

Disabilities Network of Eastern CT  
19 Ohio Ave.  
Norwich, CT 06360  
April 11, 2023  
5:30 PM - 7:00PM  
Virtual meeting via Zoom

## Minutes

### On screen:

K. Pellerin, President  
S. Baecker, Vice President  
E Petrik, Board Member  
R. Toper – guest/ potential BoD  
Beth Varas - Guest  
S. Heddle, Executive Director – DNEC

### I. Call to Order:

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

### II. Guest – Beth Varas

B. Varas, an Advocate for DNEC, has indicated an interest in grant writing. Beth saw a need for new funding sources and began exploring the world of grant writing. To that end, she was accepted into a 2-day grant writing class, online, called Grantsmanship. She was invited to share with the board the benefits of the class, including a 6-month free subscription to search for grants from an extensive data base. She shared a list of current grants received, as well as grants she is applying for. One invitation was to apply for a \$30,000.00 grant for home modification in New London County. (Edward and Mary Lord Foundation). She shared a letter from Kathryn F. Lord, Director /Trustee of the Foundation personally inviting Beth to apply for this grant.

Beth was asked to come back in the Fall to update the board on the various grants she is working on. Also, the board discussed covering the charge for the large data base of grants once the 6- month free use is over.

See attached list of new/potential grants as well as letter from the Lord Foundation.

### III. Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

### IV. Approval of minutes:

On a motion made by S. Baecker, seconded by E. Petrik, the minutes of March 21, 2023 were approved as written.

### V. Executive Directors Report:

#### Highlights:

- a. New Hire update: Ms. Ramos was to start employment on March 13<sup>th</sup>. However, due to some major medical issues that arose a few days into her employment, it was decided by S. Heddle to reset her employment date to April 17<sup>th</sup>, giving her needed time for recuperation.

- b. Ms. Heddle shared information on **REV UP, Register – Educate – Vote - Use your Power.** an organization working with assisting the blind when voting – through the office of the Secretary of State. Both S. Baecker and E. Petrik showed an interest in learning more about this organization dealing with the rights to vote, regardless of disability.
- c. K. Smith, DNEC Advocate and SILC representative, as well as M. Cole, SILC President, will be doing a presentation on emergency planning for the disabled. This sub committee of SILC, as part of the SPIL, will explore the effects of COVID and social isolation accentuated by disability.

See attached report for further information on the above highlights.

#### **VI. President's Report:**

The following **Old Business** encompasses all that would be part of the President's report.

#### **VII. Old Business:**

**Bylaws:** All board members received the final draft of the By-laws. A motion was made by S. Baecker to accept this final draft, seconded by E. Petrik; The motion was carried. Disabilities Network of Eastern CT now has fully updated and approved By-laws. Congratulations to everyone who worked on this project. A very proud moment for DNEC.

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

##### **a. Paint with Pam fundraiser**

S. Heddle went over the general information regarding Paint with Pam. The flyer has been sent to the board. There will be two sessions on the same date of May 13, 1PM – 4PM then 5:30PM – 8: 30PM, in the conference room at DNEC. Discussion: A \$40 charge will include a type of light snack; no alcohol allowed – water and other non-alcoholic beverages will be provided. Pay on-line or at the door but must be pre-registered; 22 participants at each session.

See attached information.

##### **b. Franco's Comedy for your Cause**

The contract with Franco has been signed; \$500 down, \$1000 at the show; contract with Moose Lodge in Bozrah has been completed and paid. Discussion.

See attached information.

#### **VIII: New Business:**

There is currently no new business.

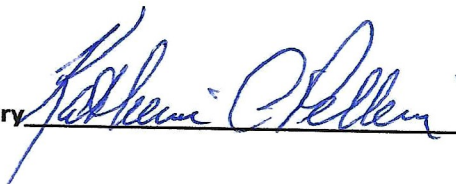
#### **IX: Other Business**

- a. May 8, 2023, dinner with Staff at Fat Cats in Norwich at 4PM. Most of Staff will be present; Bryn will be the interpreter for the deaf Advocate; board members working out their schedules so they can be present.
- b. Monthly meeting on May 9 – Greg DeFrank and E. Petrik to discuss investment possibilities for DNEC.
- c. S. Baecker will have some appeal letter suggestions at the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- d. Reminder – June 13<sup>th</sup> will be the Annual meeting – virtual. See minutes of April 11 for suggested agenda items for that meeting.

