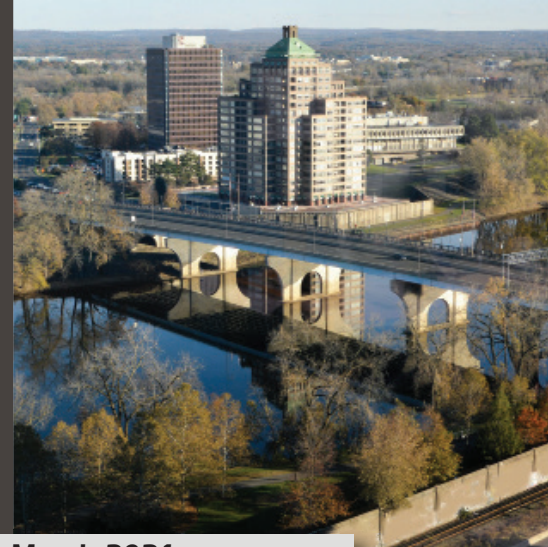


THE DAS TIMES



March 2021

Commissioner Josh Geballe opened the Town Hall with a greeting and message of thanks to all DAS employees.

DAS TOWN HALL - Keeping in Touch

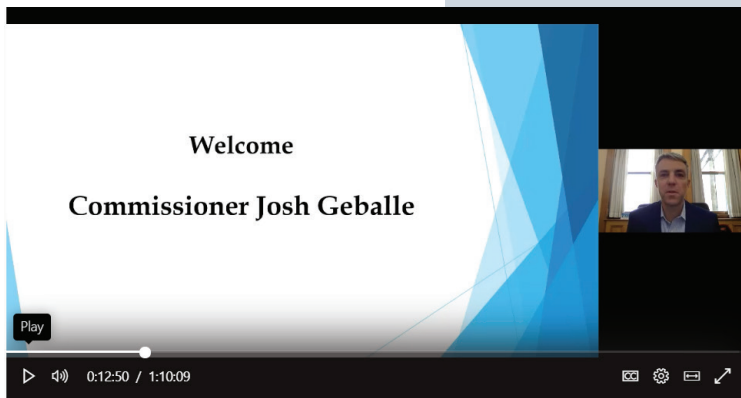
In tough times the tough get going and that statement was so true when DAS tested the digital uncharted waters with the first ever DAS Town Hall on Teams Live on Thursday, October 29. Josh Geballe, Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer to Governor Ned Lamont has been navigating the state throughout this pandemic, but wanted to recognize all DAS employees for their commitment and continued work keeping the state running amidst the unknown. Using a familiar format of Town Hall, this meeting was presented in the new Microsoft Teams Live format.

Eight presenters addressed the virtual audience of 403 participants with near flawless transitions and graphic presentations. Several staff worked behind the scenes preparing for the event weeks in advance, timing speakers, editing slides, testing, uploading files, testing participant vs. presenter vs. producer roles and anticipating possible glitches before they happen. And then the big day came.

Commissioner Geballe opened the meeting thanking everyone for persevering through these tough times and spoke of all the accomplishments in spite of the COVID shutdowns and restrictions. "It's hard right now. From day to day as the numbers start to tick up again – it's tiring. We are all facing challenges of juggling partners, kids, parents – it takes team work. We are lucky we have our jobs and our health and we have the opportunities to do something."

He then addressed people who have been returning to the office on occasion, "Just as a matter of housekeeping if you go into the office please remember to take every precaution to keep ourselves and coworkers safe. Wear your mask!"

Speaking about future plans he said, "We will be continuing our



approach of the working model we adopted and we will continue to evolve on the way. We will adjust as challenges come along.”

He went on to announce recent personnel changes, “Erin Choquette, a mainstay with DAS for 14 years took on a challenging role with The Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (PFMLA) and her replacement is Eleanor Michael from the Office of Policy and Management and the Governor’s Office. Lora Rae Anderson from Consumer Protection is now the Director of Communications at DAS and also for the Chief Operating Officer.

Eleanor greeted viewers saying, “I am so excited to join DAS and I am a big fan of Erin Choquette. I want to thank everyone who has welcomed me to this new job!”

Chief Information Officer Mark Raymond began his report by taking all participants to the beach at Martha’s Vineyard! Well...virtually.... He praised his team for their hard work keeping up with the challenges of Covid 19 while pushing forward the year’s goals of getting Business One Stop up and running. “If Covid has done one thing it has us now rethinking how we provide technology across the state.”

Deputy Commissioner Nick Hermes then reported, “In HR we regularly comment amongst ourselves how lucky we are to be working and have the ability to support others in a noble cause.” He immediately praised the Affirmative Action team for being able to meet deadlines for multiple affirmative action plans while working remotely. “HR Centralization experienced an incredible year transitioning from on site to remote. We partnered with Deputy Commissioner Noel Petra’s team and OPM to craft our workplace. Centralized HR went live at the end of August and of the more than 200 HR professionals statewide we took in half to DAS and reassigned them to specialized areas. The other half remains onsite in their agencies to focus on the general needs there. And we have digitized 90% of payroll, Workers Comp, medical and HR files. We engaged the Kronos group and another company to screen applications for employment, which frees up our staff to dedicate their time to less mundane work focusing on the final candidates. We are working with Linked In and Recruiter (formerly called Linda) to source candidates.”

Deputy Commissioner Petra of Construction Services shared, “usually crisis is a significant event like a hurricane or major snow storm, but this is the first time I have ever seen a nation - world - overnight deal with drastic change. I have witnessed people who normally don’t embrace change really step up to the plate! In crisis the cream rises to the top. I am so impressed volunteers came forward immediately and did whatever

Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology
Chief Information Officer, Mark Raymond

- Helped all state employees to work from home, with minimal disruptions
- Served the public by providing accurate, timely and usable information for Coronavirus page
- Launched Business One Stop
- Planned for complete remake on how the state runs technology, in concert with agencies
- Improved Security
 - ❖ Migrated email to cloud
 - ❖ Upgraded 21,000 phones
- Responded to Critical Incidents
 - ❖ Security
 - ❖ Storage

0:28:58 / 1:10:09

Statewide Human Resources Management
Deputy Commissioner Nicholas Hermes

- Equal Employment Opportunity update
- Human Resources Centralization update

Real Estate and Construction Services
Deputy Commissioner Noel Petra

- Executive Orders to streamline emergency real estate, services and material procurement
- Secured potential use of over 30,000 temporary hospital beds
- Agreements with CRDA to use the Hartford Convention Center as overflow hospital space
- Agreements with UCONN and the Board of Regents to house medical and other emergency personnel
- Sacred Heart University and Webster Bank Arena emergency medical facilities
- 750 hotel rooms at 24 hotels throughout the state for both the Homeless and First Responders
- Battelle rapid PPE cleaning system and the CVS drive-through testing in New Haven
- Gateway Community College classrooms for Yale New Haven Hospital emergency nurse training

0:40:09 / 1:10:09

it took to get a job done. We worked with so many private/public partnerships we were able to get the executive orders processed immediately - like finding 750 hotel rooms for the homeless. I am incredibly proud of our state.”

