

## January 2024 Meeting Minutes for Green Mountain Self-Advocates

### I. Meeting Details

Meeting Leader: Lisa Rudiakov, Board President

Date: **January 29, 2024**, Time: 10:00 AM EST Location: on Zoom

**Background Information:** GMSA Officers and GMSA staff met virtually on January 28, 2024, for 90 minutes to prepare the agenda and meeting slides.

As accommodation for board members with a disability, **notes are recorded live on Google Slides by Max Barrows and Karen Topper and displayed on a shared screen by GMSA Staff.** [Click here to review the Google slides used for January 29, 2024.](#) Staff monitor the chat and read comments from board members who prefer to type to communicate.

### II. Members Present

We had a Quorum with the following 13 board members in attendance:

1. Christopher Dubeau
2. Erik Johnson
3. Gary Vyhnak
4. Heather Raymond
5. Jennifer Rainville
6. Levi Gardner, Vice-President
7. Lisa Rudiakov, President
8. Marjorie Burns
9. Taylor Terry
10. James Paradis (alternate for  
Tesha Thibodeau)
11. Whitley Draper
12. Skye Peebles
13. Chad Cleverly, Treasurer

Other local group members were present: Paul Betz, David Frye, Max Barrows, Hasan Ko, and Danielle Viau.

### III. Absent

- Nicole Villemaire, Secretary (excused)
- Lehana Guyette (excused)

- Ocean Streater (unexcused)

#### **IV. Call to Order**

**Agenda:** President Lisa Rudiakov started the meeting at 10:00 AM EST.

The meeting agenda was shared on screen and read by Lisa R. GMSA staff simplified the wording of a few agenda items. [Click here for the agenda on slide #1 of the GMSA Board Meeting 1.29.24 slide document.](#) The **board members approved the agenda.**

Everyone introduced themselves and provided an update on local group activities.

**Minutes:** Max Barrows read the December minutes. Erik J. made a motion to accept the December 27, 2023, minutes as written. Seconded by Levi G. **Motion to approve the December minutes passed.** 12 board members voted to approve the minutes as written. Skye P. abstained because she was not at the December meeting. She added, “The notes were fabulous, and I feel like I was there.”

#### **V. OLD BUSINESS**

**Board Retreat:** In December, the Board approved having an overnight retreat. We planned to have it in March, but the officers want to change it to May 2024. The change is to avoid any travel problems due to snowstorms. The purpose is to do strategic planning on expanding peer mentoring and hiring more staff for the new 5-year grant to work with high school students. [For more details review slide #2 of the GMSA Board Meeting 12.18.23 slide document.](#)

**Voices and Choices Conference Committee:** The board wants to reward active members of local groups who regularly go to their self-advocacy group meetings. The board considered two options:

1. Give a prize or gift (like a sweatshirt or backpack) to active members who come to the conference
2. Or give a discount or cheaper conference price) to active members who come to the conference.

The idea of a discount price may sound good, but it is not helpful to everyone because some agencies already give people money to pay for the conference. The idea of rewarding active members with a prize or gift is something that everyone can enjoy and appreciate.

**Chad C. made a motion to give a prize to active members of local groups who regularly go to their self-advocacy group meetings. Skye P. seconded the motion. Motion passed. It was unanimous.**

Lisa R. reminded board members that our conference committee meets the second Monday of each month from 10:30 to 12:00. Use the GMSA link. [For more details review slide #9 of the GMSA Board Meeting 12.18.23 slide document.](#)

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**Officer Elections:** It is time to elect officers for the GMSA Board. There are 4 officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Lisa R. read a description of what each officer does. [For more details, review slides #3 through #7 of the GMSA Board Meeting 12.18.23 slide document.](#) During our February 26<sup>th</sup> we will find out who is interested in running. During our March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting people running to be officers will make their campaign speeches. Members of local groups will vote during April and May. The announcement of new officers will be in May 2024.

Lisa R shared that this is an opportunity to do more advocating for yourself and others. You can help other people try new leadership roles and have a voice.

GMSA staff answered a few questions about elections:

- It is okay if GMSA Board officers belong to the same local group. For example, Levi G. is the current GMSA Vice-President and Chad C. is the current GMSA treasurer. Both Levi and Chad are from St Johnsbury.
- A local group always has a GMSA board member even if one of their members becomes a GMSA Officer. For example, Nicole V. and Whitley D. both belong to Champlain Voices. Whitley is the GMSA board member from Champlain Voices even though Nicole was elected to be the GMSA secretary.
- Local groups decide who represents them on the GMSA board. There is no set time when groups pick their representative to the GMSA board. Most of the time a board member is selected when a local group votes on officers for their local group.

### **New Peer Advocacy Grant:**

On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, the state let us know we were awarded a 1-year grant of \$203,000 to do peer advocacy. GMSA is still working with the state to complete the necessary paperwork. Here are a few details.

The current GMSA officers (Lisa, Chad, Levi, and Nicole) will serve on a 1-year Advisory committee for the Project.

On February 15<sup>th</sup> applications will open for:

- 1 coordinator and 2 co-coordinators (at least 2 people with the lived experience of receiving developmental services)
- Hire up to 16 Peer Advocates who get services from HCRS, Lincoln Street, Families First, NKHS, Community Associates, Champlain Community Services, Howard, and Upper Valley Services.
- Peer Advocates work together to teach workshops
  - Getting ready for your Person-Centered Planning or ISA
  - Know your Rights Under the HCBS Rule and What to Do if My Rights Are Not Respected;
- Peer Advocates, working in teams of at least 2 people to provide “office hours” twice a week

## **VII. OTHER ITEMS**

**Announcement:** The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council is looking for people with disabilities to be members of their board. [For more details, review slides #11 and #12 of the GMSA Board Meeting 12.18.23 slide document.](#)

**The next board meeting is on February 26, 2024, from 10:00 to 12:00.**

## **VIII. MEETING ENDS**

President Lisa Rudiakov adjourned the meeting at 12:12 PM EST