



# State of Connecticut Council on Developmental Services

# DDS

## **APPROVED** Minutes of December 20, 2018 Meeting

**Location:** DDS Central Office, Hartford, CT

**In attendance:** Adrienne Benjamin, Chair; Pamela DonAroma; Joseph Duffy; Christine Hainsworth-Straus; Karen Hlavac; Jamie Lazaroff, Secretary; Rick Lenz; Rick Rothstein; Dr. Neil Stein; Deborah Ullman; Lisa Weisinger-Roland; and Kevin Zingler, Vice Chair

**Absent:** Diana Mennone; Dawn Oduor; and Arlene Reith

**DDS Staff:** Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner; Krista Ostaszewski, Director of Legislative Affairs; Rod O'Connor, Legislative Liaison

### **Introductions**

Adrienne Benjamin, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. The Council members introduced themselves.

### **Public Participation**

John Frost, Fay Lenz, Stan Soby

A motion was made and seconded to recess the meeting for the purposes of having the Council's holiday dinner. The meeting was recessed at 4:37 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 4:57 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the November 29, 2018 Council meeting were approved as amended. The motion for approval was made by Kevin Zingler and seconded by Jamie Lazaroff.

### **Topics of Discussion**

- Ms. Benjamin discussed how the Council's letter of support for the reappointment of Commissioner Scheff was sent to Governor Lamont's Transition Team.
- As the departing chair of the Council, Ms. Benjamin summarized the activities of the Council including the coalitions built between the Council and other stakeholder groups and increasing the visibility of the Council. She passed out the Council on Developmental Services' testimony from the first Family Hearing Day in 2017.
- Ms. Benjamin, Rick Rothstein, Joe Duffy and Rick Lenz discussed the Governor's Transition Team's Human Services Subcommittee's meeting and the discussions that were had at the meeting. Andrea Barton-Reeves of HARC and Barry Simon of Oak Hill were members of the subcommittee.
- **Election of 2019 Council Officers** - Mr. Lenz was asked to give the report of the Council's Nominating Subcommittee. Mr. Lenz, speaking on behalf of the other subcommittee members, Diana Mennone and Mr. Duffy, recommended that the slate of Council officers for 2019 be Lisa Weisinger-Roland as Chair; Kevin Zingler as Vice Chair; and Karen Hlavac as Secretary. Ms. Benjamin asked if there were other nominations for the positions of Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary of the Council. Seeing no other nominations, Ms. Benjamin closed the nomination process. Mr. Lenz made a motion, seconded by Ms. Benjamin, to elect Ms. Weisinger-Roland as Chair; Mr. Zingler as Vice Chair; and Ms. Hlavac as Secretary. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Ms. Benjamin thanked the Nominating Subcommittee members for their good work. Members of the Council thanked Ms. Benjamin and Mr. Lazaroff for their work as Chair and Secretary over the past several years.

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- **Council Legislative Breakfast** - Mr. Zingler led a planning discussion for the proposed Council Legislative Breakfast. The outcome of the discussions was to have a legislative breakfast on Wednesday, March 13, 2019 from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Members were encouraged to contact legislator's they know personally to see if they would co-sponsor the event. It was determined that invitations should be sent to each legislator and that Rod O'Connor, DDS Legislative Liaison, would help the Council members with contacting legislators and the logistics of the breakfast at the Legislative Office Building. There was discussion around inviting DDS's Regional Advisory Committee members to participate. Suggestions were made concerning the invitation that would be sent out and what information would be provided to the legislators.

### **Legislative Update**

- Mr. O'Connor reminded Council members that the 2019 legislative session begins on January 9, 2019 and ends at midnight on June 5, 2019. The 2019 session will see the introduction of a two-year budget by Governor Lamont sometime in February, with Appropriations Committee public hearings on the budget to follow at the end of February and beginning of March. Mr. O'Connor said that DDS did not submit a package of legislative proposals this year and would be following bills that were proposed and raised by committee and their impact on DDS.

### **Commissioner's Report**

- Commissioner Scheff told Council members that Ed Mambruno, DDS Ombudsperson, had relocated his office to the DDS West Region offices in Waterbury. Mr. Mambruno's telephone number remains the same. Commissioner Scheff asked if Council members had any questions concerning the Ombudsperson's reports from October and November of 2018.
- The Commissioner discussed the process so far in his seeking reappointment as Commissioner of Developmental Services. He has met formally and informally with several members of Governor Lamont's Transition Team. He said he did not have a timeline for when a decision would be made on the appointment of a DDS Commissioner.
- Commissioner Scheff told members that he had completed his first round of family meetings. He stated that these meetings had gone well and had allowed parents, family members, and other stakeholders to ask questions about how the department operates and what type of programs and services DDS offers. The family meetings allowed the Commissioner and other DDS staff to hear first-hand the experiences of DDS families. He has asked Krista Ostaszewski, Director of Legislative Affairs to compile a summary of the comments and notes from these meeting. The Commissioner reiterated that there would be another set of regional meetings scheduled for the spring of 2019.
- The Commissioner discussed the Step-Up/Step-Down Unit that is scheduled to open in January on the Hartford Regional Center campus. DDS staff are being successfully redeployed to the unit. Outreach to hospitals and private providers concerning the unit's existence, what supports it will provide, and the duration of those supports is ongoing.
- Commissioner Scheff, also, discussed DDS mobile crisis response initiative and how the department is working to partner with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to use those agencies' established mobile crisis networks. Council members had a discussion of crisis situations and the existing resources available to persons with a disability and how these resources are not always appropriate for these persons. The suggestion was made that a guardian or family member of the person with a disability contact their local law enforcement agency to share information about the person's disability and to provide ways of approaching a situation involving their family member.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

***NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: January 17, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.***