Procurement Director Carol Wilson is extremely proud of the Procurement team. “On March 16 we were all notified that we had to work from home immediately and we all came to the call – so well. Procuring PPE, we screened hundreds of vendors. By June people were starting to fatigue so we started NORM exercises and did some business planning to help adapt. In spite of it all we kicked off the CT Source contracting portal on August 1 – only a month late from the original launch date. The Surplus team continues operations with two million certified this year and Prequal continued to qualify contractors from home while set-aside launched the new Stars tool and compliance reporting tool. The P-card program did even more during COVID. Kerry DeMatteo and team were saviors bringing us to a \$1.16 million rebate!

Thank you team I could not be more proud of you!”

Dressed as a sports commentator with a football field screen in his background, Director of Business Services Jerry Lynn sang the praises of his teams beginning with Print, Mail and Courier services, “For seven months they have been open and operating five days per week and then they took on the surge of mailings that the Department of Labor encountered when unemployment skyrocketed this spring.”

He then praised the budget savers, DAS Collections, “They juggled hours and rotated shifts to continue revenue generating efforts and hit the \$1 billion mark! The state depends on this money and they came through. Then there was the Business Office who “worked long hours, nights and weekends. They are an incredible team committed to getting things done! I also want to recognize our boss, Josh and what great things you do!”

Lora Rae Anderson was introduced as new Director of Communications for both DAS and for the Chief Operating Officer for Governor Lamont, Josh Geballe. Lora Rae spoke with her signature high energy, “It’s incredible to meet all of you and I am happy to be part of this team! We are here to prove Government CAN walk and chew gum!”

This brought the first DAS Town Hall Teams Live event to the Impact Award presentation. In the past award winners were selected for going above and beyond during special circumstances or for accomplishing high reaching goals despite the odds. This year’s award went to “all DAS employees for their innovation, patience and working incredibly hard during an incredibly trying time.” Commissioner Geballe smiled and said, “Usually I take the winner to lunch which I would love to do, but I would be violating an executive order! I am looking forward to the day we can get back together again!”

Procurement Services
Director Carol Wilson

- Rolled out New State Contracting Portal
- Played a major role in COVID response (ESF-7) for all PPE and other Procurement needs.
- State Surplus: \$2 million in general fund revenue
- Prequalified 803 construction companies; \$600,000 in revenue
- Set-Aside: Certified 1315 Connecticut SBE/MBE companies; Rolled out automated STARS tool for compliance reporting
- P-Card - Generated a rebate of \$1.16 million (general fund revenue)
- Achieved agency (contract) savings of \$1.2 million
- Teamed with Harvard [Government Performance Lab](#) in developing a Results Driven Contract through sprints for various contracts

0:50:26 / 1:10:09

Business Office
Director Jerry Lynn

- Mail, Print & Courier led by Nina Ritson & Mike Guimond - This group is never deterred by Snow, Rain, Gloom of Night and not even COVID-19
- Collection Services led by Mike Barile & Frank Rivera - This crew is known as *The Budget Savers* because of all the revenue they bring into the State of Connecticut
- Business Office led by Shantelle Varrs & JoAnn Figueiredo -- #WhateverItTakes is their motto and it has never been more apparent than these past months

1:00:25 / 1:10:09

Communications Office
Director Lora Rae Anderson

- Introduction of New Staff and Staff Roles
 - ◆ Government modernization and streamlining efforts
 - ◆ COVID-19 Communications
 - ◆ Work with John and Nina in the same way
- Website Updates: We're continuing to ensure any updates are in concert with the State's style guide, if your unit staff that does web updates needs support - please contact John McKay

