



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

***Developmental Services Council
April 20th, 2023 Meeting Minutes***

Location: Meeting Held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Adrienne Benjamin, Alexis Calacro, Fredrick Lenz Jr., Dawn Dematteo, Richard Rothstein, Diana Mennone, Pamela DonAroma, Brian Dillon, Patti Silva, Kelly Dorsey (Self-Advocate Coordinator (SAC) – Midstate ARC), Christine Hainsworth-Straus,

Absent: Joseph Duffy, Arlene Reith, Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Kevin Zingler, Shannon Jacovino, DDS Ombudsperson,

Guests: Adrianna Ramirez (Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN), Thomas Ferraroti

DDS Staff: Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner, Gunnar Abrahamsson, Executive Secretary Kevin Bronson, DDS Director of Legislative & Executive Affairs

Introductions

Patti Silva, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM

Moment of Silence for those affected by COVID-19

Opportunity for Public Participation

Thomas Ferraroti

Dialogue

Council Vice-Chairwoman Patti Silva called the meeting to order at 4:35PM and noted that the threshold for a quorum was met.

Vice-Chair Silva next moved on to hold a moment of silence for those affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Vice-Chair Silva next asked if there were any members of the public who were interested in addressing the Council under the “Public Participation” section of the agenda. Members of the public are allotted three minutes to do so. Mr. Thomas Ferraroti addressed the Subcommittee for Abuse and Neglect and submitted testimony for their review.

Vice-Chair Silva moved on to the first item of the agenda, review and approval of the March 16th meeting minutes. A motion was made to pass the minutes and seconded. The minutes for the March 16th meeting were approved by a unanimous vote. At this point Vice-Chair Silva moved on to the ombudsperson report, and noted that DDS Ombudsperson Shannon Jacovino had been unable to join the meeting due to a conflict. The Ombudsperson report was tabled for review at the May meeting. Vice-Chair Silva asked Commissioner Scheff to please give an update on DDS activities and noteworthy items.

Commissioner Scheff explained to the council that much of the month of March and early April was spent looking at legislative bills, language revisions, testimony, and funding for initiatives. Commissioner Scheff provided updates on the revised Mandatory Abuse and Neglect Training for DDS Staff, and advised the council that the training should be finalized and ready for release by June 1, 2023.

DDS Director of Communications, Legislation, and Regulations Kevin Bronson provided an update on legislative bills, topics, and matters of importance. Director Bronson informed the council that DDS Staff has been distributing “bill trackers” to the council and these same tools are available on the Connecticut General Assembly website. Director Bronson followed up this discussion with an overview of the agency’s new initiative, STEP, or Supporting Transformation to Empower People. STEP is the agency's focus on enhancing our service delivery model in areas where services DDS already provides can be augmented to further promote independence, integration, and freedom of choice. Using federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that passed in 2021 DDS has portioned out some of this funding to promote and strengthen supports like assistive technology, supportive housing options, and individualized home support opportunities for those individuals who are interested.

This concluded the discussion topics for the meeting and a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously and the meeting ended at 5:28PM.

The Council then moved into Executive Session at 5:39pm. There were no votes or public business taken up during the executive session. Motion to close the executive session was made by Rick Rothstein, Seconded by Rick Lenz. Motion was unanimously approved. Executive Session ended at 6:26pm

Minutes Recorded by:
Gunnar Abrahamsson
Executive Secretary
DDS Central Office

Nothing Follows //