



State of Connecticut Council on Developmental Services

DDS

DRAFT Minutes of the December 19, 2019 Annual Meeting

Location: DDS Central Office, 460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

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

Absent: Joseph Duffy; Diana Mennone; and Arlene Reith

DDS Staff: Commissioner Jordan Scheff; Krista Ostaszewski, Director of Legislation, Regulations and Communications; Rod O'Connor, Legislative Liaison; and Joseph Carvalho, Executive Secretary

Introductions

Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. She asked if anyone from the public wished to speak and seeing none, she recessed the meeting at 4:35 so Council members could enjoy their holiday potluck dinner. Ms. Weisinger-Roland reconvened the meeting at 4:53 p.m.

Public Participation

Fay Lenz and Stan Soby No comments were made.

Topics of Discussion

▪ **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the November 21, 2019 Joint Council meeting were approved with corrections. The motion for approval was made by Adrienne Benjamin and seconded by Karen Hlavac.

▪ **Election of 2020 Council Officers**

Ms. Weisinger-Roland asked Rick Lenz to give the report of the Council's Nominating Subcommittee. Mr. Lenz detailed the process by which the Nominating Subcommittee made its choice for the slate of Council officers. Mr. Lenz, speaking on behalf of the other subcommittee members, Diana Mennone and Rick Rothstein, recommended that the slate of Council officers for 2020 be as follows: Kevin Zingler as Chair; Karen Hlavac as Vice Chair; and Rick Rothstein as Secretary. Ms. Weisinger-Roland asked if there were other nominations for the positions of Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary of the Council. Seeing no other nominations, Ms. Weisinger-Roland closed the nomination process. Pamela DonAroma made a motion, seconded by Adrienne Benjamin, to elect Mr. Zingler as Chair; Ms. Hlavac as Vice Chair; and Mr. Rothstein as Secretary. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Ms. Weisinger-Roland thanked the Nominating Subcommittee members for their good work. Members of the Council thanked Ms. Weisinger-Roland for her work as Chair for the past year.

▪ **Council's Legislative Breakfast for 2020**

Council members discussed whether they should have a second legislative breakfast in 2020. While last year's breakfast was judged a success, members discussed alternatives to a legislative breakfast including having an event at lunch or in the evening. A suggestion was made that the Council host an advocacy day which could include providers and families talking to legislators. Members determined that the Regional Advisory and Planning Council (RAC) members should be invited to participate in the event. Mr. Zingler and Rod O'Connor, Legislative Liaison, will follow up with the Office of Legislative Management to book a location for the event. The preferred date for the event would be a Wednesday in March.

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Commissioner's Report

- Commissioner Jordan Scheff spoke about Pulselight, DDS's new incident management system that is being implemented. The Commissioner suggested that if the Council members were interested in Pulselight that Josh Scalora, DDS Director of Business Analytics, could do a presentation at a Council meeting. Commissioner Scheff said that the Governor's office had asked all state agencies to provide highlights of 2019. He said that DDS highlights included the utilization of the Step Up/Step Down Unit and the awards of the ID Partnership grants to individuals and small businesses.
- Commissioner Scheff described some of the department's priorities for next year that include (1) working on "green" initiatives and helping providers find ways to reduce their carbon footprint; (2) awarding a second round of ID Partnership grants to provide jobs and economic opportunities for persons with intellectual disability; and (3) reimagining Employment Opportunities and Day Services.
- Council members discussed one of their priorities which is sexual abuse prevention and the #7 Times initiatives. The Commissioner said that Ken Cabral, DDS's new Director of Family Support Strategy, was beginning to work with stakeholder groups on sexual abuse prevention issues. Ms. Weisinger-Roland stated that there were very few trauma-informed therapists that were available to work with persons who have been sexually abused. Commissioner Scheff said that Dr. Peter Tolisano, DDS Director of Psychological Services, was working to qualify more trauma-informed clinicians as DDS qualified providers.
- The Commissioner said that he had met with the Commissioner of Social Services, Deidre Gifford to discuss ways the two state agencies can more effectively work together and to identify common issues. Ms. Hlavac asked if in reimagining day services whether that would include more funding for transportation. Mr. Rothstein added that transportation was a chronic issue in the "Quiet Corner" and other areas of the state that are not well served by public transportation.
- Ms. Hlavac asked the Commissioner about a shortage of medication administration certification classes. Commissioner Scheff said that the department had had extraordinary circumstances including a flood at the Woodland Street office and med certification employees who had left the department. These circumstances led to a slowdown in med certifications but that providers had been notified of these circumstances by the DDS Medication Certification Unit and were instructed to tell their employees who would need med certification to plan accordingly. The Commissioner added that the Medication Administration Lean process was almost completed. When the Lean process is done it will recommend that the Medication Administration Certification process be streamlined so that there will be one certification process for DDS, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and the Department of Public Health. There also will be more online components of the certification.
- When asked by Council members how the Council could best support him in 2020, Commissioner Scheff said that anything that would allow the various advocacy groups to align their priorities and work together would be helpful.

New Business

- Jaime Lazaroff announced that he was stepping down from the Council after six years. He said that a change to his job had made it difficult to attend meetings. He said that he would be available to advise the new appointee when they had been named. He thanked the Council members for their support through the years. Ms. Weisinger-Roland thanked Mr. Lazaroff for his years of service including three years as Secretary of the Council. The Council members gave him a warm round of applause.
- Mr. Rothstein commented on the Bond Commission's agenda and what DDS might expect within the framework of a bonded debt diet.

- Ms. Benjamin noted that new “grad funding” was included in the second year (FY21) of the biennial state budget, which has not happened in previous budgets.
- Krista Ostaszewski, Director of Legislation, Regulations and Communications, told members that the DDS Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid waiver amendments that had been waiting for approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) had been approved. She said that DDS was always looking to highlight success stories for the DDS [In-the-Spotlight](#) section of the DDS website. Ms. Ostaszewski noted that [2 Generation \(2Gen\)](#) Advisory Board has had ongoing discussions on ways to address benefits cliffs.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING:

January 16, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.

DDS Central Office

460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106

Schedule of Council Meetings for 2020

Council meetings are usually scheduled on the third Thursday of the month from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in DDS Conference Room A, unless otherwise specified.

January 16, 2020	February 20, 2020	March 19, 2020
April 16, 2020	May 21, 2020	June 18, 2020
July 16, 2020	August 2020 No meeting	September 17, 2020
October 15, 2020	November 19, 2020 Joint Meeting with RACs	December 17, 2020 Annual Meeting