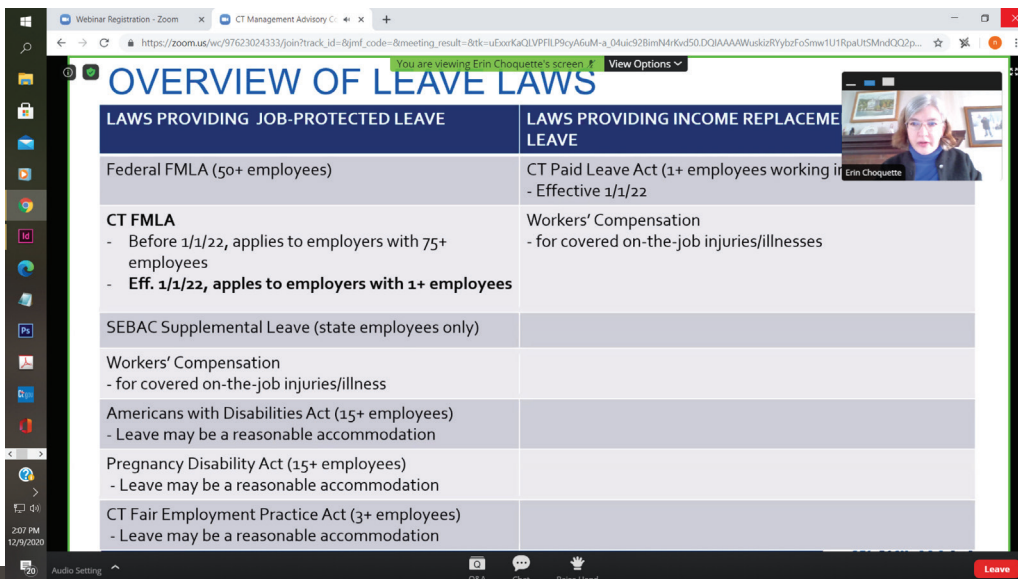
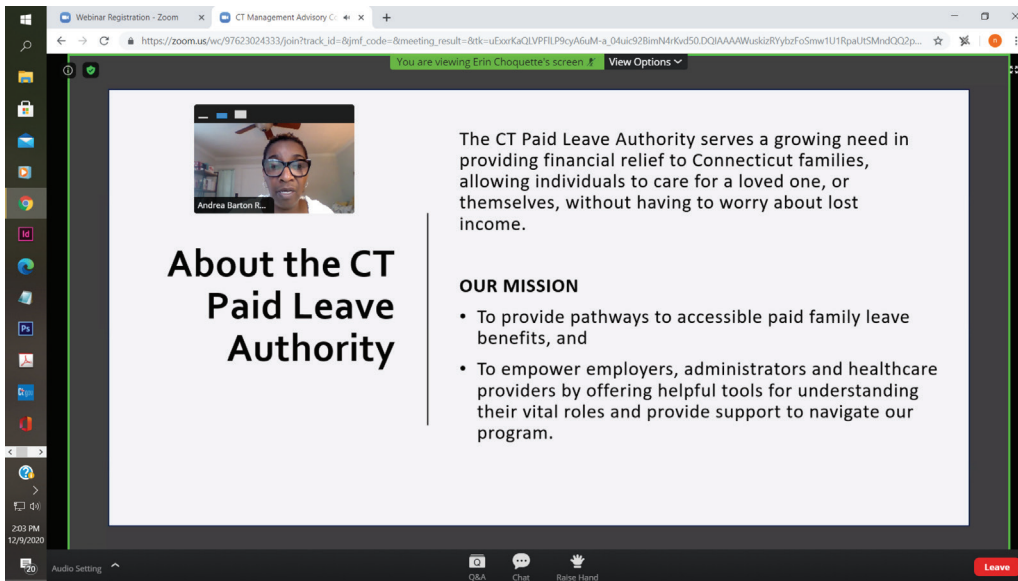
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THE CT PAID LEAVE AUTHORITY OPENS FOR BUSINESS

By Erin Choquette

QUESTION: *How do you build a brand-new agency and launch the new paid leave benefit program, particularly during a pandemic?*

ANSWER (with apologies to the Beatles): **With a little help from our friends!**



(Above) Andrea Barton Reeves and Erin Choquette gave a Zoom presentation to CT Managers on Wednesday, December 9 titled: CT Management Advisory Council: Understanding the Basics of the CT Paid Leave Program.

The CT Paid Leave Authority is a quasi-public agency mandated by Public Act 19-25 to create and administer the CT Paid Leave Program in order to allow workers in Connecticut to be able to take the time they need to care for a loved one, or themselves, without having to worry about lost income.

The CT Paid Leave Program will be implemented in two phases:

- Beginning in January 2021, the Paid Leave Trust Fund will be established based on contributions of 0.5% from the wages of private sector employees and non-unionized employees of the State.

- Beginning in January 2022, those employees will be able to apply to the CT Paid Leave Authority for income replacement benefits when they take leave from work due to their own serious health condition, to care for a seriously ill family member, to bond with a new child, to take military family leave, or to address family violence.

Unionized employees of the State, as well as unionized employees of municipalities and local and regional Boards of Education can collectively bargain for participation in the program.

It would have been impossible to set up the CT Paid Leave Authority, much less meet these statutory deadlines, without assistance from several agencies, including, chiefly, DAS.

Leading the way, DAS Commissioner Josh Geballe, serves as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the CT Paid Leave Authority, sharing his strategic vision and tactical expertise with the fledging enterprise.

Our colleagues in DAS/BEST have been invaluable partners as the CT Paid Leave Authority worked to create ctpaidleave.org and implement the technology solutions needed to support the employee contributions. Special thanks are owed to Enterprise Architect Debarghya Sengupta for serving on the Employer Contribution Platform Steering Committee and the business ct.gov team for partnering with the Authority on the employer registration process. In addition, DAS/BEST has provided its usual stellar customer service in ensuring that the Authority team has the computers, email addresses, and licenses needed to operate.

The Procurement Division has provided ongoing consultation and assistance in connection with the Authority's various RFPs. Additionally, the Supplier Diversity unit led by Meg Yetishefsky is amplifying the CT Paid Leave Authority's outreach efforts by sharing information about the program with all of the DAS-certified small and minority businesses.

DAS Communications has also been an invaluable partner in the Authority's education efforts. Additionally, John McKay and Cindy Rusczyk ensure that the Authority remains compliant with FOIA by posting information about all of the Board of Directors and subcommittee meetings on the DAS and Secretary of State websites. The Authority is in discussions with Nina Ritson and the Print shop regarding the production of educational materials about the CT Paid Leave program.

The Benefits & Leave, Recruitment, and Business Rules teams in Statewide HR have provided ongoing assistance, not only with outreach and engagement but also as valued thought partners.

Although the staff of the CT Paid Leave Authority are all operating remotely right now, we look forward to the day when we can work together in person. We appreciate the efforts of DAS Leasing and Property Transfer, Facilities and Statewide Security to provide us with working space in 450 Columbus Boulevard.

Even though the CT Paid Leave Authority is a quasi-public agency, it is a client of the DAS Business Office and DAS SmART. Special thanks are owed to Heidi Gray, Theresa Judge, Mary Gugliemino, Shantelle Varrs, Jerry Lynn, and especially, Tracie Knapsack, for doing all of those behind-the-scenes tasks that are essential to the smooth operation of an agency. We simply could not exist without their hard work and service with a smile.

The CT Paid Leave Authority appreciates the assistance of all of its agency partners, including Office of Policy and Management, Department of Labor, Department of Revenue Services, and the Offices of the Secretary of State, the State Comptroller, the State Treasurer, and the Governor. DAS, however, should take particular pride in its role in launching the CT Paid Leave Authority and ensuring that the citizens of Connecticut will be able to care for themselves and their families during critical moments in their lives.

27TH ANNUAL TURKEY DRIVE

DYANI WILLIAMS OF FOODSHARE

WROTE TO SCOTT PRZYGOCKI

No TURKEYS *but*

\$5,751 in donations

equivalent to 14,000 meals to families in need.

CONGRATULATIONS!



