

**The Southbury Training School Board of Trustees
Met via Conference Call on Monday, June 28, 2021**

Present: Eileen Lemay, Chair
Ann Dougherty, Vice Chair
Diana Mennone
Eugene Harvey, STS Director
Mark Cooper, Secretary
Sandy O'Neil.

Eileen Lemay, Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Report on DDS Council Meetings

Presented by Diana Mennone to the STS Board of Trustees on June 28, 2021.

A report was given by Diana Mennone STS Board of Trustees member on the Council on Developmental Services meetings that were held on February 18, 2021, April 22, 2021, and May 20, 2021. All meetings were held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

Topics of discussion in February included the budget as proposed by the Governor. The DDS Commissioner feels confident that DDS leadership can continue the level of services currently provided. Vaccinations, both public and private have been a priority. Also, there are continuing mitigation efforts to contain the spread of COVID by vaccinating staff. Rod O'Connor, Legislative and Regulations Specialist, gave a legislative session update noting the Appropriations Committee's public hearing pertaining to the DDS budget will be on March 2nd at 10am. The Council unanimously passed a motion to write testimony in support of the Governor's budget.

In April during public participation, Cindy Stramandinoli, active with Parents & Friends of Lower Fairfield Center, asked the Council to consider establishing a Regional Council for the public sector and for families receiving public services. This will be a topic for a future Council meeting. There was a presentation by two people. Amber Burke, Director of Employment and Day Services for CT DDS spoke about the creation of a statewide framework regarding employment. The Supported Employment Leadership Network has done an assessment that has developed concrete actions that can be taken by DDS. She wants to utilize what we learned in the pandemic to build on the service delivery as the state transitions to a post-COVID world. She also wants to look at barriers like transportation, a recurring topic. Next, Dan Berland, Director of Federal Policy at the National Association of State of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) gave a national perspective to the same conversation concerning changes in service delivery. See minutes on DDS website for details. Kevin Bronson, incoming Director of Communications, Legislation and Regulations at DDS was introduced to the Council. He noted that it will be a very busy legislative session.

In May, it was announced that Ed Mambruno, the independent Ombudsman for CT Department of Developmental Services (DDS) retired as of May 1, 2021. Ed started his tenure in state service many years ago and has served in a number of positions instrumental in empowering and bettering the lives of persons with disabilities in Connecticut. State Statute requires the Council to recommend up to 5 people for the Governor's consideration. It is an appointed position, appointed by the Governor based on the recommendations of the Council. The Council decided to invite Ed Mambruno to the next meeting to offer congratulations and thanks for his many years of service.

At the time of the May meeting, the Governor put out a budget, the Legislature proposed a budget and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) was looking into details of the proposal. The Commissioner reported on the strike action by Union workers being set for Friday, May 21 and postponed until June 4, 2021. DDS was working with the administration to alleviate the situation between providers and the Union.

To view complete Council on Developmental Disabilities minutes, go to the State of CT DDS website: <https://www.ct.gov/dds> - click on BOARDS and COUNCILS, click on COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES, scroll down & click on 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE (AGENDA & MINUTES). Scroll down to find dates of MEETINGS; see AGENDA columns and MINUTES columns to the right. Scroll down further to view previous years' MEETING SCHEDULE / AGENDAS / MINUTES.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Our current population is 144. We have had two deaths and one placement since the last meeting. We have one group of three individuals that have been approved to move into a new home. There have been delays because it has been difficult to find a home to purchase.
- Along with the CDC and their guidelines we have decided to relax our regulations and protocols.
- April 10th was our last positive case of Covid. We are continuing to test the staff
- 60-65% of our staff have been vaccinated.
- Staff are now being permitted to work in buildings other than their assigned building.
- Days Programs have reopened in Cottages 2, 6, 8, Greenhouse, Farm and Gatehouse.
- The Cottage 4 Day Program will open in two weeks.
- Music Therapy and Religious opportunities restarted a few weeks ago. Music Therapy sessions are very beneficial for our individuals.
- Families members can now visit with Individuals at our Covid visitation locations.
- Individuals can visit their families in their homes as long as everyone in the family has been vaccinated.
- Cottages 33 and 34 are closing. 38 individuals and 72 staff are being relocated.
 - We are moving 2-3 people per day and there are no moves on Fridays.
 - Some Individuals will move later than others because of renovations being done in Cottage 40, 41 and 42.
- STS has plenty of PPE's. Staff now have a choice between using KN95 masks and the blue surgical masks.
- The STS Foundation and Volunteer Services are funding a beautification project. There are seven locations that will be receiving new plantings. The STS grounds staff have been doing a great job.
- The work on the Powerhouse proposal has been submitted to Central Office and the Engineer. The cost will be 1.3 million. The money will be recouped within two years from salary savings and the use of less gas.
- The pool will be opening after July 4th.

OLD BUSINESS

Waiting to get approval from the Governor's Office officially placing Sandy O'Neil on the Board of Trustees.

NEW BUSINESS

The Board of Trustees would like to send a thank you letter to the Grounds and Physical Plants staff for all of their hard work on the beautification project.

The Disability Rights of CT have replaced the Office of Protection and Advocacy.

The next meeting of the STS Board of Trustees will be held on Monday, September 27, 2021 at 1:00pm via conference call.

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 1:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Wodjenski, Recording Secretary

Mark A. R. Cooper, Secretary

Approved by the STS Board of Trustees