

**The Southbury Training School Board of Trustees
Met via Conference Call on Monday, April 25, 2022**

Present: Eileen Lemay, Chair
Ann Dougherty, Vice Chair
Diana Mennone
Eugene Harvey, STS Director Retiree
Kathryn Hanewicz, STS Acting Director
Sandy O'Neil

Mark Cooper, Secretary, was excused from this meeting.

Eileen Lemay, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:02pm.

Council on Developmental Services

A report was given by Diana Mennone, STS Board of Trustees representative on the Council on Developmental Services for meetings held virtually via Microsoft Teams on January 20, 2022, February 17, 2022 and March 17, 2022.

Shannon Jacovino, DDS Ombudsperson sent monthly reports to the Council and attended January & February's meetings. Included was information on assistance to individuals and families; interaction with DDS, other state agencies and community organizations as well as areas of concern. The reports can be found on the DDS website.

Commissioner Scheff reported that DDS completed two public hearings regarding the DDS 5-Year Plan for 2022-2027. Ongoing feedback is being reviewed and organized in written form. Also, the Commissioner gave testimony to the Appropriations Health Subcommittee and was asked questions on the proposed FY23 budget adjustments.

A main focus continues to be on the workforce crisis. Because of the number of people retiring, where there is appointing authority there will be appointments made, but there will also be a competitive application process augmented by Temporary Worker Retirees (TWRs). The Commissioner is trying to identify a role within DDS to work with providers to address workforce development concerns and to liaise with the Governor's Workforce Council. They are working on refilling and increasing the total number of case managers.

Concerning COVID and the Omicron surge, Commissioner Scheff reported individuals served made it through largely without any adverse effects. There was an improvement in absenteeism in the public division. A Strategic Plan draft is currently being reviewed by the Lamont Administration.

The Commissioner noted that April 1st began the anticipated increase of retirements in DDS and across the state of Connecticut. This included Peter Mason, DDS Deputy Commissioner, Valencia Bagby-Young, Director of Health and Clinical Services, Thomas Dailey and Greg McMahon from the South Region as well as a host of other anticipated retirees.

Dr. Cheryl Ellis joined the DDS leadership team as DDS' new Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. She was invited and spoke at the Council's March 17th meeting. She outlined recent efforts at DDS including a monthly newsletter, developing a strategic plan and working with Self-Advocate Coordinators to ensure their voices are represented. Distribution of the newsletter is still being coordinated.

To view complete Council on Developmental Services minutes, go to the State of CT DDS website. <https://www.ct.gov/dds> - click on BOARDS and COUNCILS, click on COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES, scroll down & click on Upcoming and Past MEETING SCHEDULE (AGENDA & MINUTES). Scroll down to find dates of MEETINGS, see AGENDA columns and MINUTES columns to the right. Scroll down further to view previous years' MEETING SCHEDULE / AGENDAS / MINUTES.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Our current population is 135.
- Five STS individuals are in the placement process. Two individuals will move this week. Three individuals will move when the renovations of their new home are complete, hopefully by July.
- Disability Rights CT have not asked for information since December 2021 and we have not received any feedback to date.
- COVID - We have a couple of staff in isolation at home.
- Elisa Velardo replaced Peter Mason on April 1st as the new Deputy Commissioner. She was the Regional Director in the North Region and is familiar and supportive of STS.
- Debra Gillotti was hired as the new Unit 1 Director. Deb has a long history at STS and familiarity with the individuals and staff.
- By 7/1/22 85 staff will be retiring. Half of the staff are returning as TWR's including Eugene and Unit 4 Director, Marianne Walsh.
- In the process of hiring 85 new staff. The process is slow and tedious but anticipate the speed with increase by summer. The quality of new staff coming in have experience in group homes but it will take time to train and get everyone up to speed. There will be an additional 46 direct care summer workers.
- Staffing pulls across cottages have resumed to help with the mandated situation.
- Veteran's Proposal was discussed.
- Renovations are planned for Cottage 7a which will involve a temporary relocation to either cottage 33a or 34.

OLD BUSINESS

- Waiting to get approval from the Governor's Office, officially placing Sandy O'Neil on the Board of Trustees. Diana Mennone contacted Kevin Bronson, Legislative Liaison regarding request. Eugene will re-submit the recommendation to Kevin Bronson.
- The Board is considering new members and researching diversifying. Lee Ellen Chontos was recommended by Eugene. Ann motioned to approach her on becoming a member to the Board and Diana second, all in favor. Sandy will reach out to Lee Ellen.
- Meeting minutes dated 1/24/2021 were approved.

NEW BUSINESS

- Ann had questions about the role of Self Advocacy at STS and Eugene explained our commitment to the court regarding Self Advocacy.
- Voting was discussed as some individuals expressed their desire to vote. Must have proper identification and the guardians will be notified.

The next STS Board of Trustees meeting will be a hybrid meeting on July 25, 2022 at 1:00pm with a call-in option. The call-in number is 1-866-756-1919, you will then be prompted to enter the participant code. The participant code is 6101119#.

There being no further business, Eileen Lemay called to adjourn the meeting at 2:00pm, Ann Dougherty seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Boccardi, Recording Secretary

Mark A. R. Cooper, Secretary

Approved by the STS Board of Trustees