



CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
July 9, 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: Karen Hlavac, Jody Santoro

Absent: April Dipollina, Mark Greenstein, Steven Hernandez, Allison Quirion, Marcus Rivera, Renee Tooper and Mona Tremblay

Call to Order: 10:23 am

Public Comment: None

Approval of June Minutes – Karen Hlavac made a motion to accept the minutes as written; this was seconded by Sylvia Gafford-Alexander and approved by the Council membership.

Old Business

Discussion with DDS/Revision of Statute and Bylaws – Lisa Sheppard and Robin Wood were not able to hold the meeting with Rod O'Connor at DDS but plan to reschedule.

The latest version of the Bylaws was reviewed and some revisions suggested. Sara Lourie will make the changes and email the Council members for review. The goal is to finalize the Bylaws at the Retreat on September 10.

Annual Retreat – The Annual CTFSC Retreat is scheduled for Thursday September 10, 2015 from 9 am to 2 pm and will be held at Camp Harkness. DCF is confirmed to attend and discuss current family initiatives. Lisa Sheppard is continuing to work on having a legislator attend to discuss how to advocate for supports for children with disabilities given the fiscal climate. The concern expressed and something the Council would like to discuss is that even with all the advocacy done by various groups, significant cuts were still made specifically to services and supports for families who have children with disabilities and special health care needs.

Membership/Nominations Committee – Linda Mizzi provided an update on the brochure which is still in the development phase. She thanked Council members for the feedback given via email on the last draft, which was incorporated in the most recent draft.

Discussion:

- The Council still needs to secure releases for use of the pictures (or confirm that they have been received);
- There is interest in utilizing this brochure to encourage more diverse representation – Sylvia Gafford-Alexander is working with the Committee on language to address this;
- The latest version will be sent out via email for Council review; as previously, comments should be sent to Linda Mizzi via email;
- The brochure still needs a Council contact – such as an email; Robin Wood is working on identifying a way to do this within DDS; and
- There is an interest in re-looking at the mission/vision statement if that is to be included in the brochure.

Family Networking Committee – the committee was not able to meet prior to the meeting but a time will be scheduled and feedback given once that has occurred.

State Budget – Several State agencies gave brief updates on the budget and some of the highlights are:

- DDS did have some cuts restored but training funds were cut completely and there is a delayed start to the day program funding for high school graduates. VSP still has a cut, albeit smaller than what was in the original budget;
- DOPH still has to deal with a 40% reduction in extended service and respite funding for children with special healthcare needs which will require staffing reductions; and
- All of the agencies are challenged with staffing reductions, an inability to refill many positions and the need to cut overtime expenses.

New Business

Election of Officers – July is the Annual meeting for the Council but the Nominating Committee was not able to identify a slate of officers. Linda Mizzi, as Chairperson of the Committee sent out two emails to membership and did not get a response. There is a need to focus on increasing membership so there are more individuals willing to take on leadership roles. Also discussed ways to “think outside of the box” in terms of how to cover functions and possibly share functions across a number of members. It is particularly difficult for both family members and state agency representatives right now to take on additional responsibility. Current Co-Chair Lisa Sheppard and Secretary Sara Lourie will have to continue as Executive Committee members for the time being.

CTFSC Documentation – This was added to the agenda – to determine what documentation is/should be available and where it is being kept. The assumption is that Council records are housed at DDS but this needs to be confirmed. Lisa Sheppard and Robin Wood will follow-up with DDS staff. Specifically in terms of the brochure, it was determined that DDS will need to keep copies of the photo releases.

Announcements

Linda Mizzi announced that in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ADA, the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities will host several: "Ask the Advocate" events across the state; the New Haven event is on July 22nd in City Hall; many of the events will be held in libraries. She will send a flyer for distribution to Council members and she is asking for this to be forwarded as appropriate.

Ann Gionet reported that the Department of Public Health submitted the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant which included new performance measures. One area of focus was on developmental screenings.

Adjournment – The formal portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 am when several members had to leave and there was no longer a quorum for any formal voting.

Minutes submitted by Sara Lourie, Secretary