AND THEN MARCH 16 STRUCK.....

Throughout the year everyone has come to the call to keep their units running and to keep the state running! When they speak of heroes we need look no further than our own coworkers and team leaders at DAS.

Included below are just a few of the stories as submitted by the leadership team.

Peter Simmons included an article authored by Halina Harabasz:

DAS Construction Services COVID efforts with the Surge Hospital Construction and Support.

“Build capacity before you need it.” These were the words that Governor Ned Lamont used to describe the COVID-19 game plan for the State of CT. At the start of this pandemic, the State DAS Construction Services was put up to the challenge of assisting in the coordination and building of four temporary hospital facilities, as well as a CVS Drive-thru Test facility.

Starting mid-March, the DAS Construction Services Project Management Staff (DAS/CS PMs) were already on-call 24/7 conducting assessments of locations for potential use in anticipation of any overflow of COVID-19 patients from nearby hospitals as well as temporary housing for front-line workers.

Working together, the State Unified Command of the National Guard (NG), COVID Task Force and DAS/CS were able to identify 4 locations across the State: Southern (SCSU), Central (CCSU), and Western (WCSU) CT State Universities, and the Hartford Convention Center. Teams of DAS/CS Project Managers (“PM”) were assigned to each facility to coordinate and support the Department of Public Health (DPH) and local hospitals that would be licensing the temporary facilities. There was no manual or set of instructions to follow—it came down to team effort and improvisation to find solutions to each problem that was encountered along the way.

A 270-bed temporary hospital at Moore Field House, SCSU, New Haven was overseen by Sarah Tierney, DAS/CS PM. She worked together with several members from Yale New Haven Health, NG, DPH, OSFM, and SCSU athletics. Equipment for the facility was supplied by FEMA. The site was mobilized on 3/26 and demobilized by 7/21.

A 92-bed temporary hospital at Kaiser Hall, CCSU, New Britain was also overseen by Sarah Tierney, DAS/CS PM, along with help from Hartford HealthCare, NG, DPH, OSFM, and DAS/CS Assoc. PM, Rahul Abraham. Rahul also coordinated meals to the NG troops and UConn hospital staff staying on campus at Vance, Sam May, and R. Sheridan Residence Halls. Most of the supplies, materials, and equipment for the hospital was State procured. The site was mobilized on 4/17 and demobilized by 7/16.

A 650-bed temporary hospital located at the CT Convention Center, Hartford was overseen by Michael Milne and Carlton Grodotzke, DAS/CS PMs, and the construction was completed by the Military and NG. This also included nurses’ stations, Hartford HealthCare IT support, showers and wash stations. The facility’s setup began on 3/30 and was dismantled approximately one month later, as hospitalizations dropped.

A 167-bed temporary hospital located at the O’Neill Center Arena, WCSU, Danbury was overseen by David Wlodkowski and Carlton Grodotzke, DAS/CS PMs, with construction completed by the NG, and in cooperation with Danbury Hospital medical team and IT Dept., WCSU facility personnel, and OSFM. This included spaces for secured entry for hospital staff, patient intake/ discharge areas, food service distribution, and included the installation of a large military tent for initial patient consultation. DAS through Anthony DeNapoli, DAS/CS Assoc. PM, who provided office support for the PM’s field operations, secured a food service contract and cleaning contract to support the O’Neill center site and Fairfield Residence Hall on WCSU’s midtown campus. The site was mobilized on 4/1, and it supposed to be demobilized by 7/29.

Moreover, assessment for possible offsite and onsite temporary hospital locations for Trinity Health of New England was coordinated by Ira Henowitz, DAS/CS PM, who also served as a liaison between Trinity and the State United Command stationed at the Hartford Armory. After several considerations, Trinity Health decided to install tented temporary medical surge facilities on the grounds of their three hospitals as well as to use the existing space to accommo-

date the surge. The National Guard troops delivered and set up beds and tents along with other essential equipment.

None of the above four sites were used for patient care.

The COVID-19 drive-thru testing site located at the former Gateway College, New Haven was coordinated by Barbara Cosgrove, DAS/CS PM, in cooperation with DAS, SCSU, NG, the CT State Police, and the Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security. DAS assisted with the procurement of tents and portable toilets, as well as with organizing and implementing the set-up of this test site. CVS had the capacity to perform a minimum of 700 tests per day with the results provided within 15-20 minutes. Set-up began 4/4 with operations starting 4/10. The site was demobilized on 6/29.

In mid-April, DAS stood up an Incident Command and Liaison Cell aka "Operation Concierge," led by Lisa Humble - DAS/CS PM, to provide logistical support for the established COVID Hospitals for the duration of the State of Emergency. The team included Lisa Humble and Rahul Abraham (liaisons to Yale New Haven Hospital); Anthony DeNapoli (liaison to Danbury Hospital); Barbara Cosgrove and Halina Harabasz (liaisons to Hartford Health Care); and Allan DuFrend (liaison to Trinity Health Care). Each cell member was responsible for the coordination of contracts, material, supplies and general issues for all sites managed by their assigned hospital. This effort included coordination of meals, cleaning services, medical commodities, site security, dormitory sites for staff, and site maintenance. Hospital issues were to be coordinated directly with the Unified Command designated service provider.

During the assembly of each hospital site, the assigned cell staff communicated daily with the DAS/CS PM, assigned to construction, in order to identify and provide timely responses to site facility, operational and logistic requirements. Operation Concierge team members provided that crucial operational and logistics services for the hospital sites, and ensured that the site staff, including our Guardsmen's and Airmen's daily needs were met.

DAS Construction Services Project Managers engaged COVID emergency support rendered exemplary, professional, yet quiet service to the State's significant efforts to meet this crisis and protect our citizens. Well Done!

FROM JERRY LYNN | DIRECTOR

Business Services

It is an absolute privilege for me to lead the state of Connecticut's Department of Administrative Services' Business Services Division, which is comprised of Fiscal Services, Collection Services and the Mail, Print & Courier Services and means the overall responsibility of leading a team of approximately 120 members. As the head of these sections, we work as a team to deliver strategic budget forecasting, budget planning & management, payroll, purchasing, accounting, asset management, telecommunications, collection services, travel, and P-Cards for DAS and the agencies under the umbrella of the Small Agency Resource Team (SmART). Together, we have transformed our customer/client philosophy through rigorous outreach to gain the trust of our customers, and from there we have worked to provide a foundation to build upon. The transformation is an on-going process that continues to develop, but we are seeing our clients reaching out to us proactively, to seek our help and guidance on their respective goals, missions and initiatives. We are very customer driven and we provide outstanding customer service in a warm, welcoming and friendly style. We take pride in what we do and we tackle our tasks with a "Can-Do" approach. Our customers know this and they have come to expect it. While I am very proud of how far we have come, there is more work to do and there is always room for improvement.

