



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

**DDS**

Ned Lamont  
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff  
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo  
Deputy Commissioner

**Developmental Services Council  
July 20, 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, Kevin Zingler

**Absent:** Joseph Duffy, Arlene Reith, Lisa Weisinger-Roland

**Guests:** Sharon Saavedra

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

**Introductions**

Chairman Zingler called the meeting to order at 4:41PM and noted that the threshold for a quorum was met.

**Opportunity for Public Participation**

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. Sharon Saavedra addressed the council.

**Dialogue**

Shannon Jacovino, DDS Ombudsperson began the discussion by reviewing her 2022 Annual Report and Monthly Report and addressing questions raised by members of the council who reviewed them. Questions related to Self-Direction of supports, ethics, individual rights, and other were discussed in detail by Ombudsperson Jacovino. There was a final discussion related to how the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) works with individuals who are or have been incarcerated, and how the transition from incarceration back into society is handled. Commissioner Scheff provided an overview of DDS's deployment of case management and agency resources, to include collaboration with other state agencies to assist, transition, and oversee an individual's release from incarceration back into the department's care. Eligibility for services through DDS for individuals formerly incarcerated depends on various factors.

At this time a motion to approve the May 18, 2023 meeting minutes was made. Patti Silva and Rick Rothstein, both members of the Council voiced concerns over including “2023” to the title of the May 18 meeting minutes. Council members unanimously agreed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Patti Silva and seconded by Adrienne Benjamin.

At this point Commissioner Scheff provided the council with updates on the department’s review of the Abuse & Neglect Subcommittee recommendations. Commissioner Scheff indicated that he has assigned staff to begin working on a “family guide” outlining information related to the general processes and timelines associated with Abuse & Neglect investigations. There was additional outlining by the Commissioner on Supportive Housing and the Department of Developmental Services approach to employment incentives.

Supportive Housing and IDASH (Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder Housing) focuses on establishing partnerships between our providers and developers of affordable housing to create housing units (apartments) in these projects for individuals supported by DDS. The DDS providers facilitate the transition into the new setting and provide ongoing services as needed to support these individuals in living as independently as possible. Assistive technology plays a significant role in this program. There are currently 5 locations, 3 of which hold IDASH Housing (Bloomfield, Canton, and Hartford), and 2 additional locations for Supportive Housing (West Hartford and Torrington). There are 8 additional Supportive Housing and IDASH projects in process.

Commissioner Scheff turned to discussions around employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities, outlining his efforts to work alongside other state agencies to bolster and streamline opportunities for individuals served by the department. The Department of Developmental Disabilities is actively working with sister agencies to employ, train, and equip individuals with developmental disabilities to be successful in the workplace and lead more independent lives.

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 5:51PM.

Minutes Recorded by:  
Gunnar Abrahamsson  
Executive Secretary  
DDS Central Office

Nothing Follows //