

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

October 8, 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
Kim Smith, Staff
Greg Defrank, DNEC accountant
Danielle Darigan, Prospective Board member

On the phone:

Emily Petrik, Vice President

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:28 PM by K. Pellerin.

II. Public Comment:

None

III. Approval of minutes:

On a motion by S. Baecker and seconded by E. McBride, the September 10, 2024 minutes were approved.

IV. Financial Report:

- A.** Greg DeFrank provided a year-to-date financial report, as well as the proposed budget for the Fiscal year ending 9/2025. See attached report and budget.
- B.** On a motion by E. McBride and seconded by S. Baecker, the budget for FY 2025 was approved.

V. Executive Director Report:

- A.** See attached Executive Director's report.

VI. President's Report:

- A. Input from the Board members regarding the Executive Director's annual evaluation should be submitted to Kathy P by early November.
- B. Planning for our Trivia night fundraiser in the Spring was discussed.

VII: New Business:

- A. As a follow up to the discussion during last month's meeting regarding if hiring our accountant's son Joe DeFrank as our investment advisor would be a conflict-of-interest, Sharon H. did review our policy and determined that his selection would not present a conflict. Joe will make a presentation to the Board at our November meeting. Other investment advisors may also be contacted and asked to make presentations. The Board needs to develop an investment policy before an advisor is selected.

VIII: Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM. Next Meeting is November 12, 2024.

S. Baecker - Secretary



Date



Executive Director's Report – 10/8/2024 – Sharon J Heddle

Staffing – we hired someone, she will start on Monday, 10/21/2024. She has always worked with people who have disabilities but earlier this year she took a course on Case Management. The staff was involved in interviewing her and that turned out great. There was a different person that both Kim and I were convinced would be the best fit, but when we heard him talking with the staff, and then met with him after, it was too obvious he wasn't going to be the right choice.

The Candidates Forum sponsored by the SILC (State Independent Living Council) will be held Wednesday, 10/9/2024. The event is from 2 pm – 7:30 pm.

This is a non-partisan forum with candidates/surrogates for President, Vice-President, United States Senate and all five Connecticut Congressional Seats answering questions on disability topics. Diane Smith is the moderator who will ask questions that were developed by the Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance.

Elanah Sherman, a local disabilities rights advocate in the Norwich area, has an event coming up at the Otis Library. She just sent me the details last night and *I will send them to all of you after the meeting.*

Date: Friday, December 6, 2024

Time: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Place: Community Room, Otis Library, 261 Main Street, Norwich

Sponsors: Avalonia Land Conservancy and Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut

Topic: Design of a highly accessible trail at Cedar Wood Preserve, Norwich

Presenter: Chad Frost, Landscape Architect at Kent+Frost, Mystic

Description: Chad Frost will present his preliminary design of a highly accessible trail at Cedar Wood Preserve in Norwich. The trail, in the meadow portion of this 47-acre property, will be Avalonia's first trail to meet the requirements of the stringent Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines. This forum will provide opportunity for the public to learn about the design process and provide feedback.

This event will be sign language-interpreted.

Contact: Elanah Sherman, 860-614-7200 or elanahs@gmail.com

Investment Policy and summary - I will be sending everyone the sample investment policy for review, and we can talk about it at an upcoming meeting. We will need to have a policy in place before we can invest money. I have a one page summary of the policy to make it easier to understand. I also have a summary of the Oversight Committee responsibilities making it also easier to digest.

Conflict of Interest - I wanted to get back to you on the potential Conflict of Interest with us possibly using Joe DeFrank for investments. Our policy is for the board members and employees and their possible conflicts of interest. Since Greg is not an employee and he is not on our board, anyone we hire that is related to him or who does business with him is not a conflict to us.

I belong to a group of executives of non-profit agencies all over the world, mostly in the United States. There are 52,000 members. I posed the question to the group about using the son of our accountant for investments, stating that the accountant was not an employee or a board member. I added the information that he has zero access to our bank account and no decision-making privileges. Every comment I received back said it was not a conflict because he is not an employee or board member.

Joe DeFrank will be doing a presentation for the board at our next meeting. He is aware that we will be looking at other companies who will also be asked to do presentations in February and March. By the time we discuss the presentations, and you have a chance to make a decision and update the investment policy we could easily be looking at June or next September even.