

Paul Blaustein, Chair Person
Mercedes Witowsky, Executive Director

COUNCIL HYBRID MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 7, 2025

The third quarter of the regular public meeting for the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities was held on Thursday, August 7, 2025, 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.

MINUTES

The minutes from May 8, 2025, meeting were distributed in the meeting packet.

ACTION:

Vote: Motion made by Todd Emmons to approve the minutes as presented.

Second, by Kevin Nunez. Minutes approved.

May 8, 2025, Approved Meeting Minutes will be posted on the Council Website.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were four morning public comments. Two of the comments were read by Council Chair Paul Blaustein. Those comments were from Linda Thomas and Susan Coll-Guedes.

- Julia Simko was present and made a comment
- Pat Miller was present and made a comment
- Parul Khemka was present and made a comment
- Kathy Freeman was present and made a comment

PRESENTATION

2027-2031 Five-Year Plan Status Update was presented by Brenda Considine, Consultant, to the Council. Members were presented with a strategic planning update and results from the public listening sessions. Members had an opportunity to ask questions. Brenda was thanked for the presentation.

Preparing for Medicaid Changes was presented by Greg Woods, Assistant Commissioner and Medicaid Director of the NJ Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services. Members had an opportunity to ask questions. Greg was thanked for the presentation.

VOTING

During today's meeting, the members were asked to vote for a Council Vice-Chair and one At Large Member of the Executive Committee.

ACTION: Kevin Nunez was voted in as the Vice Chair and Kelly Stout was voted in as the At Large Advocate Executive Committee position. Congratulations to both Kevin and Kelly.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ❖ Executive Committee and Chair Report was given by Paul Blaustein.
With the recent name change of the Access For All Sub-Committee, a vote is needed to make the same change to the By-Laws.
ACTION: Kevin made a motion to change the name of the subcommittee in the By-Laws; seconded by Ryan Roy. All approved. The By-Laws will be updated and posted on the Council Website.
 - 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.
 - Access For All Subcommittee Report was given by Annette Smith
- ❖ Grants Committee Report was given by Kevin Nunez.

STAFF REPORT

- ❖ Executive Director Report was given by Mercedes Witowsky
ACTION: Motion made by Kevin Nunez, to accept the proposed 2026 budget as presented, Seconded by Todd Emmons. Floor open for discussion. All in favor, 2026 budget is approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

There was one public comment made in person:

1. Julia Simko was present and made a public comment.

Meeting adjourned

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

Minutes prepared by Jacinta Williams, Executive Assistant

Next Consumer Caucus is November 12, 2025 - 6 pm - 8 pm @ Hilton Garden Inn
Next Council meeting is November 13, 2025 - 9:30 am-2:30 pm @ Hilton Garden Inn

ATTENDANCE

Self-Advocates, Family Members In Person

Myrta Rosa	Andrew McGeady	Pam King	Peg Kinsell
Michelle Solomon	Yana Mermel	Elizabeth Dalzell	Kelly Stout
Todd Emmons	Paul Blaustein	Helen Steinberg	
Nantanee Koppstein	Ryan Roy	Kevin Nunez	

Excused

Sarah Aziz
Michael McCarthy
Michelle Solomon
Annette Smith

DD Act Agencies Representatives & Government Agencies

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

Public Member

Laura Williams, Executive Director, Arc Ocean County

Personal Care Attendant

Sean Kenny, PCA for Andrew McGeady
Edna Bond, PCA for Kevin Nunez

Public Attendees

Anabela Rossi	Walter Kalman, MSW, LSW, CAE
Julia Simko	Virginia Hawkins
Ray Vercruysse	Parul Khemka
Orah Raia	Pat Miller
Amy Jedele	Kerrie Webster, Family Resource Network
Kathleen Freeman	Mo Orlando, Community Options, Inc
Deborah Whiteside	Ann Marie DiFalco, Family Resource Network
Liza Gundell, Family Resource Network	Sharon Levine, The Arc of New Jersey
Gene Myers, Reporter	
Paul Aronsohn, Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families	
Christine Bakter, Deputy Director, Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families	

Council Staff

Jacinta Williams	Jodi Fox	Bob Titus	Ebony Freeman
Kerry McGrath	Kyoko Coco	Adam Kubler	Alison Malnak
Mercedes Witowsky	Frank Latham, ZOOM	Brenda Considine, ZOOM	