



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

*Developmental Services Council
March 16th Meeting Minutes*

Location: Meeting Held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Adrienne Benjamin, Alexis Calacro, Kevin Zingler, Fredrick Lenz Jr., Dawn Dematteo, Patti Silva, Richard Rothstein, Diana Mennone, Pamela DonAroma, Brian Dillon, Patti Silva, Kelly Dorsey (Self-Advocate Coordinator (SAC) – Midstate ARC), Christine Hainsworth-Straus

Absent: Joseph Duffy, Arlene Reith, Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Kevin Bronson, DDS Director of Legislative & Executive Affairs

Guests: Adrianna Ramirez (Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN)). Karen Hlavac

DDS Staff: Shannon Jacovino, DDS Ombudsperson, Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner, Gunnar Abrahamsson, Executive Secretary

Introductions

Kevin Zingler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM

Moment of Silence for those affected by COVID-19

Opportunity for Public Participation

None.

Dialogue

Council Chairman Kevin Zingler called the meeting to order at 4:33PM and noted that the threshold for a quorum was met. Chairman Zingler reminded the council that under Public Act 21-2 members are to announce their names and or titles before they speak in order to allow the public a better understanding of who is talking.

Chairman Chairman Zingler next moved on to hold a moment of silence for those affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Chairman Zingler next asked if there were any members of the public who were interested in addressing the Council under the “Public Participation” section of the agenda. Members of the public are allotted three minutes to do so. There were no members of the public that wished to address the Council.

Chairman Zingler moved on to the first item of the agenda, the presentation of a certificate of recognition to former councilmember Karen Hlavac, who served for 13.5 years. A certificate was presented and

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councilmembers took turns thanking Karen and giving remarks. After remarks from councilmembers ended Karen thanked the councilmembers and spoke briefly about the importance of continuing the important work of the council in the efforts of advancing and improving the lives of the individuals DDS serves.

Chairman Zingler asked if there were any additional edits or suggestions for the review of the February 16, 2023 DS Council meeting minutes. There were two suggestions, edits were made, and a motion was passed to approve the February 16, 2023 meeting minutes.

DDS Ombudsperson Shannon Jacovino provided an overview on the Ombudsperson Report for the month of March of 2023. Ombudsperson Jacovino reviewed specific cases that were flagged in her reports with the councilmembers, giving an update on the progress, outcome, and next steps for each case and the response of DDS.

Councilmember Benjamin asked a clarifying question on the summary for the Ombudsperson Report to Commissioner Scheff. The question was related to the how DDS as an agency handles instances where there re multiple reports of abuse or neglect from a single provider. Commissioner Scheff explained that DDS QualityService Review (QSR), Licensing, Resource Management, Case Management, the Regional Director's Office and the family members work in conjunction to ensure these issues are resolved and safety continues to remain a top priority. Councilmember Benjamin added that it is imperative that all stakeholders understand what Enhanced Monitoring is, the process whereby DDS places a provider under increased supervision when concerns arise over the quality of supports and services the Provider is giving to individuals, or there is a sharp rise in reports of abuse and neglect from a particular home.

Chairman Zingler asked if there were any additional questions for Ombudsperson Jacovino. There were no additional questions.

Councilmember Rothstein provided the council with an update on the Abuse and Neglect subcommittee.

Chairman Zingler turned the meeting over to Commissioner Scheff for the Commissioner's Report. Commissioner Scheff provided an overview on the following:

- ❖ DDS Opportunity to Innovate Forums.
- ❖ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and initiatives.
- ❖ Abuse & Neglect Mandatory Training
- ❖ Eligibility issues.
- ❖ Legislative Session updates.

There was additional discussion surrounding House Bill (HB) 5001 which concerns the DDS Waitlist. Councilmember Christine Hainsworth-Straus raised a question on the HB that includes an employment tax credit, asking wether language has yet to be added to the bill and wether there is momentum behind it being passed. There was not a definitive answer to the question and Executive Secretary Gunnar Abrahamsson informed councilmember Hainsworth-Straus that he would get answers to her questions and follow up.

This concluded the Commissioner's report and agenda items for April's meeting of the council were taken at this time. There were requests for the newly hired communications and health staff to attend the meeting and be introduced to the council. There was also a comment raised by Councilmember that there should be opportunities to have the council meet in person now that the pandemic is coming to an official close in May 2023, there was unanimous agreement on this point. There was discussion on the December 2022 minutes, Executive Secretary Abrahamsson informed the council that they were lost when the previous Executive Secretary's agency email was deactivated.

Chairman Zingler notified the Council that the next scheduled meeting of the DS Council is 4/20/2023 at 4:30 PM via Microsoft Teams, a motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Benjamin and seconded by Councilmember Silva.

The meeting adjourned at 5:32PM.

Minutes Recorded by:
Gunnar Abrahamsson
Executive Secretary
DDS Central Office

Nothing Follows //