

# Vermont Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council Meeting Minutes

Conference Call  
Wednesday, December 6, 2017  
10:00AM – 11:00AM

Present:

**Appointed Members:** Lori Augustyniak, Mark Depman, Jolinda LaClair, Kreig Pinkham, Theresa Randall, Mark Weikert, Nissa Walke

**Associate Members:** Mitch Barron, Peter Espenshade

**Staff:** Marcia LaPlante, Tina Royer, Cindy Thomas

Peter Espenshade reviewed the purpose of the meeting – to discuss the Agency of Human Services, Vermont Department of Health (AHS VDH) proposal to remove the language that authorizes the Vermont Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council (VADAC) in statute and concurrently establish the VADAC as an advisory body within the VDH. Lori Augustyniak reviewed the three options regarding the direction of VADAC. After the meeting, the appointed members of VADAC, will take an electronic vote, and decide the future of VADAC. Lori opened the floor to questions after listing the options, which include:

- Accept the recommendation of AHS to remove VADAC's authorization under V.S.A 18, Chapter 94, § 4803, § 4804, and § 4805, and serve as VADAC to the Department of Health on issues such as strategic planning, new initiatives, and stakeholder body for grants and policy.
- No change in statute
- Maintain VADAC's authorization under V.S.A 18, Chapter 94, § 4803, § 4804, and § 4805, and work with the VDH in the manner described in Option 1, as we draft language for an amended statute to be completed by June 30, 2018 and introduced for the 2019 legislative session.

Jolinda LaClair asked about VDH's vision for VADAC; what would the committee do, will they focus on policy and program, etc.? Cindy Thomas advised that the details need to be worked out, but she envisions VADAC would serve as a stakeholder group, to advise ADAP on grant priorities, strategic plans and policies that may be underdevelopment. She sees a need for a voice outside of VDH to advise on these issues.

Lori Augustyniak stated that helping to serve ADAP would be good role, but, is that going to be the only role? Will there be other value for VADAC, beyond ADAP? How important is the statute to VADAC's role? Cindy Thomas said that the AHS consults with VDH on issues

related to alcohol and drug issues, so by virtue of advising the Commissioner of Health, the Council would also be advising AHS.

Jolinda LaClair added that it is very important to have structure to VADAC. Cindy Thomas is willing to help council establish structure, moving forward. Cindy added that moving out of statute gives flexibility with the work plan and deliverables. She feels that members will come despite not being in statute, when value is placed on the council.

Mark Weikert expressed concern that by reporting to VDH, the Council might have less influence on the Agency of Education.

Kreig Pinkham wants a clear sense of sharpened purpose.

Marcia LaPlante read a letter from Bob Uerz. He expressed that the structure of VADAC should be determined by appointed members. His recommendation is that the Council maintain a strong focus on alcohol given focus on opioids and possible legalization of marijuana.

Concerns were raised about what would occur if in the future new leadership were not supportive of the Council structure. There is some inherent value in the statute because removal of the Council could not be as easily done. Mark Weikert asked if it would be difficult to go back into statute once they left. Marcia LaPlante will address the question to David Englander today, before vote.

It was recommended that should VADAC language be removed from the statute, a communication developed by VDH to reassure that council is not going away.

Next steps:

- Consult with David Englander regarding question from Mark Weikert, and to see if Cindy can vote in place of Barbara Cimaglio.
- Today's minutes will be sent out to VADAC before poll, by ADAP.
- Electronic poll will be distributed to appointed member

Call adjourned: 10:50am