Further, this is the mindset each day and all year long. Things are busy throughout the fiscal year for all three sections; the hard work and effort that takes place in our Collections' Division to chase and bring in over \$1 billion annually is always there. This section, which is led by Mike Barile and Frank Rivera, has a lot to be proud of. They have not been able to fully telework during the pandemic, but they have not allowed the coronavirus to keep them down. The crew led by Mike and Frank have experienced a whole slew of hurdles and setbacks due to aging systems and limited ability to telework. Despite these challenges, which includes reporting to the 450 Columbus Boulevard during the pandemic, the Collections' crew continues to do an outstanding job. Collections relies heavily on our partners in DAS/BEST, who do their best to keep Collections' aging systems chugging along. Despite the challenges and hurdles, the entire Collections' section always has a positive attitude and they work hard to keep things flowing.

Our Mail, Print & Courier Service also continues to report to 18-20 Trinity Street because their line of work is something that cannot be accomplished remotely. This crew is led by Nina Ritson and Mike Guimond, and through their perseverance and dedication, they make sure the state's printing, mailing and courier services continue to keep things moving and in production. Each day, these folks arrive and do their best to accomplish their missions and complete their tasks without fail, ever since the pandemic hit back in March. I'm really proud of their sense of duty and their strong desire to keep operations fully functional during these most extreme circumstances. This group also stepped up to the plate to help with the avalanche of mail for the Department of Labor. They are a terrific example of what state employees bring each day, but even more so as they have answered the call repeatedly during this pandemic.

April 1 through June 30 covers the final quarter of each fiscal year and it is the busiest part of the year for state agencies' fiscal offices. This section is led by Shantelle Varrs and JoAnn Figueiredo and they have always approached this as the time to shine, and once again this year, the staff of the Business Office did not disappoint. Quite simply, they are awesome. Moreover, we had the added wrinkle of being a central component of the state's response to the COVID-19 epidemic. We were called to help with setting up emergency hospitals, ordered refrigerated trailers and personal protective equipment (PPE), set up housing for the homeless, ordered emergency cleaning services, and set up testing centers, to name a few. These types of goods and services are not part of our ordinary daily tasks, and we took care of all of these things while learning on the fly. All this was done while still needed to keep our focus on the fiscal year-end closing process.

In my view, these are heroic efforts by all in the Business Services Division and it was accomplished in their usual, fly-under-the-radar style. It cannot be denied; this is a team of heroes in the trenches that does not get a lot of attention. And, they are still at it because they know the work is not done. I am so proud of them.

FROM DOUG MOORE | DIRECTOR

Property & Facilities Management

Kevin McFarland (DAS FM) and Mike Sanders (School Construction) were instrumental in setting up the Battelle Decontamination System at a DOT garage facility at 43 Chapel Street in New Haven. This system disinfects N-95 masks and allows for their re-use for up to 20 or 30 times.

A team of DAS project managers and facilities staff assisted in setting up 4 Recovery Centers at the Connecticut State Colleges (Southern, Western, Central) and CT Conventional Center in Hartford. The recovery centers were to serve as hospital overflow locations in the event the hospitals could not handle the surge in corona virus cases. There were many DAS employees involved including: Sarah Tiereny, Dave Wlodkowski, Tony DeNapoli, DAS ADPM's Peter McClure and Peter Simmons. DAS FM team members included Carol O'Shea, Marilyn Bantz, Kerri Versteeg, Gary Faraci and members of his Trade Staff.

Barbara Cosgrove assisted with the set up of the CVS testing location at the former Gateway Community College in New Haven.

Doug wants to thank all workers from all agencies that helped DAS with this success story.

FROM DAVID LABBADIA | DIRECTOR

Enterprise Applications

I would like to call out members from my Enterprise Applications team. The team stepped up to the plate when COVID-19 hit by assisting our customers with working remotely. Every member of the team went above and beyond during these unprecedented times. One specific example is the team assisting DSS with getting their users working remotely. I'm so proud of my team (Margie, Kim, Audrey, Donna, Chris, Bernard, and Jim).

I also would like to call out specific Chris Sheehan and Jim Birok for their efforts on getting agencies setup with SharePoint Online as the pandemic hit. As agencies scrambled to work remotely, Jim and Chris did a tremendous job at creating SharePoint sites, assigning permissions, migrating agencies sites and file servers over to SharePoint, so that agencies can continue to do their job. Some of the agencies never had SharePoint and looked at us for guidance. Jim and Chris also created a COVID-19 tracking site for DPH.

FROM STEVE MCGIRR | DIRECTOR

DAS Fleet Operations

The Fleet Director and Assistant Director would like to personally thank all of our colleagues at DAS Fleet Operations for their amazing professionalism and adeptness to change during these critical times. Deemed as essential, Fleet Operations has been all hands on deck since day one, and the value of fleet staff has come through with many positive suggestions from every level, all working together to keep everyone safe and healthy while still performing a vital service.

Moving to a 50/50 split shift format at the fleet garages has created opportunity out of crisis. Many have stepped up and filled vital roles that were going to be open 50% of the time. The Fleet Garages have trained a new depth of supervisory back-ups and parts room personnel that we never had before. Having crossed trained and experienced people at the ready will benefit Fleet Operations for many years to come!

The Morgan Street administrative staff was able to convert seamlessly and immediately to teleworking and has never lapsed in service. Although the technological hurdles at times have been somewhat cumbersome, it has not impacted the positive outlook of the team, and is improving communications within fleet and to the agencies it services. As the State of Connecticut moves to a paperless digital future, the admin staff at Fleet Operations due to their flexibility and ability to adapt to an ever changing work environment, is well on their way to achieving that goal.

Fleet Operations is still in the fast lane creating a benchmark department, despite a COVID19 speedbump!

