



State of Connecticut Council on Developmental Services

DDS

Minutes of the June 17, 2021 Meeting

Location: Meeting Held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Arlene Reith, Adrienne Benjamin, Christine Hainsworth-Srauss, Deb Ullman, Diana Mennone, Karen Hlavac, Kevin Zingler, Rick Rothstein

Absent: Pam DonAroma, Rick Lenz, Joe Duffy; Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Patti Silva

DDS Staff: Commissioner Jordan Scheff; Joe, Carvalho, Executive Secretary; Kevin Bronson, Director of Regulations, Communications, and Legislation.

Introductions

Kevin Zingler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:06 PM

Moment of Silence for those affected by COVID-19

Awards & Presentations – Edward Mambruno (Thanking Ed for his 25+ years of service as Ombudsperson)

- Kevin Zingler started by thanking Ed Mambruno for his many years of service on behalf of families, DDS, and providers.
- Commissioner Scheff echoed Kevin Zingler's remarks. Often the Ombudsperson is in an adversarial relationship with the agency for which they work. Ed worked collaboratively with the Regions to ensure positive outcomes and that work, especially how he did it, was greatly appreciated.
- Ed Mambruno thanked the Commissioner and Kevin for their words and returned the gratitude for DDS' relationship.
- Rick Lenz noted the amount of patience and listening needed and commended Ed for his work.
- Karen Hlavac noted the fabulous job Ed did and is grateful that Ed has a chance to retire.

Opportunity for Public Participation

None.

Topics for discussion:

- Legislative Session Update & Budget Adoption
 - o Kevin Bronson began by describing the passage of DDS' Agency bill.
 - o Biennial Budget passed – DDS does well in the budget
 - o Bonding Bill passed
 - o SB328 died in the senate – a problematic bill for several reasons
 - o SB940 – the bill impacts the agency and ▪ Rick Rothstein – asked about raises for 1199 – is this just for group homes? • Jordan – it's for all DDS-funded providers regardless of whether they are union or non-union – day, residential, and so on...
- Kevin Z – DDS leadership is working with the administration re: rate structures and other items that impact the provider community re: the implementer.
 - Jordan – the implementer got sent back to the senate today
- Karen Hlavac – asked Kevin to elaborate on the concerns with SB940?

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- Jordan – the way it’s drafted, it makes sense on the surface, but the Probate system and the way it is structured is nuanced. The statutory purview is largely up to Probate Judges – affects placements and spending of money by the agency when the Agency’s statutes and regulations would indicate a different course of action. It can often lead to the spending of resources and assignment of priorities that can fall outside of best practices. While DDS can appeal a Probate Court’s decision, that decision is binding until that appeal is heard and addressed.

Commissioner’s Report

- o Opened by indicating how busy it has been for DDS. Is grateful to report that there hasn’t been a positive case of COVID for three weeks. Noted the efforts and plans to mitigate the impact of union activity that was ultimately avoided. Noted the opportunities that are possible within this \$184 million infusion of funds.

- Examples of doing things differently:
 - Providers to be less dependent on legacy systems and adjusting costly models of services
 - FMAP money could be targeted to address the waitlist, including incentives for providers
 - o Adrienne – noted that this is an excellent idea
 - Hopes that the Cathy Abercrombie cost settlement bill fosters the creativity needed to reenergize the provider community as we continue to work to think outside the box.
- Have met and continue to work with the new Chair of DRCT, Deborah Dorfman.
 - Rick Rothstein – how is the new training formed certified?
 - o We took look at the data, there is roughly 30 percent who are no-shows. Roughly 45-50% don’t pass. It’s not a capacity issue as much as it is a utilization issue.
 - Christine Hainsworth-Strauss – thanked the Commissioner on behalf of Meg, her daughter, for being able to return to Camp Horizons. o Commissioner – Chris McNaboe has worked incredibly hard to make camp a reality this year.
- Karen Hlavac – how many res or day programs have closed or are closing as a result of what we just went through?
 - o Commissioner – some providers have closed, and while some attribute COVID-19 as a cause, there are at times additional factors at play.
 - o Kevin Zingler – mentioned unsuccessful job fairs and lack of labor force which has been a strain on providers.
- Karen Hlavac – Lower Fairfield seems to be down 40% of their staff. Some staff is required to work several shifts in a row. This is a particular concern because of retirements.
 - o Commissioner – through Memorial Day weekend we did have a unit that was down 40% but not the entire campus. There have been emergency hires to address this but trying to be cognizant of the effects on private providers by making these non-permanent positions. Tried to minimize overtime mandated of staff in other settings other than their primary setting to help alleviate burnout.
- Karen Hlavac – looking for parents, self-advocates to help build a road map that is being worked on by a committee associated with the Office of Health Strategy.

Rick R. moved and Karen seconded adding the review and approval of the May 20 Minutes to the agenda.

Passed unanimously

- o Any revisions?
- o Rick Rothstein
 - Dawn Demateo is not a member of the Council and is listed as Absent – should be removed to the
- o Motion to approve by Rick, seconded by Adriene.
- o Passed unanimously.

Executive Session to Discuss the Ombudsperson’s Position

- o Motion to enter an executive session with Kevin Bronson as a guest

- Adrienne made the motion Pam Donaroma seconded, passed unanimously,
 - o Went into executive session at 5:06
 - o No votes were taken by the Council during the executive session
 - o Rick Lenz motioned to close the executive session Rick Rothstein seconded, closed at 6 PM.

• **Karen Hlavac made a motion to close the meeting at 6:01 PM, Seconded by Deb Ullman, passed unanimously, adjourned at 6:01 PM.**