

Disabilities Network of Eastern CT
19 Ohio Ave.
Norwich, CT 06360
September 13, 2022
5:30 PM - 7:00PM
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Minutes

On Screen:

S. Baecker, Vice President
K. Pellerin, Secretary
E. Petrik – Potential Board of Director
S. Heddle, Executive Director – DNEC

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Vice President, S. Baecker

II. Public Comment:

There were no public comments

III. Approval of Minutes:

On a motion made by K. Pellerin, seconded by S. Baecker, the May 10, 2022 minutes were unanimously approved as written.

IV. Election of Member on Board

As Nominating Committee Chair, K Pellerin moved that Emily Petrik become a voting member of the Board of Directors for DNEC; seconded by S. Baecker. There was no discussion and the motion was carried.

Gratulations, Emily

V. Election of Officers

As Nominating Committee Chair, K Pellerin presented the following slate of officers for the year 2022-2023:

K Pellerin – President

S. Baecker – Vice president

K. Pellerin – Secretary.

A motion was made by E. Petrik to accept the slate of officers as presented for one year; seconded by S. Baecker. There was no discussion – motion was carried.

VI. Executive Director report

S. Heddle discussed several topics, including staffing, discussion of the current policy regarding employees who are new mothers and wish to bring their babies into work, monies that needed to be spent down by September of 2022, CACIL news, a new policy regarding PTO (Personal time off), new management for the DNEC building and reasons for the agency to remain at this site, and a proposal to hire a person knowledgeable in remaking our current website. All areas were clearly presented to the board and discussion was minimal. See attached report.

VII. Acting President's Report

S. Baecker commented on the great progress we, as a small board, made in reviewing and in some cases, rewriting the current by-laws. He thanked Sharon for the excellent management of DNEC, as well as a big thank you for the "Christmas" luncheon in July – a wonderful opportunity for the board to meet and talk with staff; a general thank you to Emily for being a part of our past year, learning all about DNEC and now formally becoming a voting member.

VIII New President's report.

K. Pellerin outlined her vision for the coming year:

1. finish the by-laws
2. recruit at least 2 more members to the board
3. continue the excellent working relationship between the board and with the executive director.
4. Evaluation of the executive director will be completed by the end of September, 2022.

IX New/Old Business:

1. A copy of the current policies has been sent to each board member to keep as a reference, as well as a suggestion to read through them in this new year.
2. S. Heddle has sent a copy of her self-evaluation to all members; members now need to write their own evaluation and send them to K Pellerin who will compose a draft of the evaluation to be approved by the board, via email. Once that is completed, K. Pellerin will present the evaluation to S. Heddle for discussion and signature, by September 30th
3. All members were sent information on two activities coming up in the next few weeks, as well as information about the website:
 - Candidates' forum on disability issues, Oct. 12.
 - SILC Annual meeting on Oct. 26th
 - Information from KCD - website proposal.

X. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be October 11, 2022, via zoom

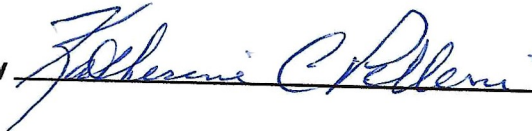
Greg DeFrank will present the financial report.

KDC will do a 30minute presentation regarding the website proposal.

XI Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM

Katherine Pellerin – Secretary



09/13/2022

Executive Director Report 09/13/2022 – Sharon Heddle

Staffing – hired a new person who started on 9/12/2022. This was to fill a vacancy. This gives us 8 employees. Sharon, Amy (pt), Alyson (pt), Brynn (pt), Gabby (ft), Kim (ft), MaKayla (ft), and now Beth (ft). MaKayla leaves for her maternity leave in about a month and will not be back until January. We will be using our policy of bringing the baby to work – which might work out well since we can work remotely. Of course, no baby to attend meetings or be around any consumers, and in office can not be disruptive. This was implanted when Brynn had her first baby 10 years ago and it worked well for both her babies. If this ends up being too cumbersome, we will discuss removing the policy.

