



CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2015

Location: Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities

In attendance: Laurie Cantwell, Ann Gionet, Sara Lourie, Linda Mizzi, Lisa Sheppard, Mona Tremblay and Robin Wood

By phone: Karen Hlavac

Absent: Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, April Dipollina, Mark Greenstein, Steven Hernandez, Allison Quirion, Marcus Rivera, Jody Santoro, Renee Toper

Call to Order: 10:20 am

Public Comment: Guest Robyn Trowbridge discussed, from her experience as a previous Council member, the challenges of preparing an annual report representing all the different viewpoints and synthesizing information from various sources and hopefully bringing people together in the process.

Approval of April Minutes – Karen Hlavac made a motion to accept the minutes as written; it was seconded by Ann Gionet and approved by the Council membership with Laurie Cantwell, Linda Mizzi and Mona Tremblay abstaining.

Old Business

Co-Chair Vacancy – Volunteers were requested; the Council was reminded that July is the Annual Meeting and there will be election of officers.

Revision of Bylaws - The Council reviewed the 4/9/2015 draft sent out electronically; language changes were suggested in several areas which will be incorporated in a new draft; most were specific to assuring consistency across the document with the addition of new committees and composition of the Executive Committee. Sara Lourie will make these revisions and circulate to the Council for review.

There was extensive discussion about potential additions to the membership section of the Bylaws and what agencies/groups should be considered for addition to the Council; one example raised was the new Office of Early Childhood which will eventually be the home of the Birth-to-Three program. In addition, there are other Councils/Committees which have inquired about membership on the Connecticut Family Support Council;

there will need to be continued discussion around this since consensus was not reached. Robin Wood will review these issues with the DDS Legislative staff particularly because the changes being discussed would require a statutory revision prior to the Bylaws being updated. This may not be feasible at this time but will continue on the agenda as part of the Bylaws discussion.

Council members also pointed out there is current language in the Bylaws related to expense compensation and asked whether this would ever be possible given budgetary issues. It is seen as additional incentive to encourage family member participation as it would provide reimbursement of travel costs for meeting attendance. Robin agreed to raise this with staff at DDS as part of the conversation above.

Annual Report Update – The Annual Report has been finalized and is at the printer. The time frame for completion is not known and electronic distribution may be helpful to get it out to the Legislature sooner. Lisa Sheppard will follow-up. Lisa thanked the Annual Report Committee and all of the Council members who worked on the Report having a product that reflects a great deal of time, hard work and a team effort.

New Business

Setting up New Committees - It was agreed that even though the Bylaws were not finalized at this meeting, the two new committees being added could still move forward. There is the need to begin the important work on membership materials and process which is seen as vital to growing the Council; outreach to other family groups is also a priority area that needs to be addressed. Linda Mizzi agreed to chair the Membership/Nominations Committee and Mona Tremblay agreed to chair the Family Networking Committee and will be looking for Council members to join them.

Annual Retreat – Reminder that the Council's Annual Retreat is scheduled for Thursday September 10 and there was discussion about speakers. This will also be on the agenda for the May meeting.

Announcements

Ann Gionet announced that she is the Department of Public Health representative to the Interagency Coordinating Council and can be an active link between that group and the Family Support Council.

Robin Wood announced and handed out a flier for community meetings being held by the new Value Options Autism Team across the state.

Adjournment –The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 pm

Minutes submitted by Sara Lourie, Secretary