

**The Southbury Training School Board of Trustees  
Met via Conference Call on Monday, January 24, 2022**

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

Eileen Lemay, Chair was excused from this meeting.

Ann Dougherty, Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 1:02pm.

**COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

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A report was given by Diana Mennone, STS Board of Trustees representative on the Council on Developmental Services for meetings held virtually via Microsoft Teams on November 17 and December 16, 2021.

The meeting on November 17th was a special joint meeting of the DDS Council and the Regional Advisory and Planning Councils (RACs). Each Region gave a brief report concerning topics like assistive technology, the step-down unit, emergency transitional housing, the "Seeds of Change" presentations, advocacy, examining diabetes with the DDS system, finding adequate, responsible and appropriate help, quality of Day Programs with severe behavioral challenges and funding and opportunities for parent groups. The main focus was on the employment of caregivers.

The DDS Council's Chair Kevin Zingler gave a summary of the Council's meetings over the past year and members' testimonies before the legislature on the Council's priorities.

The Commissioner answered questions concerning healthcare and benefits for caregivers, challenges facing providers in providing benefits to attract employees, the waiting list and trends moving away from traditional residences to more creative options. He also talked about the Governor's Workforce Council looking at ways of attracting employees. He remarked that the nomination for DDS Ombudsperson would be announced by the Governor on November 19th.

The DDS Council met after the RACs meeting ended and had a presentation called "Think College", a national project dedicated to developing inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disabilities. Dr. Menzo and associates of Goodwin University presented a slide show.

December 16th was the annual Council meeting. A report from the Nominating Committee recommended the current leadership team continue. Election of the Council's Officers for 2022 was held and slate was voted in unanimously.

Shannon Jacovino, nominated for DDS Ombudsperson was introduced and detailed the December Ombudsperson report regarding case management, various concerns from families, concerns regarding staffing levels, meetings she has attended and ones she is in the process of scheduling.

Commissioner Scheff expressed concern regarding COVID and its variants. Staff are quarantining in rates not seen since the winter of 2020. A Strategic Plan draft is currently being reviewed by the Lamont Administration. Two public hearings will be held in mid-January. Notice of the hearings will be posted and shared with the Council. Concern continues about the ongoing workforce crisis. DDS is looking at what can be done to compete in an increasingly competitive labor market. There is no official word yet from the CT legislature regarding whether they will meet in-person or virtually starting in February.

The Council is looking for topics for future meetings. Some ideas were shared by members.

To view complete Council on Developmental Services 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 Upcoming and Past 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 137.
- Five STS individuals are in the placement process. Three individuals will move when the renovations of their new home are complete. The moves of two individuals have been delayed due to Covid but they may move in two to three weeks.
- Disability Rights CT are continuing their investigation and continue to ask for information. It's unknown when the investigation will be complete.
- We have a new wave of Covid cases. 49 of our individuals and 105 of our staff to date. All but one individual and most of the staff has been vaccinated.
- With the exception of our dental clinic, all clinics have been closed. All nonemergency medical appointments have been cancelled.
- Staff currently only work at their own assignments, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- We have reopened the isolation unit. Most individuals have been asymptomatic.
- We continue to have ample PPE.
- Weekly Covid testing is currently being done at STS for staff and individuals. This has been occurring for four weeks. It's unknown how long we will be able to continue onsite testing.
- Many staff are retiring between April 1, 2022 and July 1, 2022. STS has been given approval by the union for 75 permanent direct care positions that can be filled with applicants from outside DDS. 73 current part time staff will be given the option to go full time. Positions have also been open to staff from the regions.
- Some retirees may be given the opportunity to come back on a temporary workers status to work at their current sites, help train and provide support to new staff.

- Interviews have been completed for the Unit Director position. We are waiting for the position to be offered to the approved candidate.
- A DDS five-year plan is currently being worked on. Several Home and School members have been able to give their input into the upcoming plan.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- Waiting to get approval from the Governor's Office, officially placing Sandy O'Neil on the Board of Trustees. Diana Mennone contacted Kevin Bronson, Legislative Liaison regarding request.
- The Board is considering new members and researching diversifying.
- Meeting minutes dated 11/23/2021 were approved.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Shannon Jacovino has been appointed the new DDS Ombudsman. She would like to attend the Board of Trustees meeting on April 25, 2022. The members unanimously approved.

**The next STS Board of Trustees meeting will be held on April 25, 2022 at 1:00pm. The call-in number to attend this meeting is 1-866-756-1919, you will then be prompted to enter the participant code. The participant code is 6101119#.**

There being no further business, Ann Dougherty called to adjourn the meeting at 2:02pm, Mark Cooper seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Wodjenski, Recording Secretary

Mark A. R. Cooper, Secretary

Approved by the STS Board of Trustees