



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services



Dannel P. Malloy  
Governor

Council on Developmental Services

Jordan A. Scheff  
Acting Commissioner

**Minutes of Thursday, January 19, 2017**

Location: Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Central Office, Conference Room A

**In attendance:** Adrienne Benjamin, Chair; Lisa Weisinger-Roland (via phone); Vice Chair; Jamie Lazaroff, Secretary; Jennifer Carroll (via phone); Karen Hlavac; Rick Lenz; Diana Mennone; Patti Silva (via phone); Deborah Ullman; Kevin Zingler (via phone)

**Absent:** Arlene Reith; Dr. Neil Stein

**Staff:** Margaret Castonguay, Executive Secretary; Christine Pollio Cooney, Legislative Liaison; Jordan Scheff, Acting Commissioner

**Introductions**

Chair Adrienne Benjamin, called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m.

**Public Participation**

Jack Frost, Fay Lenz, Rick Rothstein

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes for the January meeting were approved

**Topics for Discussion**

Acting Commissioner Jordan Scheff told the Council that Commissioner Murray's last day was January 19<sup>th</sup> and that he had been appointed as Acting Commissioner. Commissioner Scheff commented on the DDS Five Year Plan speaking about the history of the plan and how the previous plan's core ideas were brought forward in the current plan's narrative. The DDS Five Year Plan hearing was well attended and Commissioner Scheff thanked members of the Council for their testimony and support of the plan. The testimony submitted and the public hearing's transcript will be posted on the DDS website. Commissioner Scheff commented on a recent press release that stated incorrect savings projections for various private provider' budget proposals for DDS. The Commissioner responded with the correct information updating the Council on the current year DDS budget and the contribution to the projected fiscal year 2018 budget. Commissioner Scheff updated the Council on the DDS residential Waiting List and said that it always would be a priority for the agency. The Commissioner answered questions concerning DDS's and the Local Education Agency's responsibilities for funding of residential placements for school-age children.

### **Ombudsman, Ed Mambruno**

Mr. Mambruno shared with the Council the history on the Office of the DDS Ombudsman. He spoke on the initiatives and structure of the office, as he works in partnership, with individuals, families, state agencies, municipalities, general assembly members and mostly individuals receiving DDS supports. Mr. Mambruno shared with the Council his recognitions and awards as well as the boards and commissions he serves on. Mr. Mambruno highlighted some of the frequent issues he gets requests on, such as budgets, guardianship, respite, day programs, case management, camps, and many miscellaneous questions that he collaborates with other agencies and makes referrals for individuals who have needs for services in other agencies.

### **Adrienne Benjamin Council Chair**

Ms. Benjamin updated the Council on the activities of the DDS Advocacy Sub-Committee. The Committee met on January 10, 2017. The Committee drafted a letter to the Governor which highlighted the formation of the Committee and shared its goals in recommending to the Governor a list of principles. The subcommittee focused on how to get the united message of the seven principles out to legislators. The Council's letter to the Governor will be sent out broadly, and a large bright sticker will be created to wear and call attention to the seven principles. The goal is to have a lot of visibility at Family Hearing Day. All Council members will be encouraged to attend. The Sub Committee is planning to meet with Jon Slifka, the Governor's Liaison to the Disability Community. The next scheduled Sub-Committee meeting is Tuesday, February 14, from 11:00 to 1:00.

### **Legislative Update**

Christine Pollio Cooney Legislative Liaison provided an update to council on numerous bills being raised this session. Ms. Cooney cautioned members that proposed bills have a long process to follow before becoming law. Governor Malloy will present his budget for fiscal years 2018 and 2019 in Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>. This is a starting point for the next two-year budget. Information will be shared as the Appropriations Committee sets the dates for public hearings on proposed agency budgets. The public will have an opportunity to testify. Additional information will be shared once we receive it. The department is in the process of incorporating feedback on the draft Five Year Plan and the final plan should be submitted to the legislature soon. DDS legislative updates and public hearing testimony may be found on the DDS website under Legislative Affairs.

### **New Business:**

The Council to invite the following to present:

- Robin Wood, Director of Family Support Strategies & Advocacy, to speak on the national Community of Practice (COP)
- The Self Advocate Coordinators (SACS)
- Melissa Marshall, Director, Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Regional Advisory Council's (RACS) in the spring at the DDS Cheshire office
- Izabella Pulvermacher, DDS' dental coordinator. (Council members spoke about forming a subcommittee on dental care for people with intellectual disabilities)
- Members of the ARC
- Unions

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.