetings. Suggestions included Bellingham, the Tri-Cities, the Everett or north Seattle area, Spokane, Wenatchee, Vancouver, Dayton, and the University of Washington. Staff will research the suggested locations, including meeting space, lodging, transportation, accessibility, and cost.

The committee will continue this discussion and make final recommendations about the 2027 meeting locations at the October meeting.

Action Items

Staff will:

- Prepare the Council Charter and executive order for review using plain-language summaries and topic-based sections.
- Add the MOU to a future agenda when significant developments are ready for committee review.
- Research potential locations for the 2027 in-person Council meetings.
- Bring meeting-location options back to the committee in October
- Continue supporting recruitment, appointments, and orientation for new Council members.

Committee members were encouraged to review the Charter and share ideas for changes, meeting locations, and ways to strengthen membership recruitment and representation.

Adjournment

Riley Daugherty adjourned the meeting.