Cares Act Funds – that was the \$188,000. We were required to spend it by 9/30/22 or return it. We have now spent it all, the last of it went to new technology for the office.

CACIL is meeting monthly with John Larkin our lobbyist, Patty McQueen our communications manager, and Spencer Cain our newest consultant Public Policy Solutions. He is helping us formulate a plan to have more in the budget for the CILS. Molly Cole the SILC Executive Director participates in these meetings as well.

SILC Annual Meeting

Candidates Forum

DNEC Policies – I have sent you a copy of our policies and plan to do this every September. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, I am open to them. The newest policies I have revised or added were:

Revision of the Initial Employment Period. I added a sentence that they are not eligible for time off during the first 90 days.

Revision of the Attendance Policy. I clarified what is too many and when could a person be terminated. We have not had the problem with any employees who have been here longer than 90 days, but we have had problems with newer employees, and I wanted this to be clear to them that they can be terminated.

Revision of Paid Time Off. There is an example in the policy that wasn't easy to understand. I revised it.

New Policy Discretionary Bonus Policy. This was a suggestion from IL-Net that all CILS have this type of a policy, and it was a good suggestion. This informs us that bonuses are not an expectation. It clarifies who is eligible and that they may be distributed to one, or all. It is up to the discretion of DNEC – meaning the ED or the Board.

I do have a question about one of the policies that I would appreciate you thinking about for a month or two and helping me with figuring out the right way to approach. PTO is a use it, or lose it policy. 12/31 comes along and whatever PTO you have not used is wiped out and you start fresh on 1/1. People who voluntarily quit can be paid out 50% of the prorated amount of unused PTO. This is completely unfair to people who remain employed. This was put in place to encourage people leaving to not try and use up all their PTO before they leave, meaning they could use a whole year's worth and then leave us in July when they should have used 7/12's.

Do we eliminate this policy for those people leaving us?

Do we change the policy for employees at the end of the year?

The only thing I could think of is to payout current employees for a percentage of unused PTO – up to a maximum amount. I don't want this to encourage people to not use their PTO – they should use it, that is why they have it. My thought is for anyone having 15 hours or less on 12/31, pay them the 15 hours or less. Example – one person has 35 hours remaining on 12/31. They would be eligible to receive 15 hours paid out. Another person has 5 hours remaining, they would be eligible to receive 5 hours. This would only apply to people who have been employed for a minimum of one full year and the payout would only be calculated for the remainder on 12/31.

If we change the policy for current employees, do we change the policy for the voluntary termination employees to a maximum amount – prorated – as well?

Rent - We are entering a new agreement with Sr. Resources for seven years beginning in January.

Changes:

- New owners of building
- Rent increase from \$8.47 sq ft to \$9.00 sq ft
- 2024 rent increases 3% per year
- Current fair market value for office space runs from \$10 sq ft for downtown to \$14 sq ft in the business park per Norwich Community Development Corp.
- We currently use 1,520 sq ft.
- We will move out of the back room completely – 602 sq ft
- We will use an empty office in the building for our storage – 278 sq ft.
- We will then be using 1,196 sq ft.
- With the increase in rent, and decrease in our sq ft, rent will remain approximately the same.

Things considered when making this decision:

- The fair market value for rent – our rent is significantly below that.
- We share the cost of cleaning, garbage removal, shredding and pest control.
- Safety of having other people in the building with us.
- Safety of leaving the front door unlocked and a receptionist observing people entering
- Safety of leaving the building after dark.
- Parking areas right outside the front door.
- Quick response to maintenance calls – usually same day by onsite property manager
- Cost of moving – furniture, internet, IT equipment, phone service.
- Time and cost of looking for a place that is affordable.

Website – I have sent you a proposal from the web designer I spoke about at previous meetings. She is happy to join us for the October meeting and review her proposal with us. I am going to include money in the budget for a new website for DNEC regardless of if we choose her, someone else, or nobody at this time.