



**CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 11, 2015**

- Location:** Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
- In attendance:** Laurie Cantwell, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Ann Gionet, Sara Lourie, Linda Mizzi, Lisa Sheppard, and Robin Wood
- By phone:** April Dipollina, Karen Hlavac, Allison Quirion, Marcus Rivera, Jody Santoro, and Mona Tremblay
- Absent:** Mark Greenstein, Steven Hernandez, and Renee Toper
- Call to Order:** 10:16 am
- Public Comment:** None

**Approval of May Minutes** – Karen Hlavac made a motion to accept the minutes as written; this was seconded by Ann Gionet and approved by the Council membership with April Dipollina and Sylvia Gafford-Alexander abstaining.

**Old Business**

Distribution of Annual Report – Ann Gionet delivered the Annual Report to the General Assembly and at that time a copy was also left in the mailboxes for the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. Lisa Sheppard is still planning to draft a letter specifically for the Governor and Lieutenant Governor to formally send the report. Each Council member received a copy and the state agency representatives also received a copy for their Commissioner. Sara Lourie will hold on to the box of extras for additional distribution as determined appropriate.

Revision of Bylaws – Robin Wood and Lisa Sheppard are scheduled to meet with Rod O'Connor at DDS to discuss the issues identified at the last meeting regarding addition of a new state agency or other organizations, compensation, etc. Sara Lourie is still working on the revisions and will forward a new draft once completed.

Impact of State Budget – Council members identified that there are still issues related to the new proposed state budget. Some of the DDS cuts were reinstated but not fully, the Department of Public Health is facing reductions to the Children with Special Health Care Needs line item, and there are still DSS/HUSKY reductions which are concerning. Council members were encouraging continued advocacy in these and other areas of

concern. There was interest expressed in determining how other family groups are responding such as the Cross Disabilities Alliance and the Family Support Network.

## **New Business**

Annual Retreat – The Council's Annual Retreat is scheduled for Thursday September 10 at Camp Harkness (thanks to April Dipollina for securing this great location). Discussed at greater length a variety of possible speakers/topics among them: new statute development DDS legislative staff, DCF's strengthening families initiatives, the Commission on Children, Senator Ted Kennedy Jr, etc. There was definite interest in having DCF come to talk and Sara will follow-up on that. Lisa Sheppard will reach out to Senator Kennedy to see if that is a possibility.

July Annual Meeting – Election of Officers – the July 9, 2015 meeting is the Annual Meeting of the CT Family Support Council at which time new officers are elected. The Membership/Nominations Committee will develop a slate of officers and as identified in the Bylaws there can also be nominations from the floor at the meeting. The need for volunteers for the 2 Co-Chair positions from among the family members and the 1 Secretary position from among the state agencies was reiterated.

Membership/Nominations Committee – Linda Mizzi who is chair of this committee, and committee members Jody Santoro and Laurie Cantwell distributed a draft brochure focused on getting information to family members/advocates who may be interested in Council membership, so that ultimately membership is increased. The brochure provides some basic information about the Council and the steps if someone is interested in how to get appointed as well as where to go for more information.

There is not resolution of what contact information (phone, email, etc) will be on the brochure and Robin Wood will follow-up with DDS again. The clear preference was for an email address that the Executive Committee can access and make sure there is a response to inquiries from prospective members.

The brochure is designed to include pictures and the Council membership was primarily interested in having family pictures and representing the diversity of our families in Connecticut. Council members were asked to identify any pictures, secure permission to use these in the brochure and forward to Linda.

There were many positive comments about the presentation, professionalism and content in the draft. In order to finalize, Linda will send an electronic copy and is requesting comments within a week, so this can be finalized once the contact information piece is resolved.

Family Networking Committee – Mona is looking for members for this new committee. Council members Ann Gionet, April Dipollina, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander and Robin Wood volunteered. Mona will start an e-group and set up a conference call. It was noted that numerous times this topic has been raised – or a suggestion made that the Council needs to reach out to other family groups to find out what they are doing. This will be the role of this committee so that the Council has better and current information about the “state” of family support. As one example, it was suggested that we might want to consider returning to a prior practice at Council meetings when the Family Support

Network Regional Coordinators periodically joined a meeting to provide input/feedback from their part of the state. If we are to do this, it will need to be clear what specific information the Council is hoping to obtain from these discussions.

### **Announcements**

Robin Wood announced the state's participation in a national Community of Practice conference. Connecticut is one of 5 "mentor states" to help other states replicate what has been happening around family supports, emphasizing the concept of "life course, utilizing person centered planning, focusing on use of on-line media (for helping families build circles of support and self-directed supports) and an initiative called Safe and Smart Assistive Technology

**Adjournment** –The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 pm

Minutes submitted by Sara Lourie, Secretary