

**DDS North Region**  
**Regional Advisory Council**

March 20, 2024

Meeting Minutes – Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams (meeting was recorded)

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Members Present: Kim Little, Chair; Donna Cohen; Cindy Lichtsteiner; Ellyn Little; Sue Prihar; Annette Scully; Tammy Selinger; Stacie Silva, DDS North Regional Director (ex-Officio member)

Guests: Kristina Hammond; Melanie Lambert (CT PIE)

Meeting called to order at 5:03 pm.

- Presentation – Melanie Lambert, Project Coordinator, CT PIE
  - Melanie introduced herself as Project Coordinator for Connecticut Pathways to Integrated Employment, also known as CT PIE. Melanie is here because the Project Director of the Grant, Lynn Frith, was asked to present this evening, however, she was having some technical issues, so Melanie is here in her place to share some information about CT PIE.
  - Melanie shared a slide presentation for the Council members about CT PIE, which is “an initiative in Connecticut that helps eligible youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities find employment, working side by side with people of all abilities and earning competitive wages and benefits.” The Aging and Disability Services agency was awarded a grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration aimed at increasing opportunities for individuals who are working in sub-minimum wage employment to pursue and obtain competitive integrated employment. The presentation better explained the focus on promoting this message and developing interagency collaboration to increase competitive integrated employment opportunities.
  - Web address (CTPIE.org) was shared where people can connect with the program and obtain a contact form.
  
- Transition to GT Independence Discussion (Tammy Selinger) –
  - Tammy Selinger explained that she suggested this agenda item since her family self-directs and they have been having difficulty with the transition to the new FI agency. She discussed the issues that have been occurring. Others also expressed the same concerns. Donna Cohen also explained the difficulties she has been having. One of the main concerns is that it is supposed to go into effect on Sunday, and they don’t feel it will happen and that employees will be able to get paid. Calling has also been extremely difficult and frustrating. There were also issues with the training that was provided by GT. Questions were being asked, and the presenter would not repeat the questions, so they would answer but not everyone was able to hear what question was being answered.
  
- Regional Director’s Update – Stacie Silva
  - Stacie began by stating that she wanted to address some of the concerns from the previous discussion regarding GTI. She stated that DDS is in constant communication with GTI to address some of the concerns directly. Meetings are being held internally by DDS with staff that has been meeting regularly with GTI all through the transition. Stacie was asked to share that meetings are continuing to be held. They do understand that the waiting time on the customer service phone has been an extreme wait time. They are hoping that it will be reduced as time goes on and they are grabbing employees from all over to try to assist as best as possible during the transition time. It was emphasized that DDS is going to ensure that employees are going to get paid.
  - A question was asked about mileage and reimbursement. Stacie will follow up and ask that question.
  - Stacie encouraged people to continue to follow the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday forums which are still ongoing.
  - Elba and Elisa will be invited to attend the next meeting to speak more about supportive housing.
  - Stacie announced that this will be Claudia Neumann’s last meeting as she will be retiring. The new Executive Secretary, Ether Diaz, will be introduced at the next meeting.

- Legislative Update – no update.
- Open Forum for Public Participation – None
- Meeting was adjourned at 5:44 pm. The next meeting will be held on April 17, 2024 at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Claudia Neumann*  
Executive Secretary