

**Advisory Council Meeting
March 21, 2019
4:00 pm
Ella Grasso Center, Stratford, CT**

Minutes

Members Present

Sue Bastien, Charles Bergamo (Chair), Lori Chiappiniello, Marina Derman (Vice Chair), Gil Kellersman, Roger McNealy, Karen Simon, Arlene Steinfeld

Public Present

Nancy McNealy, Mr. McNealy

1. CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETINGS MINUTES – A change will be made to the “review of Minutes” date from September 2019 date to reflect 2018.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the Minutes.

3. NEW BUSINESS –

- The group discussed the scheduled April 2019 Advisory Council meeting date. This date is during Holy Week. Due to the fact that there are several extra meeting dates built into the meeting calendar, it was decided that this meeting should be canceled.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to strike the April 18, 2019 meeting from the schedule.

- Chairman Bergamo shared that he also sits on the Connecticut Council of Developmental Disabilities. This Council is federally funded. He shared that this group is looking at participating in the Northeast ARC Tank. <https://ne-arc.org/the-arc-tank/about-the-arc-tank/> . Mr. Bergamo gave a brief overview of the ARC Tank and how it is similar to Shark Tank. This program looks for new and innovative ideas to “positively disrupt disability services to improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism and their families.” The group aims to hear “from out-of-the-box thinkers, people who can imagine possibilities, be creative and who want to change the status quo.” More information on this can be found on the link above.

He also explained how the CT Council of Developmental Disabilities is funded by the federal government and can fund the programs and missions of DDS. The Council would give startup funding for a program that could be self-sustained (similar to a grant). Funding requests must fall within the parameters of the DDS 5-Year Plan (i.e. closing of STS, etc.).

- Letters went out to members who were unable to regularly come to the RAC meetings. This will allow for quorums to be easier to reach. Fritz explained how he heard from one of the former members on the meeting time and location. They wondered why this is the only location that the group meets. He explained that we have attempted to hold meetings at alternate locations and times; on those particular dates, we could never get a quorum so that is why the RAC decided to hold all meetings at the Ella Grasso Center, Stratford.
 - Chairman Bergamo met with a family group at the Waterbury Easter Seals. This group of families consists of foster families with developmentally disabled children. They inquired if the RAC would be able to have one of their future meetings in the Waterbury location. Chairman Bergamo asked the RAC if they would be willing to go to Waterbury. The group answered affirmatively and a future meeting will be held in Waterbury with the Easter Seals group participating as members of the public.
4. WAITLIST UPDATE – Tammy Venenga, DDS – Tammy oversees the Planning and Resources Allocation Teams (PRAT) across the state.

Tammy distributed a handout with the Waitlist (WL) numbers and explained the chart. She explained that a survey was sent out to families to inquire about how families and their needs were being met. The chart reflects the results of the WL survey. The WL categories are: 1. Emergency, 2. Urgent, 3. Future Needs. The handout does not reflect day service needs. This is a residential needs chart.

During the annual IP, families should be asked by their case manager if their needs are being met. If the needs are not being met, then the case manager will forward a request to the PRAT to seek those services. The PRAT will review and approve/disapprove of the request.

A copy of the WL data (from the Management Information Report (MIR)) was also distributed. This report is updated quarterly and available on the DDS website.

<https://portal.ct.gov/DDS/Media/Publications/MIR-Management-Information-Reports>

The numbers of individuals on the waitlist were discussed. The number is gradually coming down. A discussion about how families may request funding then deny it later also occurred. This is being explored because some families may believe that if they accept funding that their rights to their family member will somehow change. That is not the case. DDS wants families to be involved in all decision-making with individuals served by the department.

There was a brief discussion on skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and intermediate care facilities (ICFs) Tammy will run a report on how many individuals are in these facilities. She will break down who is at STS, etc.

There was some concern that some families are not being asked the question, “are your needs being met”, during the annual IP. Tammy shared that she attends the Case Management Supervisor meetings and will request that the case managers be reminded that this question should be asked.

5. OLD BUSINESS – Fritz mentioned that he looked into the 1985/86 budget cycle and how grads were placed. He shared a brief overview of how that process occurred.

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- The Department is considering a redo of the LON
- Due to legislation looking at banning plastic straws, a review of plastic straws used by individuals with DD will be looked into. A clause needs to be in there that would allow our individuals to use straws for medical purposes.
- The DDS Step Down unit is open and running. There are presently two individuals in the unit. This unit was created as a result of individuals who were being brought to emergency rooms and being left there. The goal of this unit is to alleviate that problem.
- Mobile Crisis Unit – we have hired 18 direct care staff. We will also be hiring three Social Workers/Psych specialist that would be available 24/7 to cover the crisis unit.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT – no comment

8. OTHER BUSINESS - Roger McNealy mentioned that since the DDS layoff of Recreational Therapists he is unable to enjoy bowling, dances, etc. Fritz indicated he would look into rec programs in the area where Mr. McNealy lives and share that information with him.

9. ADJOURNMENT -

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council adjourned the meeting at 5:55pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Eunice B. Rivera
Executive Secretary
DDS West Region