



Approved Minutes of April 14, 2011

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: David Hadden; Jim Heffernan, Chair; Thomas Kalal; Sheila Mulvey; Peter O’Meara, Ex-officio; Lou Richards; Patti Silva; Patrick Vingo, Vice-Chair.

Absent: Donna Bouteiller, Jennifer Carroll, Jack Frost, Gregory Kelley; Dr. John Pelegano, Secretary.

DDS STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Kathryn du Pree, Deputy Commissioner; Ed Mambruno, Ombudsperson; Rod O’Connor, Legislative Liaison.

GUESTS: Deb Heinrich, Non-Profit Liaison to the Governor.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Jim Heffernan called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Mr. Heffernan introduced Deb Heinrich who is the Non-Profit Liaison to the Governor and asked all members to introduce themselves.

NEW ADMINISTRATION AND NON-PROFIT PROVIDERS:

Ms. Heinrich discussed her role with the new administration to help strengthen, support and honor the important role of the non-profit providers in offering human services. Ms. Heinrich’s role is focusing on policy development and related functions including communication between the providers and the executive branch improving the providers’ ability to focus on service delivery by streamlining requirements and adopting best governmental practices; ensuring best practices implementation throughout the provider community; and developing stronger relationships and partnering with philanthropic foundations to achieve systems change. Ms. Heinrich thanked Commissioner Peter O’Meara for his leadership to establish best practices in contracting and purchasing.

Sheila Mulvey raised a question regarding the need for advocacy and support for the families who self direct their services and act as employers. A discussion ensued regarding networking, contacts through technology and other methods these families could use to connect and strengthen their advocacy through collective efforts.

David Hadden asked about the implementation of best practices and addressing the costs of providing quality services. Ms. Heinrich discussed the need to develop incentives for providers to cooperate, collaborate and partner to best use resources.

REVIEW OF THE MARCH MINUTES:

Rod O’Connor already captured two typographical errors. Mr. Heffernan asked for one other change. Patti Silva motioned to accept the minutes as corrected, seconded by Mr. Hadden. The Council approved the minutes as amended.

OMBUDSPERSON REPORT:

Ed Mambruno reviewed his monthly activities including specific consumer issues. He was also involved in discussions about contingency planning for nursing home facilities that might close. Mr. Mambruno discussed the Governor's Coalition for Disabilities Scholarships, which has been in place since 1995. This year's award is going to an individual served by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Scholarships range from \$2,500 to \$5,000. The award event is on May 20th at 9:30 AM. Council members were invited to attend the awards event.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Mr. O'Connor briefed the Council on the status of the four agency bills. All have been approved by the respective committees and are before the House or the Senate. The Autism Spectrum Disorder bill passed the House earlier this week and will next go to the Senate. The sexual assault bill passed the Judiciary Committee but was not recorded as passed. This error has been corrected.

The home care attendant bill passed out of the Human Services Committee and will go to the Senate. The Appropriations Committee plans to pass out a budget by the end of April. The Sustinet bill is still receiving legislative support but is not supported by the Governor at this time. Sustinet models the federal Affordable Health Care Act. There is also another state bill that allows municipalities and non-profits to buy into the state employee health insurance plan.

Mr. O'Connor included the scope of study description of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee's (LPRIC) proposal to undertake a cost comparison of DDS' public and private services. This includes residential and day services including Southbury Training School and regional centers. The final report is due in December 2011 and preliminary findings will be made in August or September.

COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE:

Commissioner O'Meara discussed the budget status for FY 12. The current Governor's budget supports continued services for DDS. However, this is dependent upon state employee concessions. All departments were asked for a 10% reduction plan as a contingency if concessions are not made by employees. The reduction plans were due April 13, 2011.

Lou Richards asked the Commissioner about the number of people in nursing homes and the reasons for their admissions. Commissioner O'Meara discussed the department's screening process and the department's monitoring and oversight for individuals placed in nursing homes.

Mr. Hadden made a motion, seconded by Patrick Vingo that the Council on Developmental Services should adopt a resolution thanking Commissioner O'Meara for his years of service with the department and on behalf of persons with intellectual disability. The resolution reads as follows:

Resolved that the Council on Developmental Services extends its deep appreciation and gratitude to Commissioner Peter O'Meara for his stewardship, leadership, compassion and commitment to the safety and well-being of persons with intellectual disability. Commissioner O'Meara has combined a strong set of personnel and financial management skills to further the best interests of the persons that the Department of Developmental Services serves. The Council thanks Commissioner O'Meara for his 16 years of unwavering commitment to strengthen supports and services for persons with intellectual disability in Connecticut.

The Council adopted the resolution unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Patti Silva provided an update on the Sparkle Program in Wethersfield.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Heffernan asked Mr. O'Connor for an update on bylaw changes. Mr. O'Connor recommends the Legislative Committee be designated as an ad hoc committee, which gives the Council more flexibility. Mr. O'Connor researched Robert's Rules of Order and consulted with the FOI Commission regarding the use of teleconferencing or videoconferencing. Nothing precludes it but everyone must have the same access. A discussion ensued regarding the importance of deliberative discussion and public participation. Mr. Hadden moved and Ms. Mulvey seconded a motion to approve the following bylaw amendment.

Article V – Meetings Of The Council

(NEW) (9) At the discretion of the chairperson, or the vice chairperson if the chairperson is unavailable, a member of the Council may be allowed to attend a meeting through teleconference or videoconference. A member of the Council who has the permission of the chairperson to teleconference or videoconference shall be counted present for purposes of a quorum and for purposes of voting on motions before the Council. Council meetings, where a member of the Council is in attendance by teleconference or videoconference, shall “be conducted by a technology that allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time (and, if videoconference, to see each other as well)” so as to promote simultaneous communication central to the deliberative character of the meeting. The Council shall adopt rules on how recognition by the chairperson is sought and the floor obtained when a Council member is present by teleconference or videoconference. (See section 50 “Committees”, subsection “Conduct of Business in Committees” in Robert's Rules of Order.)

This amendment language can be voted on at the June meeting. Mr. Heffernan clarified the call-in option will only be for Council members and not the public.

Ms. Silva asked for clarification regarding the language regarding the Legislative Committee. Mr. O'Connor indicated the terminology can be changed from mental retardation to intellectual disability if the department's respectful language bill passes in the General Assembly. This change to the bylaws also can be voted on at the June Council meeting.

Tom Kalal made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Vingo. Mr. Heffernan adjourned at 8:07 PM.