

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

September 10, 2024
5:30 PM - 7:00PM
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Minutes

On screen:

Kathy Pellerin, President
Scott Baecker, Secretary
Sharon Heddle, Exec Director
Erin McBride, Board member
Sharon Barrett, Board member
Danielle Darigan, Prospective Board member

On the phone:

Emily Petrik, Vice President

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:29 PM by K. Pellerin.

II. Public Comment:

None

III. Approval of minutes:

On a motion by S. Baecker and seconded by E. Petrik, the May 14th minutes were approved.

IV. Executive Director Report:

- A. See attached Executive Director's report.
- B. Following the report, there was a discussion regarding selecting an investment advisor. On a recommendation from an Executive Director at another non-profit, Sharon contacted Joe DeFrank, our accountant's son. Emily asked whether hiring Joe might present a conflict-of-interest. A discussion followed and we'll continue to discuss the matter at a future meeting.

V. Election of new Board members

- A. On a motion by K. Pellerin and seconded by S. Baecker, Sharon Barrett and Erin McBride were welcomed as new Board members.
- B. On a motion by K. Pellerin and seconded by S. Barrett, the slate of officers for the 2024-2025 term was presented and approved: President Kathy Pellerin, Vice President Emily Petrik, Secretary Scott Baecker.

VI. President's Report:

- A. The annual evaluation of the Executive Director will be performed by the Board in October.
- B. Erin offered her thoughts and suggestions for Board members and staff participation in additional community outreach events.
- C. Planning for our Trivia night fundraiser in the Spring will be discussed at our October meeting.
- D. Sharon provided a brief update on the recently adopted State Plan for Independent Living.

VII: New Business:

- A. None.

VIII: Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM. Next Meeting is October 8, 2024.

S. Baecker - Secretary *A. Baecker* Date *2/4/25*

Executive Director Report – 9/10/2024 Sharon J Heddle

I want to start by going through the documents I sent you in the email to see if you have any questions.

- The meeting schedule for this year. We will have Greg with us for October and February, as we usually do, and we will not meet in December.
- List of Acronyms. If you hear of anything you would like me to add to the list, just let me know.
- SILC Annual Meeting – there is still time for me to add you onto the guest list if you would like to attend.
- Candidates Forum – I am going to send you a new link right after this meeting. This new one is to register to attend the event in person, or to get a link to watch it virtually. There is not cost to attend either way. You will get an opportunity to listen as our moderator, asks disability related questions to the candidates/surrogates for the President, VP, US Senate and all five CT Congressional Seats. Kim and I have volunteered to work at the Candidates Forum.

- Updates on what DNEC staff was up to this summer for outreach events and presentations and other important events.
 - 4 Outreach Events
 - 5 Presentations
 - We arranged for a blind consumer to participate in a video using the accessible voting equipment.
 - Kim and five other SILC members attended the NCIL conference in Washington DC for a week in July.
 - Four of us attended a benefit dinner to support kids going to the CDR summer camp.
 - In October we will have a table at the Healthy Living Festival.
 - In November all staff will attend the Aging CT Summit.

I have also given you a list of the committees that we attend regularly – meaning at least once a month, some meet more often.

Sharon

- CACIL member
- SILC DNEC representative
- Bridging Aging and Disability member
- CT PIE committee member
- Data Tech member
- ADACC Board Member
- SILC Recruitment Committee member
- BRIDGE CT Statewide Advisory Workgroup member
- Rev Up member
- SPIL Development Committee
- SPIL Evaluation Committee

Kim

- SILC board member from DNEC
- CACIL (CT Association of Centers for Independent Living) secretary
- Emergency Preparedness Chairperson
- Supported Decision Making member
- Aging CT Summit planning committee
- Rev Up member
- Data Tech member
- SILC Board Officers Nominating Committee
- Hartford Healthcare Community Advisory Council member

Alyson

- National Association for the Deaf (NAD)
- CT Association for the Deaf (CAD)
- Deaf Advisory Committee Member

We are starting a new ASL class next week – a different one for us. Alyson will be teaching one, possibly two, people who are blind and hard of hearing. Alyson made some calls to find out how this is done, spoke with the first woman about what her needs are to make this successful. We are working with her case manager at BESB who is going to pay for the class, to see if they will pay for us to do it in New London with a person at Center for the Blind. It will be a great challenge for Alyson and she is excited about it.

