

COUNCIL HYBRID MEETING MINUTES (Updated May 9, 2024)
Thursday, March 14, 2024

The first quarter of the regular public meeting for the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities was held on Thursday March 14, 2024 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Hamilton, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order by Paul Blaustein, Council Chair, who presided and declared a quorum present.

INTRODUCTIONS

The Open Public Meeting Act and Council Vision were read. The meeting notice was published in the *Trenton Times and Star Ledger*. Everyone around the table introduced themselves.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ❖ Paul Blaustein advised all members about today's absence of Mercedes Witowsky, Executive Director due to family matters. However, she has provided a video recording of her report that will be played later.
- ❖ Recognition was given for the sudden passing of Matthew Byra, son of Elli Byra, a long-term member of this council. Ellie is possibly one of the originators of most of the advocacy activities that are conducted by individuals and their families with developmental disabilities. Matthew had a wonderful life, the best life possible through the efforts of Ellie and her efforts to have helped all of us, our children and families to live a better, more secure life.
- ❖ As Council Members we have an obligation every year to complete the Financial Disclosure Statement for the State Ethics Commission. Please keep an eye out for an email from them as this task has a deadline of May 15, 2024 or you will pay a \$50 a day penalty fee for non-completion.

MINUTES

The minutes from November 2, 2023 were distributed in the meeting packet.

ACTION:

Motion made by Todd Emmons to approve the minutes as presented; Seconded by Kevin Nunez. The meeting minutes are approved and will be posted on the Council Website.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Blaustein read the Public Comment Guidelines before comments were made.

There were 2 public comments made:

1. Fanny Ochoa was present and made a comment
2. Linda Zani Thomas submitted 2 written statement public comments.

PRESENTATIONS

Disability Rights NJ: Medicaid Unwinding presentation was given by Michael Brower, Legal Director. The floor was opened for questions and answers.

Community Innovation Project Grant: Supported Housing Association presentation was given by Diane Riley, Executive Director and Kate Kelly, Associate Executive Director. The floor was open for questions and answers.

Everyone was thanked for their attendance and participation.

The Council Retreat is scheduled for May 8, 2024 and is held for Council Members only. Agenda Items are now being accepted. Please send suggestions to Executive Director, Mercedes Witowsky.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ❖ Executive Committee and Chair Report was given by Paul Blaustein.
 - Advocate Advisory Subcommittee Report was given by Ryan Roy.
- ❖ Public Policy Committee Report was given by Nantanee Koppstein and Bob Titus.

ACTION:

VOTE: Three position papers were updated and presented to the members for voting. A quorum was established with the following below outcomes:

1. Position Statement on Deinstitutionalization, Motion made by Kevin Nunez to approve the updated statement as presented, Helen seconded; Approved
16 Yes votes;
 2. Position Statement on Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and Self-Directed Employees (SDEs), Motion made by Kevin Nunez to approve the updated statement as presented, Todd Emmons seconded; Approved
16 Yes votes; and
 3. Position Statement on Rights of people with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD), Motion made by Kevin Nunez to approve the updated statement as presented, Todd Emmons seconded; Approved
16 Yes votes
- Children and Youth Services Subcommittee Report was given by Peg Kinsell.
 - Health and Wellness Committee Report Elizabeth Dalzell.
- ❖ State Plan Committee Report was given by Helen Steinberg.
 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee Report was given by Jade Pollock
 - ❖ Grants Committee Report was given by Kevin Nunez.

STAFF REPORT

- ❖ Executive Director Report was given by Mercedes Witowsky via video recording.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Blaustein read the Public Comment Guidelines before comments were made. There were five public comments made:

1. Monique Dujue Wilson was present and made a comment.
2. Yana Mermel was present and made a comment.
3. Fanny Ochoa was present and made a comment.
4. Susan Colls-Guedes was present and made a comment.
5. Walter Kalman was present and made a comment.

Meeting adjourned

Members transitioned to the Lunch and Learn portion of the meeting.

Minutes prepared by Jacinta Williams, Executive Assistant

Next Advocate Caucus is May 8, 2024 from 6:00pm-6:45pm

Next Council meeting is May 9, 2024 from 9:30am-1:30pm

ATTENDANCE

Self-Advocates, Family Members In Person

Paul Blaustein	Todd Emmons	Elizabeth Dalzell
Andrew McGeady	Myrta Rosa	Ryan Roy
Peg Kinsell	Kevin Nunez	Nantanee Koppstein
Helen Steinberg,	Michael McCarthy, ZOOM	Safiyyah Muhammad, ZOOM

Excused

Annette Smith
Kim Murray, Director, Office of Special Education Programs
Laura Williams, Executive Director, Arc Ocean County

DD Act Agencies Representatives & Government Agencies

Karen Carroll, Director, Division of Voc. Rehab. Services, **ZOOM**
Joyce Jelley, Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities
Jill Hoegel, Disability Rights New Jersey
No Representative, Division of Family Health Services
No Representative, Division of Developmental Disabilities
Jacqueline Moskowitz, Division of Disability Services
No Representative, Division of Medical Asst. & Health Services

Personal Care Attendant

Matthew McMullen, PCA for Andrew McGeady
Page Bond, PCA for Kevin Nunez

Public Attendees

Paul Aronsohn, **Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families**
Christine Bakter, **Deputy Director, Office of Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families**
Monique Dujue Wilson
Yana Mermel
Susan Colls-Guedes
Fanny Ochoa
Diane Riley
Michael Brower
Kate Kelly
Walter Kalman

Council Staff

Jacinta Williams	Kerry McGrath
Bob Titus	Frank Latham
Kyoko Coco	Adam Kubler
Jade Pollock	Jodi Fox