

Montana ABLE Oversight Committee
Meeting Minutes

Date: March 11, 2026

Time: 10:08 AM – 11:20 AM

Chair: Theresa Baldry

Attendees

Committee Members:

- Theresa Baldry
- Kathleen Magone
- Michael Woods

Guests from the State:

- Kristy Makela (notes/minutes)

Members of the Public:

- Travis Hoffman
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1. Call to Order

Summary:

- Meeting called to order at 10:08 AM.
 - Recording approved for note-taking purposes.
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2. Public Comment

Summary:

- No public comment.
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3. Opening Items

a. Approval of Agenda

Summary:

- MontGuide discussion postponed due to presenter unavailability and rescheduled for July 2026.

Decision:

- Agenda approved unanimously as amended.

Action Items:

- None
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b. Approval of Previous Minutes (Nov 2025 & Jan 2026)

Summary:

- Edits reviewed and accepted.
- Discussion held on improving formatting for clarity and consistency, including grouping attendees by role (committee, public, state staff).

Decision:

- Minutes approved with agreed formatting updates.

Action Items:

- Theresa Baldry → Send finalized clean copies
 - Kristy Makela → Apply standardized format to future minutes
 - Michael Woods → Post approved minutes to website
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4. Business Items

MontGuide Discussion

Summary:

- Presentation postponed to July 2026 at request of presenter.

Action Items:

- None
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DPHHS Website – Montana ABLE

Summary:

- Current website reviewed; includes basic program info, meeting agendas, and minutes, but contains outdated information (e.g., incorrect next meeting date).
- Committee identified several improvements to increase usability and transparency:
 - Add national ABLE resources (e.g., ABLE Resource Center, National Disability Institute)
 - Update meeting schedule and ensure accuracy
 - Improve organization of documents (e.g., grouping agendas/minutes by year instead of a single long list)
 - Add clear instructions for the public re submitting concerns or requests for assistance
 - Consider adding a general “resources” section with appropriate disclaimers
- Noted that website updates may require a formal state process and could take time.

Decisions:

- Website review will be added as a standing agenda item.

Action Items:

- Michael Woods → Submit requests to state web team:
 - Add national resource links
 - Update meeting dates
- Committee → Explore document organization improvements
- Committee → Develop language/process for submitting concerns
- Theresa Baldry → Add website review to ongoing agenda

ABLE Activities (Webinars / Trainings)

Summary:

- Limited participation in recent trainings.

- Kathleen Magone has been sharing national resources but will not continue after her term ends.
- Committee acknowledged need to reassign this responsibility.

Action Items:

- Committee → Identify member to take over sharing training/resources
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Requests for Assistance / ABLA Account Concerns

Summary:

- No new formal concerns reported.
- Concern raised that the public may not know how to submit issues.
- Committee acknowledged that past concerns (fees, transfers, account issues) have been discussed but not formally compiled or advanced.
- Emphasis placed on moving from discussion to actionable follow-up.

Action Items:

- Theresa Baldry → Begin compiling concerns from past meeting minutes (focus on last 1–2 years)
 - Kristy Makela → Assist with review as needed
 - Committee → Review compiled list at May or July meeting
 - Michael Woods → Forward formalized concerns to external contact (Census / Kimberly Shockley)
 - Committee → Add clear submission guidance to website
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Committee Membership / Appointments

Summary:

- No update on appointment of a member with a disability (pending follow-up).
- Kathleen Magone announced she will not renew her term (ending ~September 2026).

- Recommendation made for a replacement with legal expertise and lived experience in disability-related financial planning.
- Committee discussed need for broader recruitment, including financial/accounting expertise tied to statutory requirements.

Action Items:

- Lloyd (pending) → Follow up on disability representative appointment
 - Kathleen Magone → Reach out to recommended candidate (Erika Johnson)
 - Theresa Baldry → Seek additional candidates (financial expertise)
 - Committee → Prioritize filling vacancies to reach full membership
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Email & Attachments from Sara Sparks (Legal Letter)

Summary:

- Committee reviewed legal correspondence and raised concerns regarding:
 - Who requested the letter
 - Whether it constitutes an official legal opinion
 - We need to determine the “weight” of the letter
 - Potential inaccuracies in interpretation
 - Whether the State is using it as guidance (e.g., regarding Medicaid recovery and qualified expenses)
- Committee agreed clarification is needed before determining a response.

Action Items:

- Michael Woods → Determine:
 - Origin and purpose of the letter
 - Whether it is an official legal opinion
 - How it is being used by the State
- Theresa Baldry → Resend letter and attachments to all committee members
- Committee → Reassess need for formal response after clarification

ABLE Program Data Report

Summary:

- Report reviewed (accounts, contributions, withdrawals, closures).
- Privacy concerns noted; detailed data will not be included in minutes.

Action Items:

- None
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5. Work Plan / Upcoming Topics

Summary:

- Committee identified priority topics for upcoming meetings:

May 2026 Meeting:

- State RFP process for ABLE program
- Committee's statutory role in providing input and oversight
- Review of compiled account concerns

July 2026 Meeting:

- MontGuide presentation and discussion

Action Items:

- Theresa Baldry → Develop May agenda (RFP + concerns focus)
 - Committee → Prepare to discuss statutory responsibilities and oversight role
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6. Next Meeting

Date: May 13, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM

7. Adjournment

- Motion: Michael Woods
- Second: Kathleen Magone
- Passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM

Action Items Summary (Quick Reference)

- Theresa Baldry → Send finalized minutes; compile historical concerns; resend legal materials
 - Kristy Makela → Standardize minutes format; assist with concern review
 - Michael Woods → Update website; upload minutes; clarify legal letter; forward concerns
 - Kathleen Magone → Contact potential committee candidate
 - Lloyd (pending) → Follow up on disability appointment
 - Committee → Prepare for May RFP discussion; identify replacement for training/resource role
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Minutes prepared by: Kristy Makela

Status: Approved