



Council on Developmental Services



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Joseph W. Drexler, Esq.
Deputy Commissioner

APPROVED Minutes of January 12, 2012

In Attendance: Jennifer Carroll; Jack Frost; David Hadden; Jim Heffernan, Chair; Thomas Kalal; Jamie Lazaroff; Terrence Macy, Ex-Officio; Shelia Mulvey; Patrick Vingo, Vice Chair

Absent: Donna Bouteiller; John Pelegano; Secretary; Lou Richards; Patti Silvia

Staff: Michelle Bacry, Executive Secretary; Christine Pollio Cooney, Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs; Joseph Drexler, Deputy Commissioner; Ed Mambruno, Ombudsperson

Chairman Heffernan opened the meeting at 6:04 pm.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Ombudsperson's Report:

Ed Mambruno shared his December report with Council Members and updated them on a few issues he worked on with families.

Mr. Mambruno discussed a call he received from a concerned mother (who is not the guardian) alleging that her daughter was being taken advantage of financially by D.D.S. leaving her with no money to pay her rent. After some investigating with the region, Mr. Mambruno determined this was not the case. The daughter has a court appointed conservator who handles her finances and the rent has been paid.

Jim Heffernan asked at what point does DDS step in and what processes and audits are in place to ensure that there is no abuse of an individual's monies. Commissioner Macy responded that all private providers and DDS have audit procedures in place that must be followed. Joe Drexler explained that individuals who live in group homes have many layers of oversight which create safe guards. The licensure process is another layer of oversight. Shelia Mulvey added that for individuals who receive rent subsidy a report is required every month of the individual's funds. If any change appeared in the way funds were being spent it would be identified.

In follow up to a request at last month's meeting, Mr. Mambruno handed out the heating assistance packet from Operation Fuel that was printed off the website operationfuel.org. Shelia Mulvey offered to get a sample packet from New Opportunities Inc. the agency that her son utilizes. It was explained that funds are on a first come first serve basis.

Review of December Minutes:

Jim Heffernan made a motion to accept the minutes as written for the December meeting. Thomas Kalal seconded the motion. The Council voted unanimously to accept the December minutes as written.

Legislative Update:

Christine Cooney advised the council that the legislative session for 2012 will convene February 8, 2012. The 2012 session is a "short session". Two of our three legislative proposals were approved by the Administration for submission to the Legislature. The proposals are regarding including insurance for Birth to Three services as "maintenance of effort" and a bill clarifying the competency statute.

Ms. Cooney updated the council that the 5 Year Plan is not finalized but will be by the end of the month. Ms. Cooney spoke of a readers group that would consist of DDS staff members and asked if two Council members would like participate in the reviewing process. Jim Heffernan felt that the entire council should have an opportunity to read and review the draft version and share their thoughts with Commissioner Macy and Ms. Cooney. Ms. Cooney explained that the reader's group goal is to review the document for its readability. Ms. Cooney agreed to email for draft version to all council members on Friday, January 13th and requested feedback by Thursday, January 19th. Ms. Cooney reminded council members that this document was in draft form and was not for further distribution at this point.

Commissioner's Update:

Commissioner Macy expressed his gratitude to Christine Pollio Cooney for working so quickly on bringing the stakeholders group together for the DDS Mission/Vision.

A residential rate setting stakeholders group is being organized. Commissioner Macy explained that CMS requires states to have a rate system in place that is consistent across agencies. Failure to move forward can lead to CMS requiring rapid changes. The rate system impacts people who receive services, families and providers so all need to be represented in the process.

Commissioner Macy shared his satisfaction with the diversity of representation that will be attending the Mission/Vision workgroup on Wednesday, January 18, 2012. The meeting will be facilitated by John O'Brien who has the ability to synthesize numerous thoughts and ideas and capture what is trying to be conveyed. Shelia Mulvey, Jamie Lazaroff and Jennifer Carroll will be participating in the workgroup. Once a draft of the mission statement is prepared it will be posted on the DDS website for review and feedback from the public.

Commissioner Macy's first Town Hall meeting with the Southbury Training School is scheduled for Friday January 13 after the meeting a tour of the Training School is scheduled with Representative Abercrombie who is the Vice Chair of the Appropriations Committee.

Commissioner Macy advised members that the process to fill the vacant positions within the organization is moving forward. An interview process has been devised and there is hope that key positions will be filled soon.

Old Business:

Shelia Mulvey updated the group on Executive Order No. 10 concerning Personal Care Attendants.

The personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council has been meeting. DDS and DSS are required to submit a list, including names and addresses, of all direct hire staff so that union representatives can contact them. This list is available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act.

Ms. Mulvey also addressed the group regarding the need for real employment of our consumers. Commissioner Macy agreed that it is time that all agencies work together to help find employment – real work for real pay. Ms. Mulvey spoke of the use of one time money to provide our consumers with the staff and training that is needed to secure this type of employment. Jamie Lazaroff expressed the need of dependable transportation within the state to get to jobs.

This discussion allowed Commissioner Macy to also explain the difference of “shelter workshops” which would consist of consumers working in a congregate setting doing piecework, typically for sub-minimum wage. Competitive employment allows the consumers to work side by side with non disabled individuals making minimum wages or more.

Jim Heffernan stated employers need to be educated about the abilities of consumers receiving DDS supports.

David Hadden shared that his law firm Robinson and Cole employ 3-6 individuals with disabilities for more than 20 years and these individuals have become important co workers within the firm.

New Business:

Members discussed potential meeting topics and site visits for 2012.

The council agreed to hold some of the possible site visits in the afternoon as long as enough notice is given. Christine Pollio Cooney and Michelle Bacry will follow up on the requests from council members.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 pm on a motion made by David Hadden, seconded by Tom Kalal.