I have posted for a full-time position on Indeed. I re-wrote the usual post and this time I have several really good candidates. We are doing the interviews of the most qualified people this week and next. If we don't find the right person we will go to the next group. I received a total of 155 resumes in a week and narrowed it down to 25 people to interview. I was at an Executive Director's meeting yesterday – a meeting for all ED's of all CILs in the country – the topic was keeping good people and what benefits you can provide to keep them and reward them. Most of the things mentioned are already things we have –

Health Insurance	PTO (we do 175 hours for year 1)
Paid Holidays (13)	Hybrid work 4-day work week
Flexible Schedule	Mileage Reimbursement
Lots of training	

New ones that I should consider

- Having your birthday as a holiday.
- I am going to include a cellphone reimbursement for our staff of \$25 per month. When they are not in the office, they are often using their personal cell phone for company business. I found that most of the other CILs do a reimbursement. To get the reimbursement they will have to provide the front page of their cell phone bill each month. \$25/month.
- Currently the people who do not need our health insurance plan get an extra 4% in their paycheck. That has been 4% since before I started in 2012. One of our staff who does have our insurance earns \$23/hr. The 4% would equal \$140 per month. We actually pay close to \$1,000 for her insurance.

I have been working on the budget for the new year and will send to Greg in about a week. There are a few things that we can afford that I am going to include this year.

- We have a few more things to buy to complete our renovations. We have two more desks to purchase, a shelving unit for my office, a few chairs, 2 data jacks. I am expecting approximately \$3,500.
- I am purchasing a Sound Masking setup. It goes in the ceiling in each of the offices and in our hall. It is impossible to have a confidential conversation and more than a few times I have found myself in the lunchroom or outside having one. \$5,000
- I will be working with Greg to see if we can give the employees bonuses this year. I believe we can, but I will wait to discuss with him before I make the final decision on amounts or timing.

New Money/Grant

I applied for **\$10,000 ARPA** (American Rescue Plan Act) funds through ADS. This seems to be the last of the COVID money and must be used for something that would have made 2020 easier if you had this in place. I will use it for new laptops to replace the ones purchased in 2020. I received an email saying they received my application and they will respond around the end of the month.

BRIDGE CT - \$50k retroactive, \$100k, \$100k, \$100k, \$50k

New Topics –

Investing – meeting with Joe DeFrank on 8/28/2024– Access Independence uses him and says they are very happy. I have sent you his business information. He charges a management fee of 1% of the balance in our account with him. I have another meeting scheduled with him for tomorrow to go over questions that you have, and then I would like him to do a presentation in November for you. We currently have 3 CD's with Bank of America.

	date purchased	mature date	interest rate	apy	original	current		note
13 mth	11/10/2023	12/10/2024	4.89	5.00	75,000	77,792		was always a 13 month
13 mth	6/13/2024	7/13/2025	4.65	4.75	100,000	100,779		newly opened in June
13 mth	11/29/2023	8/3/2025	4.79	4.90	50,000	51,854		11/2023 was 7 month, matured and in July made a 13 month CD
					225,000	230,425		

I spoke with Greg to find out how much we could take from our checking account to invest with Joe – Our current bank balance is \$315,000. Greg feels we could comfortably invest \$140k - \$150k, in addition to our CD’s. He will be at our October meeting to go over the budget and we can talk to him more about that.

“I feel comfortable with DNEC maintaining a checkbook balance of approximately \$140,000 to \$150,000 which still feels high but conservative still. In essence, you would be considering investing approximately \$140,000 to \$150,000 as well”

DAVE AND AMY MEETING UPDATES – I sent an email thinking them, I cc’d you all.

Nothing from Amy after our meeting. Contact from Dave Doukas was just him asking me if I had any questions about BRIDGE CT. That was it – no thank you from either about inviting them.