SHANE P. MALLORY, RPA, BOMI-HP | ADMINISTRATOR

Statewide Leasing and Property Transfer

During the COVID-19 pandemic, within less than 2 weeks of being asked to assist in the homeless shelter decompression effort (relocating the homeless out of shelters), the Statewide Leasing & Property Transfer team had successfully negotiated, executed and obtained approvals on agreements for over 750 hotel rooms at 14 hotels throughout the State at substantially reduced rates from the hotels' normal rates. Moreover, the shelter decompression implementation in Connecticut which included many agencies such as Housing, Social Services, and non-state entities, etc... has been hailed as a best practice in the Country. The rooms have been renewed through the end of August thus far.

During the same period of time, in addition to the normal day to day business and assisting dozens of client agencies, the team negotiated two license agreements at Gateway Community College to allow Yale New Haven Hospital to use classrooms for emergency nurse training and an agreement between Jordan's Furniture in New Haven to use parking for a drive-up COVID testing center.

Multiple memorandum of understandings were also done for emergency COVID response activities, the team negotiated with other state agencies for the use of residence halls at BOR and UCONN for first responders and healthcare providers, a facility for the operation of a mobile PPE decontamination unit, Aircraft Landing Authorization Agreement for use of athletic fields at Central Connecticut State University to land a military medical helicopter and at the Connecticut Convention Center as a stand-up field hospital.

This was and continues to be a truly team effort across all agencies and levels of government. The team wouldn't have been able to complete all the agreements if Deputy Petra, Commissioner Geballe and Governor Lamont hadn't issued an Executive Order streamlining the real estate requirements. The cooperation received from fellow state agencies, the Board of Regents, UCONN just to name a few has been instrumental in the team's ability to react quickly.

The Statewide Leasing and Property Transfer Division's portfolio consists of approximately 1,864,860 square feet of office/courthouse/storage space for 50 state agencies, In addition, the department also acquires and disposes of real estate for the same state agencies.

FROM DARREN HOBBS | DEPUTY STATE BUILDING INSPECTOR

In the Division of Real Estate and Construction Services... The building, elevator and boiler inspections teams have kept pace with the construction industry which hasn't slowed, and quickly adapted to remote working, including doing hundreds of inspections using Facetime and Zoom at a significant time savings to the state, helping keep projects on schedule and budget. This builds on 2019's switch to all electronic reviews of construction documents which has proven to be key in these challenging times. The teams haven't missed a beat on the administrative end either, processing thousands of payments and certificates and responding to inquiries, ensuring citizens are kept in compliance and informed.

Thanks again!

FROM CAROL WILSON | DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT

Connecticut Pandemic Procurement Excellence Submission

CT Pandemic Procurement Context:

On March 10, 2020, Governor Lamont declared a public health emergency to bolster Connecticut's effort to contain Covid-19. Within a week, state offices closed, and all state procurement staff were required to work from home. Department of Administrative Services (DAS) leadership quickly realized this was no temporary disruption, but a full-blown pandemic that would require urgent action to meet the evolving needs of the state. What started as some team members logging extra hours suddenly shifted to nearly 90% of the procurement team focused on personal protective equipment (PPE) sourcing, often 14-hours a day, 7-days a week.

For CT's procurement team, this wasn't just a complex challenge to conquer. CT was one of the hardest hit states in the country, and most staff intimately knew individuals impacted. Multiple colleagues were hospitalized and fighting for their lives. As one staff member highlighted, "This wasn't just a hypothetical exercise. We were doing this for our colleagues, our families, and our neighbors." As much of the state felt paralyzed by the realities of the pandemic, DAS Procurement played a unique role in giving purpose to those on the sidelines. For business and philanthropic leaders eager to help source PPE, DAS Procurement offered an outlet for partnership. For small businesses out of work due to stay at home orders, DAS Procurement helped to empower companies to change their business models, retool, and ultimately transform the state's supply chain.

As staff tried to manage new work environments and time commitments, a new normal slowly developed. Whatever their previous roles or responsibilities had been, all staff now had to navigate the complexities of international supply chains, politics in all echelons of government, and multifaceted public-private partnerships to get the job done. As one staff member commented, "So many people were contacting their state representatives or DAS to do whatever they could to help CT citizens. Ordinary citizens retooling factories, donating PPE, and selling goods at cost. A complete outpouring of care and concern for each other in a time of need."

CT Pandemic Procurement Response:

CT took a range of innovative steps to effectively procure critical goods and services, while ensuring proper controls remained in place to prevent fraud and abuse. The following activities highlight some of the most crucial efforts:

1. Implemented a systematized process to vet and source PPE. With hundreds of new leads daily, DAS Procurement needed an organized approach to efficiently assess and follow up on inbound PPE solicitations. With nearly all staff recruited to assist with the effort, DAS Procurement generated a collaborative Excel tracker shared via Microsoft Teams to capture key information related to each lead. Utilizing standardized outreach protocols, assigned DAS Procurement staff used their expertise and relationships with subject matter experts to validate the viability of each lead.

As many of the leads originated outside of the United States, DAS Procurement developed unique partnerships, such as an arrangement with Alibaba, to help vet factories in China. As one contract specialist commented, "It was a very stressful time trying to figure out if the PPE products vendors were offering were actually viable and trying to get them to understand CT couldn't just pre-pay for products prior to delivery. The more I stood my ground the more I could see things shifting and it seemed like my efforts were starting to pay off." All of these efforts focused on efficiently procuring critical supplies, while de-risking PPE transactions as much as possible.

2. Created an interactive dashboard to inform PPE reporting. During the early days of the crisis, a critical need became evident: how can DAS Procurement share progress on sourcing and procuring much needed PPE with emergency command staff and executive leadership? As a solution, DAS Procurement partnered with the Department of Corrections to create a daily dashboard capturing data from its internal sourcing tracker to report on the procurement of PPE directly to the Governor's Office and other key partners. This included information on units ordered/received by product, total spend, items donated, and total leads vetted. These easy to visualize statistics became frequent talking points for both CT's Chief Operating Officer and the Governor in daily public news conferences.

