



**CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 12, 2015**

- Location:** Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
- In attendance:** Laurie Cantwell, Ann Gionet, Sara Lourie, Linda Mizzi, Lisa Sheppard, Mona Tremblay, Robyn Trowbridge, and Robin Wood
- By phone:** Karen Hlavac, Marcus Rivera, and Renee Toper
- Absent:** April Dipollina, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Mark Greenstein, Steven Hernandez, Allison Quirion, Jody Santoro
- Call to Order:** 10:17 am
- Public Comment:** None

**Approval of February Minutes** – Robin Wood moved to accept the minutes as written; Karen Hlavac seconded the motion and they were approved by the Council membership.

**Old Business**

Report from Bylaws/Membership ad hoc committee – Sara Lourie is still in the process of revising the Bylaws as discussed at the last meeting. This will remain on the agenda for the next meeting.

Report from Annual Report ad hoc committee – Mona Tremblay and Robin Wood provided a status update on the Annual Report. The state agency drafts were reviewed and there are still a few that have not been submitted. The committee decided on a user-friendly format with web links directing the reader to more details about the service being described. The report this year will not utilize a grid as previously discussed due to time constraints in setting this up. The committee is also recommending the use of family stories to personalize the report; there was discussion about the types of stories – focused on success vs. the impact of budget cuts – and how best to identify sources within a relatively short time frame. A number of Council members volunteered to either write stories from their own or known experiences of other families, to identify places where stories already exist and the Council can get permission to use and/or identify families willing to share their stories. All stories should be sent to Ann Gionet by March 26; one concern was the length and we may need to request size limits in order to assure there is sufficient space. The goal continues to be to complete this by the end of

April. It is not yet clear who will fund the printing of the report but there may be a possibility that this could be done through the legislature since this is a legislatively mandated Council. Lisa Sheppard will follow-up.

Additional work to be done includes:

- a. Identify printing source and funding;
- b. Collect and integrate family stories;
- c. Include Council member contact information and appointing authority;
- d. Draft report overview; and
- e. Draft recommendations.

## **New Business**

Impact of State Budget Cuts – the concern about the current proposed budget cuts as well as those impacting state agencies over the past 3-5 years was expressed as it related to almost every topic covered at the meeting. It is difficult for Council members to consider completion of an Annual report that does not reflect the concern as it impacts families of children with special needs. There was particular mention of several of the cuts – the DDS reductions in the Voluntary Services Program, rent subsidy and day programming for high school graduates and DSS Medicaid rate cuts specifically - for which poignant family stories will abound. There were questions about how much of this is known by families and mention of some of the organizations trying to get information out to the public. This will continue to be monitored and discussed by Council members as the budget moves through the process.

## **Announcements**

Lisa Sheppard reported that Sharon Dexler has resigned; she is leaving the Office of the Child Advocate and can no longer represent them on the Council. A new appointment has not been made as of yet.

Marcus Rivera discussed the time frame for public comment on proposed changes on the State Department of Education federal application.

Sara Lourie handed out fliers for the Autism Family Forum in April and an informational flier from Value Options with contact information for their autism team.

**Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 pm

Minutes submitted by Sara Lourie, Secretary