**X: Adjournment** – April meeting adjourned at 6:50PM

Katherine Pellerin, Secretary



Date 5/1/2023

04/11/2023 Sharon J. Heddle, Executive Director Report

Our newest person, Sheyla Ramos, worked the first week and had to take a leave of absence. We will be starting over with her on 4/17/2023.

I met with Franco about the Comedy Fundraiser. We have the Moose Lodge reserved and I have given them their check. I gave Franco his deposit. My plan is to make up a “to do” list and “idea” list for the comedy fundraiser, I am basing it off the previous one we did with Franco. Then I will determine how we are going to approach this and who we need help from and what kind of help.

Painting with Pam fundraiser. I am just going to work it out with Pam of what needs to be done. I know she will need access to the building from approximately 11am to 10pm. This will mean at least one staff person will need to be in the building during those hours. I will work it out with the staff to see who can be there, and if nobody then I guess it will be me. When the flyers are complete, I will send them to everyone and ask that you send them to friends and family and hope we get 20 people at each class.

In March, Kim Smith did a presentation about DNEC for the Center of the Blind in New London. I received a call from the office of the Secretary of the State (SOTS) who was speaking with them. They are having a lunch and learn at the end of May and the topic will be voter rights and education. The SOTS office said they would bring equipment with them to demonstrate how to use devices that would make the voting process more accessible for the blind. We were invited to come to the lunch and learn in a supportive role. I also make the introduction for them to our Rev Up liaison – Gretchen Knauff. REV UP is Register, Educate, Vote, Use your Power.

In April Ledge light Health District is organizing an Emergency Planning group and we were invited to attend and talk about lessons learned from COVID and people with disabilities. They want to show us what they worked up and hear from us. As part of SILC, we have an Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee that Kim is part of. She and the head of the committee, Rich Luby, will be attending the meeting. Rich will be doing most of the presentation since that is what he does.

03/31/2023 Beth Varas

## New Funding Sources

Norwich Rotary - \$1,144 towards repairs to accessible van

WAIM - \$1,000 towards repairs to accessible van

Lion's Club – eye glass for two consumers

Eastern CT Community Foundation (private donor) \$500 towards stair lift

Mystical Giving Garden Project (private donor) \$1,600 towards ramp

504c agricultural grant for rural areas – create a driveway that can be used with ramp - \$10,495.

The American Dental Foundation – applied for funding for dentures.

CT Dental Foundation – applied for funding for dentures.

Edward and Mary Lord Foundation – sent letter of intent, received invitation to apply for \$30,000 grant for home modifications.

I would like to introduce Beth Varas. Beth has been with us for seven months and over the last two months has shown an interest in grant writing. In the short time she has been with us she has identified and gotten help for our consumers from Norwich Rotary, WAIM, Lion's Club, Eastern CT Community Foundation, Mystical Giving Garden Project.

She has gotten the application process started with The American Dental Foundation and CT Dental Foundation. She has applied for and received the approval last week for a 504c Agricultural Grant \$9,980 to create a driveway that can be used with a ramp.

And finally, for now, she sent a letter of intent to the Edward and Mary Lord Foundation who then responded by inviting her to apply for a grant.

Beth recently took a 2-day training on Grant writing and is ready to begin working on this.

**THE EDWARD AND MARY LORD FOUNDATION**

**% Kathryn F. Lord  
55 Town Line Blvd.  
No. Franklin, CT 06254**

March 22, 2023

Ms. Beth Varas  
Advocate  
Disabilities Network of Eastern CT  
19 Ohio Avenue  
Norwich, CT 06360

Dear Ms. Varas:

The Trustees of The Edward and Mary Lord Foundation met on March 21, 2023 and discussed your Letter of Interest with regard to the opportunity for your organization to submit a Grant Application to us that would assist you in your Mission of supporting independent living for the disabilities community in our region.

The Trustees of the Lord Foundation voted unanimously to invite your Grant Application in the amount of \$30,000. Because our regionally based Mission focuses only on serving non-profits working with communities in New London County, (not Windham), we would ask that you direct your Application on aiming your assistance to those qualified residents who live within the confines of New London County.

We are looking forward to your Grant Application, as we believe your organization is a perfect fit for our Mission. Also, on a personal note, I and my brother, fellow Trustee Jeff Lord, know all too well the difficulties faced by disabled folks and their families, as well as the importance of striving for independent living....our father was a paraplegic who lived at home for 20 years after his spinal cord injury and could only have done so with the many home modifications we made and the care we were able to provide to him. Being able to help others in a similar position as our father will be a great privilege for us.

Sincerely,



Kathryn F. Lord  
Director/Trustee