3. Drafted Executive Orders issued by the Governor to streamline procurement processes. As the crisis unfolded, DAS' legal team realized certain statutory procedures were impacting the ability to efficiently and effectively procure

essential goods and services. With the support of the Department of Administrative Services, the Office of Policy and Management, and the Attorney General's Office, Governor Lamont issued two executive orders, 7Z and 7GG, to facilitate the emergency procurement of critical goods and services. Given unique supply chain constraints, these orders were essential to streamline processes for a multitude of procurements. Furthermore, the orders mitigated disruptions in care for vulnerable populations impacted by human service procurements.

4. Established longer-term supply chains and supported new service areas. DAS Procurement did not just ensure a temporary reprieve of PPE shortages for the state. It acted proactively, leveraging new vendor relationships to establish longer-term agreements to obtain PPE on a consistent basis. As of July 2020, CT had nine standing orders for ongoing PPE receipt into 2021 for over 80 million individual PPE items. As emergency PPE sourcing stabilized, DAS procurement shifted to support other state agencies in procuring critical services related to the Covid response. Despite these services being outside its statutory responsibility, DAS served as partner entity to help source Covid-19 lab testing facilities, contact tracing staffing support, community resource coordinators, and an audit of Covid responses by long-term care facilities.

5. Utilized ESF7 Group to transform how critical supplies were delivered across the state. Following the activation of the State's Emergency Support Functions, the ESF7 Group took the lead in coordinating purchasing with the private sector. As one ESF7 member commented, "Throughout the Covid-19 response, we were able to build a multifaceted team of members from different agencies who never worked together. It was amazing to see how we were able to overcome obstacles and communicate across agencies." Through daily 8:00am calls, the ESF7 Group established sourcing priorities for the day, answered questions, and offered a forum to share ideas. Indeed, the ESF7 Group helped to provide structure and facilitate critical collaboration between state agencies (including the military) to secure and distribute PPE.

Long-Term Impact on CT Procurement

By the end of June 2020, CT's emergency procurement effort involved over 2,500 leads screened, with 470 deemed viable, resulting in 369 separate orders costing \$175 million. Most critically, nearly 66% of those orders had been received, demonstrating the careful balance of efficiency with protecting the state from fraud. These statistics reflect all the incredible efforts across the state to ensure front-line workers, non-profits, and residents were properly resourced in their fight against Covid-19.

This emergency period is about much more than sourcing specific goods. While it is still difficult to assess the full effect, Covid-19 is already impacting the long-term trajectory of procurement across the state. DAS Procurement is now exploring a strategic reassessment related to its capacity, agility, and resiliency in light of this emergency period. The following questions highlight some of the core considerations:

- How can we take what was deregulated during this emergency, make it permanent, and operate more efficiently in the new norm?
- How can we leverage a new value chain of converting procurement manuals into tools and templates, followed by new training, to ultimately further empower client agencies?
- How can we better incorporate data metrics to measure our results and better tell a story about our successes and failures?
- How do we redefine our collective paradigm of purpose and structure given new needs across the state?

Beyond these key questions, public procurement has been forever changed in CT. The increased profile of procurement processes is demonstrated by the dozens of procurement-related local news articles, and the creation of a direct line to the Governor. In Connecticut, the Covid-19 response has demanded more attention be paid to the strategic role public procurement plays not just in the daily operations of state government, but when emergencies strike.

As DAS Procurement Leader Carol Wilson summarized, "I can proudly say, being a procurement professional for over 35 years, that this was the most important and memorable professional challenge I have ever faced. I owe deep gratitude to our DAS Procurement Staff and other colleagues who made our response so effective."

DAS EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY WELCOMES RENÉE LOMBARD...



DAS Equal Employment Opportunity Unit welcomes Renée Lombard, who joined the team October 30, 2020. Renee moved to Connecticut from Minnesota where she received her Master's degree in Industrial Organization Psychology and was working in higher education in Professional Development Services. Originally from Massachusetts, she recently returned east to "move closer to family, get married, buy a house and start a new job!"

"I grew up in central Massachusetts so my family is only an hour away. My husband grew up in Avon so he was quite happy to return to the area! Living in the Midwest an hour was a quick drive usually on highway roads going 65-70 mph. Connecticut is a little different with traffic, but with COVID it doesn't seem bad at all, and it helps that I have been teleworking."

She also noted that starting a job during COVID has been strange and she is looking forward to when business returns to in person so she can meet face to face with the employees at DAS as well as going on site visits. "Face to face adds color and interest to the work place!"

Renée will be responsible for the Departments of Housing, Economic and Community Development, Agriculture and the State Library. Welcome to DAS Renée!

....and MILDRED VERDEJO

Mildred Verdejo comes to DAS EEO unit from Southern Connecticut State University, Office of Diversity & Equity Programs. She worked at Southern for 13 years, and prior to that was with the then Connecticut State University System Office, now known as the Board of Regents for Higher Education. She also spent three years at Wesleyan University before joining the state. In addition she has 11 years of experience in the insurance industry. Welcome to DAS Mildred!



DAS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN APPROVED

by **Alicia Nuñez**

DAS is pleased to announce that the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities approved the 2020 DAS Affirmative Action Plan at its November 18, 2020 meeting.

A hard copy of the plan is available for your review via the Human Resources Office, Commissioner's Office and/or by contacting the agency's Equal Employment Opportunity Director, Alicia Nuñez. Also for review are the current DAS Affirmative Action, Policy Statement, Summary of Objectives and the Discrimination Complaint Process.

The Affirmative Action Plan is a comprehensive look at DAS and its employment processes and opportunities and illustrates the Department's workforce diversity, hiring and promotion procedures, and career mobility services.

Alicia expresses her thanks to the Statewide Human Resources, Supplier Diversity, SmART Team, the Business Office and Communications for their time and contributions to the plan.

"It's an incredibly informative document and it takes many hands from throughout DAS to put it together. Thank you again for your time and efforts in assembling another successful Affirmative Action Plan," said Nuñez.

All employees and managers are encouraged to review the plan and submit any comments, suggestions, or questions to Alicia Nuñez, Equal Opportunity Director at (860) 713-5317 or alicia.nunez@ct.gov.



JOB FAIR FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

by **Alicia Nuñez**

On October 16, the 8th Annual Disability Resource Fair was held virtually in recognition of Disability Employment Awareness month. For the first time Job seekers and employers from Connecticut were invited to an interactive virtual environment, where they were able to meet, network, and interview. Maximizing hiring results with real-time chats, resume databases, and a virtual job board.

