

**Southeastern Connecticut
Regional Human Services Coordinating Council**

*A steering committee of the
Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments*

Draft Minutes

Friday, December 16, 2022 8:30 AM

Conducted via Zoom

Attendees: Deb Monahan (Thames Valley Council for Community Action), Kathleen Stauffer (The Arc), Dina Sears-Graves (United Way of Eastern CT), Alison Dvorak, (Senior Resources - Agency on Aging), Jen Muggeo (Ledge Light Health District), Gino DeMaio (Sound Community Services), Jennifer Granger (United Community and Family Services), Patrick McCormack (Uncas Health District), Kate Milde (Norwich Human Services), Amanda Kennedy (SCCOG), Kyle Casiglio (SCCOG).

1. Call to Order

Ms. Monahan called the meeting to order at 8:32 AM.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Alison Dvorak has assumed the position of Executive Director at Senior Resources, replacing former member Joan Wessell. Ms. Dvorak has been with Senior Resources for 13 years.

3. Legislative Agenda

Ms. Stauffer addressed the group, reminding all to congratulate elections winners on their victories, noting the implications of senate democrats holding a veto-proof majority, and reporting on the non-profit alliance's legislative efforts including a tool to find and correspond with legislators and an ask for 16% increase in rate payments in addition to cost of living adjustment (COLA)

Mr. DeMaio brought up that much of the work from the previous legislative session has yet to be implemented. An 8% COLA had been promised but

only 5.1% thus far delivered. The gap was being made up for with American Recovery and Prosperity Act (ARPA) funds that are temporary and not intended for this purpose. Mr. DeMaio also reported the difficulty many agencies are facing with property tax exemptions and lack of outsourcing appropriate programs by the state. Ms. Stauffer noted this is an area where Connecticut is one of very few states not out-sourcing these programs to private sector providers.

The group discussed the possibility of meeting with some of the legislative delegation face to face. Ms. Kennedy said the COG could facilitate a meeting between select key legislators and representatives of the RHSCC.

Ms. Kennedy shared the legislative agenda of COG member municipalities, noting potential overlap in calls for increased investment in workforce development and in fully funding pilot programs. Ms. Stauffer noted that the pilot program issue was highly relevant to eastern CT, where the rural character makes service provision more expensive than in urban areas.

The group proceeded to identify a number of issues of common concern. The following topics emerged from this discussion:

- Workforce Development
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in Recruitment
- Educational/Training funding not adequate for the mandatory requirements of many professions (e.g. a health inspector needs a four year degree, limiting the value of a pipeline program run through community colleges)
- Conflict between state and private provision of services.
- Programs being passed and funded but not put out for RFP (School based care example cited)
- Rates for human services are not indexed
- Community training services are beneficial but draw from staff time/capacity. Could benefit from stipend.
- Legislative initiatives should be a collaborative process, include the service providers before introducing legislation in order to craft a better bill with the input and support of stakeholders.

The group noted there was positive momentum in favor of action and that the long session will benefit the collective efforts of human services orgs.

4. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 AM.

The next convening is scheduled for January 20th at 8:30am

