

## **COUNCIL HYBRID MEETING MINUTES Thursday, November 14, 2024**

The fourth quarter of the regular public meeting for the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities was held on Thursday, November 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 welcomed and introduced newly appointed Self Advocate Council Member Kelly Stout.
- Mercedes Witowsky, Executive Director will not be joining the meeting today due to family matters.

### **MINUTES**

The minutes from August 15, 2024 meeting were distributed in the meeting packet.

### **ACTION:**

**Vote:** Motion made by Todd Emmons to approve the minutes as presented;  
Seconded by Kevin Nunez. All approved  
The August 15<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting Minutes 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 in person:

1. Yana Mermel was present and made a comment
2. Michelle Solomon was present and made a comment

### **PRESENTATION**

NJ Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families, Paul Aronsohn presented a deep dive into the 2023 Annual Ombudsman Report and discussed some recommendations. Members participated with additional feedback.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ❖ Executive Committee and Chair Report was given by Paul Blaustein.  
The committee recommended creating an Ad Hoc Subcommittee to help address the membership of the Council. Paul Blaustein asked for volunteers to be willing to visit the Governor's Appointments Office to help with identifying interested individuals.

### ACTION:

Volunteers for the Nominations Ad Hoc Subcommittee are:

1. Kevin Nunez
  2. Elizabeth Dalzell
  3. Kelly Stout
  4. Safiyah Muhammad
  5. Myrta Rosa
- Self-Advocate Advisory Subcommittee Report was given by Ryan Roy.
- ❖ Public Policy Committee Report was given by Nantanee Koppstein.
    - 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 Annette Smith
  - ❖ Grants Committee Report was given by Kevin Nunez.  
Kevin also gave an update on SABE, which is Self-Advocates Being Empowered, to which he is the representative for the state of New Jersey.

## STAFF REPORT

- ❖ Executive Director Report was given by Kyoko Coco.  
Instead of highlighting the report, 2 videos will be shown of the work the staff have completed on the following subjects:
  - Inclusion; NJ is My Home 2 video compilation shows diverse stories of integration in the community whether it's employment, community inclusion, accessing services or self advocacy.;
  - Collaboration; Black Impact Summit was held on June 6, 2024 and collaboratively discussed solutions and recommendations for barriers preventing access to necessary services.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

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

There were three public comments made in person:

1. Richard Hood was present and made a public comment
2. Bill Byrne was present and made a public comment.
3. Julia Simko was present and made a public comment.

## ADVOCATE CAUCUS

Self-Advocates meet the night before the council meeting to discuss topics of their interested. Last night's topic was on guardianship. Summary was given by Myrta Rosa.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Kevin shared his health issue and recovery and thanked everyone for their well wishes;
- Ryan congratulated Todd and Myrta on their recent nominations and welcomed new member, Kelly Stout
- Safiyah Muhammad addressed the members and read her resignation, which will come at the end of the first quarter or sooner.

Meeting adjourned at 1:35pm

Minutes prepared by Jacinta Williams, Executive Assistant

**Next Self Advocate Caucus is scheduled for March 12, 2025 from 6:00pm-6:45pm**  
**Next Council meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2025 from 9:30am-1:30pm followed by**  
**the Lunch and Learn from 1:30-2:30**

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Self-Advocates, Family Members In Person**

Paul Blaustein	Todd Emmons	Elizabeth Dalzell	Sarah Aziz
Andrew McGeady	Myrta Rosa	Ryan Roy	Annette Smith
Kevin Nunez	Nantanee Koppstein	Michael McCarthy	Kelly Stout
Safiyah Muhammad			

### **Excuse**

Helen Steinberg,  
Peg Kinsell

### **DD Act Agencies Representatives & Government Agencies**

Joyce Jelley, Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities  
Jill Hoegel, Disability Rights New Jersey  
Kourtney Pulliam, Division of Family Health Services  
Jacqueline Moskowitz, Division of Disability Services  
Jonathan Seifried, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Developmental Disabilities  
Phyllis Melendez, Division of Medical Asst. & Health Services  
Kim Murray, Director, Office of Special Education Programs  
No Representative Division of Voc. Rehab. Services

### **Public Member**

Laura Williams, Executive Director, Arc Ocean County

### **Personal Care Attendant**

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

### **Public Attendees**

Christine Bakter, Deputy Director, Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families  
Leonela Mora  
Elizabeth Mane  
Diane D'Orazio, State Director Community Options  
Bill Byrne  
Julia Simko  
Richard Hood  
Tom Baffuto, Executive Director, the Arc of New Jersey  
Josh Brady  
Walt Fernandez  
Diane Driver  
Mary Ciccone, Disability Rights New Jersey  
Ray Vercruysse  
Michelle Solomon  
Cobey Meyer  
Tern Day

### **Council Staff**

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