

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

March 12, 2024
5:30 PM - 7:00PM
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Minutes

On screen:

K. Pellerin, President
E. Petrik, Vice President
S. Baecker, Secretary
R. Toper, Board member
S. Heddle, Exec Director
E. McBride, Prospective Board member
S. Barrett, Prospective Board member

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 PM by K. Pellerin.

II. Public Comment:

None

III. Approval of minutes:

On a motion made by E. Petrik and seconded by K. Pellerin the minutes of the February 13, 2024 meeting were approved.

IV. Executive Director Report: Highlights

- A. Staff level is now where we need it to be.
- B. Our unused Hearing Aid Loop was donated to the Park Congregational Church in Norwich.
- C. DNEC will have staff and a table at the Learn Disability Summit at Mohegan Sun Saturday March 16.
- D. Staff will have a presentation in Groton for MALTA House of Care March 13.
- E. 2 staff members will attend the Tech Act conference in May.
- F. Sharon serves on several committees including the committee developing the State Plan for Independent Living, Pathways to Integrated Employment, REV Up, and BRIDGE CT.
- G. Developing a daytime ASL class with an anticipated start date some time in April.
- H. Emily P will present a financial literacy program she created for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities to DNEC staff in April.

- I. Next Meeting is April 9, 2024.

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

V. President's Report:

- A. Renee will present 4 fund raising ideas for discussion at our April meeting.
- B. Erin developed a draft info sheet on DNEC to be used on Linked In and possibly other social media sites to attract future Board members.

VI: New Business:

- A. Reviewed and approved the draft letter to ADS Commissioner Amy Porter inviting her to our June 2024 meeting.

VII: Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 6:19 PM

S. Baecker - Secretary



Date

8/8/24

Staffing – we now have 3 full-time advocates, and 1 part-time Deaf Services advocate, Gabby will be moving to part-time after June, then Kim and myself. I consider us fully staffed at this point.

I was cleaning out some long-forgotten areas of DNEC, I came across a Hearing Aid Loop that we had purchased before COVID. The intention was to have it installed in our conference room, however there was never a need. I contacted the Hearing Loss Association of America – Eastern CT chapter. They had just gotten a call from Pace Congregational Church in Norwich looking for one. So, we donated it to them. They are having it installed and I will be going out there in April to meet them and tell them about DNEC.

We will have a table at the Learn Disabilities Summit. We did this for a few years before COVID and this is their first year resuming it. I will have 3 people there for the day.

Kim Smith and staff are doing a presentation tomorrow in Groton for MALTA – “MALTA serves people who are facing or experiencing homelessness or are otherwise in great need by providing food, clothing, and loving-kindness. Through this, we seek to help restore or maintain a sense of dignity, connection, and hope to people in or coming through dire circumstances.”

We will share a table with the other CILs at the Tech Act Conference in May – Tech Tools for Life.

I have been working on the SPIL Committee, we are meeting weekly to get the SPIL done – (State Plan for Independent Living).

From our Data Tech Committee, we determined the SILC needed a Data Coordinator who could help us with analyzing all our data to ensure we are all doing things the same and to see what the story is that is coming out of this. She will be coming to DNEC to meet with us next week.

I am on the CT PIE committee – CT Pathways to Integrated Employment (elimination of Subminimum Wage and replacement with Competitive Employment}

BRIDGE CT – I don't remember what the BRIDGE stands for – This is working with youth in transition to adulthood. It hasn't begun yet, but we do meet, and ADS is figuring out the roles of each agency/department that they will be involved. It is a 5-year grant ADS received for \$10 million.

REV-UP is starting again and I am on that committee within the SILC – Register, Educate, Vote – Use your Power. Educating people with disabilities about voting, accessible voting equipment, and voting rights. Gretchen Knauff, president of the SILC (State Independent Living Council) is the leader of our group.

We are trying to put together a daytime ASL class. Alyson Dolan, our Deaf Services Advocate has expressed a desire to teach the class so we are trying for a 6-week class that will begin in April.

We are also starting an ASL class for our staff on Tuesday mornings starting at the end of March.

Emily Petrik is coming to DNEC in April and will teach the staff about a program she created teaching people with Developmental/Intellectual Disabilities about Financial Literacy. This is for the staff to have a way of educating our consumers who may need the information in a simpler manner than our staff demonstrates right now.