



Paul Blaustein, *Chair Person*  
Mercedes Witowsky, *Executive Director*

## **COUNCIL MEETING** **Thursday, August 9, 2018**

A regular public meeting of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities was held on Thursday August 9, 2018 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Hamilton, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 10:48 am by Paul Blaustein, Chair Person, who presided and read the Open Public Meeting Act and Council Vision. The meeting notice was published in the *Newark Star Ledger* and the *Trenton Times*.

### **Approval of Minutes / Announcements**

#### Approval of Minutes: Discussion

The minutes from the May 24, 2018 meeting were distributed. Joe Young mentioned the end of the meeting doesn't announce the action from the closed session.

#### **Action:**

Motion made by Bill Testa to approve the minutes with the amendment, "During closed session, the Council voted unanimously to hire Mercedes Witowsky as the Executive Director of the NJCDD". Seconded by Safiyyah Muhammad. The minutes were approved pending the amendment and will be added to the website.

#### Announcement:

- ❖ Paul formally introduced the new Executive Director, Mercedes Witowsky to the Council.
- ❖ The Developmental Disabilities Advocacy Network, DDAN, was introduced to the Council members. The DDAN will bring the Council, self-advocates, to design and implement an advocacy agenda and plan to work towards protecting and advancing the rights, opportunities and service systems for people with I/DD in New Jersey.
- ❖ Paul Blaustein gave a summary of his attendance at this year's NACDD Annual Conference in Maryland.

### **Public Comment**

- ❖ Tom Baffuto, Executive Director of Arc NJ, thanked the Council for supporting the Arc of New Jersey's "Summit to address sexual offenses against people with I/DD: Blueprint for an Empowered Future.
- ❖ Eric Joice, Chief Executive Office of FRN, invited the members to this years Beach Bash, Sunday September 9, 2018 and to the National Caregivers Conference, Thursday October 11, 2018. Eric also mentioned his retirement at the end of this year.

- ❖ Myrta Rosa, Council Vice Chair, congratulated Mercedes Witowsky on her new position as Council Executive Director.

## **Consumer Caucus**

The Consumer Caucus takes place the night before the full board meeting. Paul wants to utilize this opportunity to encourage self-advocates to discuss the issues that concern them and to enlist the Council to work on these matters. Andrew McGeady, Council Member, started the conversation by suggesting DDD work with families and individuals with I/DD on an RFP for an alternative fiscal intermediary to PPL. Andrew also suggested that new individuals choosing to self-direct their services should be allowed to utilize Easter Seals to hire their support staff, as existing self-directing individuals are permitted to continue doing so. Paul responded that NJCDD could not solicit proposals from prospective FIs, but would continue to advocate for choice of fiscal intermediaries. Myrta and Gary both oppose the title “consumer” when referring to individuals receiving services. They prefer to be referred to as “member,” the term used at Community Access Unlimited. Paul thought the term “member” was appropriate for the relationships that Gary and Myrta maintain at CAU. In general, he believes that all persons have the right to select the term to be used to refer to them. Paul and Mercedes thanked the self-advocates for their thoughtful comments. Andrew McGeady was selected to report on the Consumer Caucus to the Council.

## **Presentation: Arc Data Bank Grantee: “DD Training Resources” (see PowerPoint Presentation presented by Celine Fortin of The Arc of NJ.)**

Celine Fortin was thanked for her presentation and update.

## **Committee Reports**

- ❖ Executive Committee and Chair Report was given by Paul Blaustein
- ❖ Policy Committee Report was given by Ellie Byra
- ❖ Planning Committee Report was given by Kevin Nunez

## **Voting of Council Grants**

The following grants were approved:

**1. Training and Resource Databank (Year 2), awarded to The Arc of New Jersey:** The databank, website and calendar **provide individuals** with I/DD and their families **a single and convenient point of access** to all the information and training available. Grant was approved for \$32,529.15;

14 vote YES; 2 Recusals: Bill Testa & Peg Kinsell

**2. Direct Support Professional Advocacy & Public Awareness Campaign (Year 2), awarded to NJ Association of Community Providers (NJACP):** To execute a robust public awareness and advocacy plan that more meaningfully engaged stakeholders and made the DSP workforce crisis a greater priority for policymakers, with a requirement that the NJACP include language that demonstrates how the project includes families/family groups and individuals with I/DD. Grant was approved for \$128,350.00;

15 vote YES; 1 Recusal: Bill Testa

**3. SEVA Special Education Volunteer Advocates (Year 2), awarded to SPAN:** To provide a means for systemic change by enhancing supports available to families seeking quality inclusion and effective transition services so children with I/DD can become more independent, productive, contributing and included members of their community. Grant was approved for \$150,000.00;

13 vote YES; 1 Abstain: Joe Young; 2 Recusals: Felicia Walton & Peg Kinsell

**Executive Director Report given by Mercedes Witowsky**

**Voting on 5 Year Plan Objectives for FY19 Cycle**

The following objectives were approved for moving forward with RFPs:

1. Dental (released July 30, 2018)
2. Employment
3. Housing
4. Dual Diagnosis
5. Transportation
6. Advocacy for Special Education
7. Partners **in** Policymaking (PIP)

Motion to accept the Executive Director's recommended funding objectives made by Kevin Nunez, seconded by, Gary Rubin. Passed unanimously by the Council.

**Action**

Motion by Kevin Nunez to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Peg Kinsell and carried.  
The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm

Minutes prepared by Jacinta Williams, Executive Assistant

**Next Consumer Caucus is October 24, 2018 @ Hilton Garden Inn**

**Next Council meeting is October 25, 2018 @ Hilton Garden Inn**

## **ATTENDANCE**

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

Paul Blaustein	Ellie Byra	Andrew McGeady	Todd Emmons
Myrta Rosa	Gary Rubin	Safiyyah Muhammad	Kevin Nunez
Helen Steinberg	Elizabeth Dalzell	Peg Kinsell	Tara Montague

### **Excused Members**

Walt Fernandez                      Kara Sellix

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

Joyce Jelley, Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities

Joseph Young, Director, Disability Rights New Jersey

*No Representative*, Office of Special Education Programs

Felicia Walton, Division of Family Health Services

*VACANT, Division of Voc. Rehab. Services*

*No Representative, Division of Developmental Disabilities*

Harry Pizutelli, Division of Disability Services

Phyllis Melendez, Division of Medical Asst. & Health Services

### **Public Member**

William Testa, Executive Director, Arc of Morris County

### **Guests**

Dan Keating, Executive Director, ABCD

Tom Baffuto, Executive Director, Arc NJ

Natalie Trump

Matthew McMullen

Alycea Tetto

Kathy Wigfield

Bill England

Lisa Weissbach-Efrat

Eric Joice

Laura Kelly

Mary Hurley

Joan Migton

Lauren Agoratus

Walter Kalman

Shiela Gary

### **Council Staff**

Mercedes Witowsky

Jacinta Williams

Gail Furrer

Kyoko Coco

Frank Latham

Bob Titus

Jonathan Waller

Dennie Todd

Jennifer Brown

Rebekah Novemsky

Brenda Considine

Jaymes Brill