

Disabilities Network of Eastern CT
19 Ohio Ave.
Norwich, CT 06360

Nov 14, 2023
5:30 PM - 7:00PM
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Minutes

On screen:

E. Petrik, Vice President
S. Baecker, Secretary
R. Toper, Board member
S. Heddle, Exec Director
B. Varas, DNEC Staff
E. McBride, Prospective Board member

Absent: K. Pellerin, President

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by E. Petrik.

II. Public Comment:

None

III. Beth Varas provided an update on her work researching and applying for grants as well as her new role as the DNEC's Consumer Services Advocate. As part of the \$30,000 grant funding received in September from the Lourde's Foundation to support consumers who need home modifications, Beth is creating a DNEC a flier to distribute to area social service agencies promoting the *Welcoming Home* program.

IV. Approval of minutes:

On a motion made by S. Baecker and seconded by R. Topper the minutes of the Sept 12, 2023 meeting were approved. Approval of the minutes of the Oct 10, 2023 meeting is delayed until the January 9, 2024 meeting.

V. Proposed 2024 budget (Oct 1, 2023 - Sept 30, 2024)

On a motion made by S. Baecker and seconded by R. Toper, the proposed FY 2024 budget as presented by our accountant Greg DeFrank at the Oct 10 meeting was approved.

VI. Executive Director Report: Highlights

- A. Amy resigned her staff position for medical reasons.
- B. Sharon now plans to post job openings for two full time staff positions Jan/Feb 2024
- C. Staff attended Ct Assoc of the Deaf annual conference/ networking event at the New London Library/presentation with Big Brothers Big Sisters/ conference on supported decision-making.
- D. Sharon sent out 120 appeal letters.
- E. Sharon invested \$75,000 in a 13-month CD at Bank of America. Another 7-month \$50,000 CD is pending.
- F. The new contract (for FY 2024) with state Dept of Aging & Disabilities is pending.
- G. Sharon has an adequate supply of gift cards to assist consumers in financial need during the winter.
- H. Met with K. Pellerin to discuss my BOD performance review.
- I. The Corporate Resolution has been updated.
- J. Next Meeting is Jan 9,2024.

Sharon's report was included with material sent in prep for the meeting.

VII. President's Report: None

VIII: New Business: None

IX: Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM

S. Baecker - Secretary  Date 1/19/24

Executive Director's Report – Sharon J Heddle – 11/14/2023

Staffing – Amy Dudek left us unexpectedly for medical reasons. Beth has taken over Amy's duties. That is a part-time position. We are hiring two full-time people to hopefully start work in January.

The staff attended a few events this last month:

The CT Association of the Deaf had their annual conference. We had a booth at the event and Alyson Dolan, Deaf Services Advocate, spoke to about 140 people at the event. She gave out her card, brochures, and spoke about DNEC and CILs throughout the state.

Beth attended a workshop at the New London Library with other non-profits in the area.

Beth met with Stonington Human Services to talk about DNEC and the Lord Grant for Home Modifications.

Kim did a presentation to the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program about DNEC services.

Kim and Beth attended a conference about Supported Decision Making for people with disabilities opposed to guardianships. Kim and I already attend a monthly Supported Decision Making meeting and this was an expanded version of this with the key note speaker being a person with an intellectual disability who had to "fight the system" to regain her rights and make her own decisions.

I sent out 120 Annual Appeal Letters. I sent these to a variety of people known and unknown. Some of the unknown groups were some banks, doctors, dentists, attorneys, realtors, our representatives and senators.

I purchased \$75,000 -13 month – 5% CD from Bank of America. I also intended on a \$75,000 – 7 month CD but for some reason that one did not process. Our Small Business Banker at BOA, Mercedes Turner, who assisted me with the process is looking into this to find out why that 7 month CD did not happen. She did not get back to me by the time I left work for the day.

Our contract with ADS ended on 9/30/2023 and we are still working with them on getting the new one. I emailed Dave Doukas, the Director of BRS, and summarizing his response – he apologizes for this taking so long, he will try to send something out to the CILs this week explaining what is going on, then he ended it with “I do believe you should feel confident in signing the document as I worked hard to ensure that the amendment would create the financial bandwidth necessary for ADS to issue all payments governed by the SPIL, those anticipated in the SFY 2024 State IL appropriation and to allow for any reasonable COLA we see in FFY 2024 and/or for the first quarter of SFY 2025 without the need for further amendment.”

We have begun getting some of the “winter” phone calls. A call for help with oil, a call for propane, a call for a grocery store gift card because they spent all their money on oil. I have purchased \$500 in ShopRite gift cards and will be adding \$500 Stop and Shop and \$500 Walmart. I have done this for the last few years for our consumers.