



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

*Developmental Services Council
February 16th Meeting Minutes*

Location: Meeting Held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Adrienne Benjamin, Alexis Calacro, Kevin Zingler, Fredrick Lenz Jr., Dawn Dematteo, Patti Silva, 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

Guests: Adrianna Ramirez (Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN)).

DDS Staff: Kevin Bronson, Director of Legislative & Executive Affairs, Shannon Jacovino, DDS Ombudsperson, Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner, Gunnar Abrahamsson, Executive Secretary, Jill Kennedy, Legislative & Regulations Specialist.

Introductions

Kevin Zingler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:34 PM

Moment of Silence for those affected by COVID-19

Opportunity for Public Participation

None.

Dialogue

Council Chairman Kevin Zingler called the meeting to order at 4:34PM and noted that the threshold for a quorum was met. Chairman Zingler next moved to welcome new members and noted that newly appointed Councilmember Brian Dillon had yet to join the meeting. Chairman Zingler next asked Commissioner Scheff to welcome his new staff member, Gunnar Abrahamsson. Gunnar Abrahamsson made introductory comments and thanked the Council for welcoming him. Commissioner Scheff next asked that Jill Kennedy, a newly hired Legislative and Regulations Specialist at Central Office come on and introduce herself to the council. Jill thanked the council and introduced herself.

Chairman Zingler reminded the council that under Public Act 21-2 members are to announce their names and or titles before they speak in order to allow the public a better understanding of who is talking.

Chairman Zingler next moved on to hold a moment of silence for those affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Phone: 860 418-6000 ♦ TDD 860 418-6079 ♦ Fax: 860 418-6001

460 Capitol Avenue ♦ Hartford, Connecticut 06106

www.ct.gov/dds ♦ e-mail: ddsct.co@ct.gov

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Chairman Zingler made mention that the Council was joined by Kelly Dorsey, a Self-Advocate Coordinator (SAC) for Provider Midstate Arc and asked that councilmembers make introductions to Kelly. Councilmembers made introductions.

Chairman Zingler 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. There were no members of the public that wished to address the Council.

Chairman Zingler notified the Council that there would be a tabling of the 12/15 Council Meeting Minutes as Gunnar Abrahamsson has encountered technical difficulties retrieving them from Joseph Carvalho’s old account. A motion to table the minutes was made by Chairman Zingler, the motion was moved by Councilmember Rothstein, and seconded by Councilmember Kelly Dorsey. There were no objections and motion passed unanimously.

DDS Ombudsperson Shannon Jacovino provided an overview on the Ombudsperson Report for the month of February and January of 2023. Ombudsperson Jacovino reviewed specific cases that were flagged in her reports with the councilmembers, giving an update on the progress, outcome, and next steps for each case and the response of DDS.

Councilmember Benjamin asked a clarifying question on the summary for the Ombudsperson Report to Ombudsperson Jacovino. The question was related to the language on the lack of support options for individuals with Autism and an Intellectual Disability. There was discussion and Ombudsperson Jacovino agreed that the wording in this specific instance should be changed.

Chairman Zingler asked if there were any additional questions for Ombudsperson Jacovino. There were no additional questions.

Executive Secretary Abrahamsson notified Chairman Zingler that Councilmember Dillon had joined the call successfully.

Councilmember Rothstein provided the council with an update on the Abuse and Neglect subcommittee.

Chairman Zingler turned the meeting over to Commissioner Scheff for the Commissioner’s Report. Commissioner Scheff provided an overview on the following:

- ❖ Nomination and Confirmation hearing for the Commissioner’s reappointment.
- ❖ DDS Opportunity to Innovate Forums.
- ❖ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and initiatives.
- ❖ Fiscal Intermediary (FI) and Eligibility issues.
- ❖ Legislative Session updates.
- ❖ DDS Budget updates.

Commissioner Scheff completed his report and passed the discussion over to Kevin Bronson, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs. Director Bronson provided an overview on a number of bills being proposed along with language changes within particular bills. Commissioner Scheff began taking questions from councilmembers.

With the conclusion of the Q&A portion of the meeting Chairman Zingler asked for two councilmembers to serve as volunteers in drafting testimony on behalf of the Council to present the testimony to the Appropriations Committee on February 28th. Councilmember Rothstein and Councilmember Pati Silva both raised their hands. Chairman Zingler asked the Council for their consensus on these two members presenting testimony. Consensus was confirmed.

At this time Adrianna Ramirez (CTFSN) introduced herself to the Council and gave a brief overview of the mission and goal of CTFSN.

Chairman Zingler recognized Brian Dillon and asked that he please introduce himself to the council. Councilmember Dillon provided the Council with his background and experience and expressed his eagerness to begin working on important areas of Council business.

Chairman Zingler notified the Council that the next scheduled meeting of the DS Council is 3/16/2023 at 4:30 PM via Microsoft Teams, a motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Benjamin and seconded by Councilmember Silva.

The meeting adjourned at 6:04PM.

Minutes Recorded by:
Gunnar Abrahamsson
Executive Secretary
DDS Central Office

Nothing Follows //