

**Advisory Council Meeting
September 20, 2018
4:00 pm
Ella Grasso Center, Stratford, CT**

Minutes

Members Present

Sue Bastien, Charles Bergamo, Lori Chiappiniello, Marina Derman, Mickey Herbst, Alison Jacobson, Gil Kellersman, Roger McNealy, Karen Simon, Arlene Steinfeld

Call to Order

Chairman Bergamo called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm

Motion to Approve Minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the Minutes of the March 15, 2018 meeting.

Chairperson's Report

- Chairman Bergamo suggested that someone volunteer to take the role of Vice Chairman. He indicated that there may be a time when he cannot attend and it would be a good idea to have someone Chair the meeting in his place. Anyone who is interested in serving in this capacity can let the group know.
- He also shared that some of the members on the Committee have not attended a meeting in quite some time. Therefore, he will be contacting those members to inquire whether they are still interested in participating. If not, he will be taking them off the membership list.
- There was a brief discussion on who the membership should consist of. We currently have a new member who meets one of the criteria as set forth in the statute. The statute also states that an attorney be on the committee, but we haven't been able to fill this vacancy.
- Work Groups: Mr. Bergamo also mentioned that the South Region Advisory Council has an active work group on housing. He feels it might be something for the West Region Council to create work groups that could focus on a topic of interest. Whomever, is interested in a particular topic could reach out to each other to develop a sub-group on that topic. Once the topic has been researched and discussed, those members could share their information with the West RAC. A work group topic should not duplicate another regions focus area, so that we could invite the Housing Subcommittee from the South RAC to present to our group and vice-versa. Sample topics include: in-home behavioral supports, transition, budget, etc.

Fritz mentioned that the South RAC had a Café series that was very active. This Café to Go was a group that met with food, coffee and...conversation. This was a national trend that was successful in combining food and conversation. It was a good way to brainstorm. He encouraged the group to Google it to learn more if anyone is interested.

Sharing of information on a larger scale seems to be a barrier.

Mr. Bergamo will reach out to the other RAC Chairman's to see what other subcommittees might be out there. He will share the information with the group.

Ms. Bastien shared that there is a meeting being hosted by the Council on Developmental Services taking place at the Temple Beth El, 2626 Albany Avenue, West Hartford, CT at 10 am on Thursday, September 27, 2018. RSVP to donna.devin@ct.gov for more information as well as to register.

- Chairman Bergamo highlighted the April meeting (Council of Developmental Disabilities - statewide group). The trend is to keep people and home to try to save money. The supports and services available in this format were discussed. Technology in the home setting was also discussed. Many of the members felt that the technology available is very innovative and interesting.

New Member

Roger McNealy, the newest RAC member, joined the meeting for the first time. Introductions took place.

Director's Report

- The beginning of the fiscal year started July 2018. The DDS was granted full funding that allowed all of grads to begin on time (as opposed to years past where funding was not given in a timely manner). Our Department didn't suffer too many cuts.
- As a result of caregivers and providers dropping off individuals to emergency rooms and not picking them up, we received funding to address this issue.
- A **Mobile Crisis Unit** is also being developed. Callers will call 2-1-1 for intervention. DDS trained staff will come out to assist the crisis and relieve the situation with a plan to deal with the crisis. Individuals will not likely be removed at the time the crisis unit shows up.
- A **Behavioral Respite Unit** (similar to the former Woodbridge Project) is also close to opening at the Hartford Regional Center in Newington. This will allow each region 2 respite beds at the Cottage should an emergency arise. Individuals that are placed here would have a discharge plan in place prior to their admission (i.e. a 30- day or 60-day plan to be placed in another setting). This is not meant to be a long-term placement. Staff from DDS will determine the priority list for the Respite Unit.
- There will be a new Governor in November. For members of the RAC that are interested, there will be a 2018 Candidates' Forum on Disability Issues hosted by CT Council on Developmental Disabilities, CT Cross-Disability Lifespan Alliance on October 11th at the Red Lion Inn, Cromwell. Further information will be forwarded via email.

New Business

Ms. Derman distributed a handout: "*Lower Fairfield County Families for Families - Presents: Changing Expectations*"

When: October 16, 2018
Time: 7:00-8:30 pm
Where: Toquet Hall, 58 Post Road East, Westport (2nd floor)

This is for parents and caregivers of teens and adults with I/DD who are currently receiving or will be seeking services through DDS.

Other Business

- Redeterminations: Ms. Derman shared that there seems to be an issue with redetermination renewals. She shared an example of the problem she experienced with DSS/DDS. Fritz replied that the DDS has responded to this issue with DSS by hiring five dedicated Liaisons who are responsible for redeterminations and communicating directly with DSS. This should alleviate this problem.
- Mickey & Marina will brainstorm on how to disseminate information to families.
- It was mentioned that the forums formerly held in the Trumbull Shopping Mall were good.

Citizen Comment

Comment from a public citizen that agrees that smart technology in the home is a great idea. It is beneficial to be exploring these options for our population.

Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council adjourned the meeting at 5:20pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Eunice B. Rivera

Executive Secretary