

Disabilities Network of Eastern CT
19 Ohio Ave.
Norwich, CT 06360
March 21, 2023
5:30 PM - 7:00PM
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Minutes

On screen:

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

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by K. Pellerin.

II. Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of minutes:

On a motion made by S. Baecker, seconded by E. Petrik, the minutes of February 14, 2023 were approved as written.

IV. Executive Directors Report:

Highlights:

- New Hire started March 13th and from her interviews, it was felt that with her background, she will be an asset to DNEC as an advocate. S. Ramos is bilingual, understands the world of the disabled, will be full time.
- A relatively new staff person who has asked to learn how to do grant writing has been awarded a 2-day, virtual scholarship to the Grantsmanship Center. She will be asked to share her experience with the board at the April meeting.
- S. Heddle and K. Smith continue to provide free tax service to clients needing help in preparing their taxes. This is done through the auspices of VITA.
- Both S. Heddle and K. Smith will be part of a subcommittee in SILC dealing with supportive decision making.
- The Executive Director for SILC, Molly Cole, has requested recruitment materials for a resource table to be set up for the reunion of the Partners in Policymaking graduates, to take place April 1, in Hartford. S. Heddle is sending our Expectation sheet for potential board members as well as a document she wrote up to use as a recruitment tool.

See attached report for further information on the above highlights.

V. President's Report: Purpose and transparency

K. Pellerin discussed general information about fundraising for non-profit organizations. The primary tool in any fundraising attempt seems to be the direct approach as found in appeal letters. Next would be on-line donations, individual events, grants, employee events, etc. The major take-away in researching this topic was two-fold:

the fundraising campaign must

1. Follow the message of the mission statement and
2. Tell a story.

VI. Old Business:

a. **Bylaws:** A copy of the by-laws, re-typed by G. Findley, has been sent to all members. Final vote will be at the April meeting, unless there is an issue that needs addressing.

b. **Fundraising – S. Heddle reporting:**

Paint with Pam fundraiser

S. Heddle went over the general information regarding Paint with Pam. There will be 2 sessions on the same day. Tentative date is May 13, 2PM – 5PM then 6PM - 9PM, in the conference room at DNEC. All board members agreed on this fundraiser.

See attached information.

Franco's Comedy for your Cause

S. Heddle had quite a bit of information regarding this event. It was decided that October would be the best time. She has already talked with the Moose Club in Borah and had a list of dates when this facility would be available; she also had the costs for renting the Moose Lodge, cost for Franco comedy, as well as specifics about the responsibilities of the board and staff. Tentative date is Oct. 7, 2023. All board members agreed to move forward in arranging for this fundraiser.

See attached information.

VII: New Business:

a. **Annual meeting: June 13, 2023**

Pre-Covid era the annual meeting was always a combined meeting and potluck dinner. This was an opportunity for board members and staff to meet. It was not always successful and dealing with potluck food that needed to be heated up or dealt with after the meeting did not always lend itself to a successful gathering of board members and staff.

Post Covid: last year board members and staff met at a restaurant to celebrate a missed Christmas party for the staff. It was very successful. Both board members and staff enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere and the ability to just get to know one another without dealing with food, meeting, etc. DNEC was able to pay for the dinners.

In discussing this years' end of season, it was felt that the Annual meeting be kept separate from a relaxed meet and greet with all staff and board members. To that end, there is sufficient money to pay for a gathering of all at a local restaurant and have a relaxed time celebrating DNEC and its successes of the 2022-2023 year. All board members agreed. More info forthcoming.

b. **Appeal letter**

Discussed the information that K. Pellerin shared in her report regarding the importance of an appeal letter. What should be in this letter that meets our mission statement and tells a story? S. Heddle stated that some of the more frustrating aspects to advocating for clients is dealing with medical /dental issues not covered by insurance/ Husky/Medicare. I.E., root canals, or dentures, eyeglasses, just to name a few situations. S. Baecker, who has had success in writing appeal letters, suggested that there be a specific appeal requested in the letter. Possibly stating a general cost for glasses, for instance, might appeal to someone to pay for just that item, or a group willing to pay for a root canal. S. Baecker was asked to put a working letter together for the next meeting so that the process of writing an appeal letter can begin – hopefully to be used in the Nov/Dec period.

VIII: Other Business:

K. Pellerin set the schedule for the annual ED evaluation to be completed before the end of the fiscal year – Oct. 31.

IX: Highlights for the next three meetings

April 11, 2023

By-laws vote
Report from Beth Varas about the grant writing course
Further discussion from S. Baecker on the appeal letter

May 9, 2023

E. Petrik and G. DeFrank to discuss investment possibilities for DNEC.

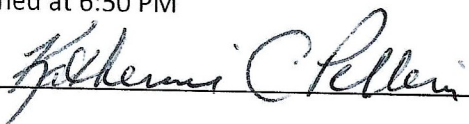
June 13, 2023 – Annual Meeting

Recap year
Nominations for officers and new board members
Annual meeting minutes from June 2022
Look to the future/ calendar for 2023-2024 DNEC meetings.

X: Adjournment

The March meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM

Katherine Pellerin – Secretary

 3/28/2023

3/21/2023 Executive Director Report

We have a new hire that began working on Monday. Sheyla Ramos. Prior to getting COVID 2 years ago, she spent several years working for the Access Agency in Windham County as the Homeless Prevention Navigator. She is experienced in applying for various benefits, speaking with landlords, working with homeless people, doing a lot of what we already do. She was out of work for 4 months from COVID and when she went back, her stamina could not keep up with the job requirements of going out into areas where the homeless live.

Beth Varas is our employee I told you asked about researching and writing grants. We contacted NCIL (National Council on Independent Living). They recommended The Grantsmanship Center as one of the best trainings in the country. We applied for and received a partial scholarship from them and Beth will attend their 2-day virtual training next month - \$272.50.

I have asked Beth to attend our meeting next month for 10-15 minutes so you could meet her and she could tell you about her interest in grant writing.

I have been working with ADS in preparation for the Site Visit they are hoping to do in the fall. However, these meetings are in preparation for the Data Tech committee to review everything and then it goes back to ADS.

Kim and I have been doing taxes for our consumers again this year with VITA.

Some of the meetings we have participated in lately –

SILC Subcommittee - Supported Decision Making Coalition

CT Pathways to Integrated Employment project (CTPIE) – Kim and I are on the Individualized Support Subcommittee – figuring out the supports needed for someone entering employment. This is for people that would normally be in a sub-minimum wage position.

Kim and I went to the LOB to testify – I was in person, Kim ended up doing it on Zoom because there was 7 hours in between the two of us.

Eileen Healy and I met with Senator Lesser and Representative Gilchrest to discuss funding for the CILs. It was a very positive meeting – they were surprised at not only our financial situation but the number of services we provide. They have now followed up twice with our lobbyist, John Larkin.

We did a lunch and learn presentation at the Center of the Blind in New London. From that I was sent an email today from the Director of Outreach and Engagement at the Secretary of State's office. They asked if we would like to participate in an event they are creating with the Center of the Blind and talk about voting rights and options on 5/30/2023. I will be meeting with Arienne Orozco on 3/28/2023.

I joined the Eastern CT Corridor Rail & Transit Customer Focused Working Group. One of the topics – what is stopping people from using public transit.