This was a celebration of the contributions of workers with disabilities. There were over 30 employers and resources tuned in and available to persons with disabilities.

Employers in the State of Connecticut included the Department of Administrative Services, Department of Social Services, Department of Developmental Services, Department of Labor, and Aging and Disability Services. DAS Human Resources Specialist, Raisa Capellan and EEO Director, Alicia Nuñez participated in the event and were on hand to share their knowledge of various CT State government job opportunities and resources that are available to people with disabilities. Each participant received the JobAps link and PowerPoint presentation designed by our DAS Statewide Human Resources Management Talent Solutions Team. Over 240 participants joined. LifeBridge provided Sign Language Interpreting for the virtual fair. This event was also Tweeted throughout the morning by our very own DAS Communications Unit.

CONNECTICUT DIGITAL GOVERNMENT SUMMIT 2020

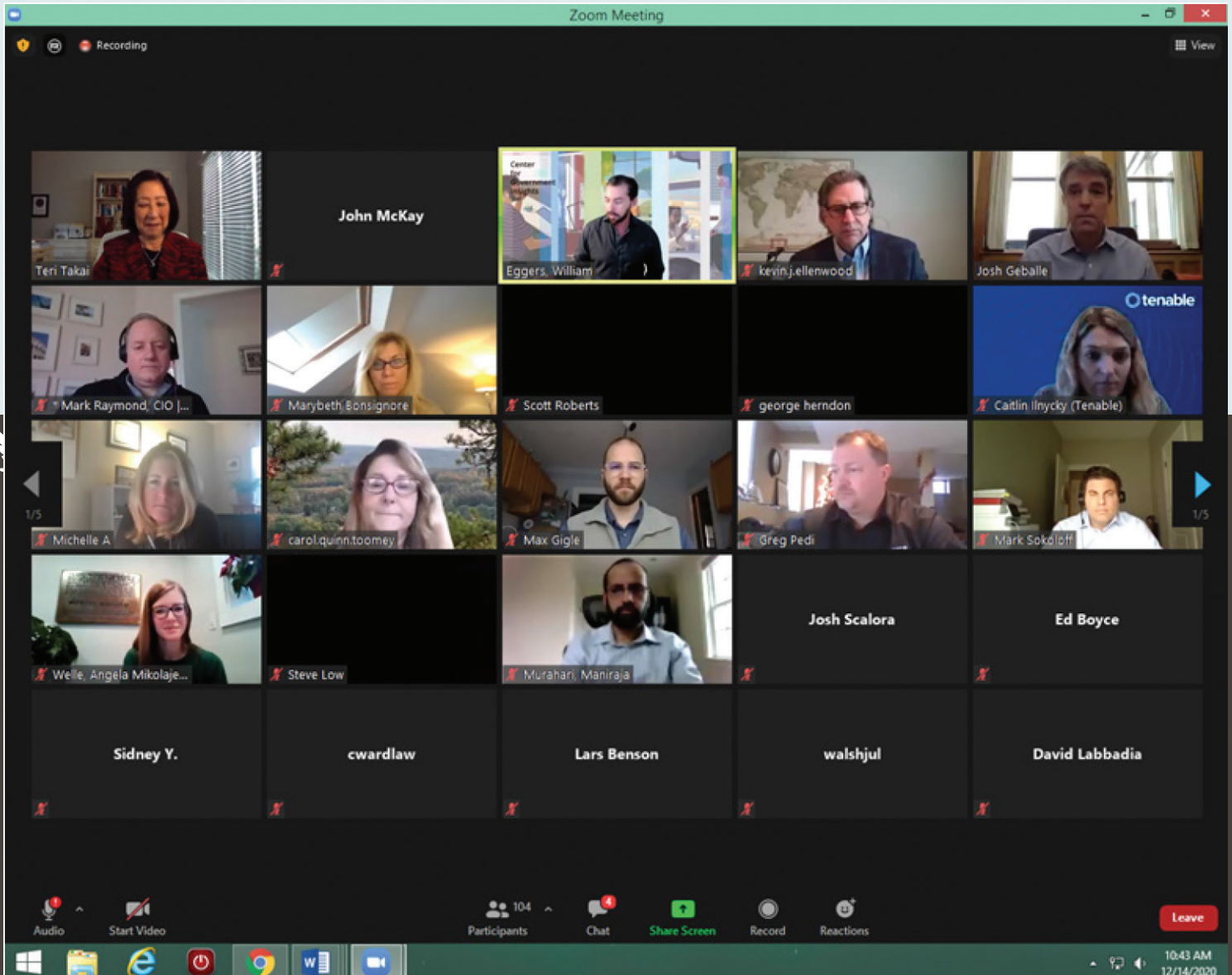
By John McKay

This year's Connecticut Digital Government Summit was "digital" in every way! The conference was held December 14-15 in a virtual format on Zoom for Government, a version with advanced security controls, which is used for meetings and webinars by the Department of Homeland Security.

CIO Mark Raymond said, "I am delighted to be involved with the 4th annual Connecticut Digital Government Summit. The last year has reinforced our need to make Connecticut the first all-digital government to be able to provide services wherever and whenever they are needed. The Summit provides a unique opportunity for government leaders to interact with our industry partners to leverage the best ideas and most effective technology solutions for the next generation of government services."

One of the break out sessions, Acceleration of the Government Experience, included DAS Commissioner and COO Josh Geballe. The evolution of the consumer experience has been underway for decades, with its many stages unfolding at a reasonably comfortable pace. But 2020 is a tipping point. Online is fast on its way to becoming the only way.

Josh spoke on the incredible changes the state has faced during the pandemic and the incredible role state IT services have played during the event. "We've done some incredible work during the pandemic and it isn't going to stop after the pandemic. States government needs to be adaptable to change and continue to push modernization of state systems."



IN MEMORIAM



ROBERT JAMES ZALUCKI
May 15, 1971 - August 22, 2020



CRAIG SCOTT MOLLISON
November 25, 1968 - November 24, 2020



GEORGE MEDEIROS
September 29, 1964 - January 1, 2021

IN MEMORIAM



RICHARD OMOHUNDRO
February 7, 1948 - April 15, 2020



PATSY MCLAUGHLIN
April 19, 1942 - April 27, 2020



ROY WYNNE
June 27, 1945 - August 22, 2020