



CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL
Special Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2015

Location: Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities

In attendance: Laurie Cantwell, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Ann Gonet, Sara Lourie, Linda Mizzi, Allison Quirion, Jody Santoro, Lisa Sheppard, Myra Watnick, Robin Wood

By phone: Sharon Dexler, April Dipollina, Karen Hlavac, and Renee Toper

Absent: Mark Greenstein, Steven Hernandez, Marcus Rivera, Mona Tremblay, Robyn Trowbridge

Call to Order: 10:17 am

Introductions - Three new appointed Council members – Laurie Cantwell of Cromwell, Allison Quirion of Amston and Jody Santoro of Cromwell - were welcomed to their first meeting. There was great excitement in having new members appointed; Laurie, Allison and Jody graciously shared their personal stories and the journey which brought them to the Council. In addition, Myra Watnick joined the meeting for the first time representing Mark Greenstein and the Birth-to-Three Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC).

Public Comment: None

Approval of December Minutes - One correction was made and Ann Gonet moved and Robin Wood seconded the motion to accept the minutes as revised. The minutes were approved as revised by Council membership.

Old Business

Meeting Location – Lisa Sheppard raised the possibility of holding the meetings at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) in the future to facilitate direct contact with Legislators. Council members were reminded that this is the role of family members and advocates but not the state agency representatives. Some questions were raised about access during the session with regard to the availability of Legislators, rooms in which to hold the meetings and parking. Since there was interest in exploring this but not necessarily holding all the meetings there for the reasons outlined above, it was suggested that perhaps some of the meetings could be held there. April Dipollina made a motion that the Council would try to hold 4 meetings a year at the LOB; this was seconded by Jody

Santoro and approved by all Council members in attendance. Lisa will start exploring this option.

Bylaws/Membership Ad Hoc Committee – In continuation of previous discussions, there is a need to both formalize the membership/vetting process and to review the Bylaws relative to membership and other needed changes. In order to finalize the brochure and membership materials already in process and to assure that the content is accurate and reflects current Council practice, it is essential to review the Bylaws first to see if any changes are needed. Lisa Sheppard has agreed to coordinate an Ad Hoc Bylaws/Membership committee to review the Bylaws and make recommendations about needed changes. Volunteers to work on this committee in addition to Lisa include Laurie Cantwell, Jody Santoro and Sara Lourie. Lisa also planned to discuss this with DDS Legislative Liaison Rod O'Connor to get input from him regarding things the Council may need to consider as we review the Bylaws and membership process.

Reappointments - Appointed Council members were reminded of the process to get reappointed if their appointing authority has left his/her office and there is a new official in that position. Calling the office of the new official in that position is the first step to getting that reappointment letter.

New Business

DDS Website Update - Robin Wood is in the process of updating the Family Support Council section of the DDS website and requested feedback and/or suggestions. One suggestion was to make sure that the Annual Reports are all linked to that section of the website so they are easy to access. She will also be updating contact information to reflect the current Co-Chairs. It was also noted that December minutes which were sent for posting did not end up on the website. Robin will follow-up on that as well.

Event for Commissioner Macy - Robin also let the Council know that the Family Support Network (FSN) has asked if the Family Support Council would like to co-sponsor an event to recognize Commissioner Terry Macy who is leaving the Department in January 2015. Lisa Sheppard made a motion for the Council to co-sponsor this event, Ann Gonet seconded the motion and Council membership voted in favor; Robin Wood abstained.

Annual Report Ad Hoc Committee - It is time to prepare the Council's 2015 annual report. Volunteers for an Ad Hoc Committee were requested to begin the process of reviewing prior reports and making recommendations to the full Council regarding the focus of the report for this year. It is important to complete the report prior to the end of the Legislative session and the state agencies, which often have significant sections to prepare, need to begin this very soon.

The difficult “maze” that families face when trying to access services and supports was raised; this has been discussed at several prior Council meetings and seems to be a significant and repeated concern and may be something the Council wants to explore further. This could be added to the recommendations in the Annual Report and/or could become the focus of future work for the Council. This is part of what the committee will explore and bring back to the full Council meeting in January.

Ann Gionet agreed to send out the electronic version of the 2014 report and to coordinate this committee. Members who agreed to participate in addition to Ann include: April Dipollina, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Allison Quirion, Jody Santoro, Renee Toper and Robin Wood. Myra Watnick will check with Mark Greenstein regarding ICC input and participation.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 pm

Minutes submitted by Sara Lourie, Secretary