

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday September 23, 2021 - 9:00am-10:30am
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES
Special Meeting:
Overview of the Employment is for Everyone Initiative
Roundtable Discussion of Disability Employment Services,
Priorities, and Opportunities for Collaboration.**

Attendance: Jim Ross, Marina Derman, Stacie Curran, Tom Holleman, Doug Rivkin, Diane Johnson, and Joe Anastasi.

Present from Human Services: Margaret Pinheiro, Sue Pfister, and Kristen Witt

Joined: First Selectman-James Marpe, Gary Mayerson, Sara Purdy Schwartz, Kate Travis, Jason Wilson, Kaity Appley, Johnathan Steinberg, Tom Cosker, Sal Liccione, , Trever Rogers, Brian Gresko, Amber Burke, Luis Velazquez, Matt Miceli, Fran Hornick, Daria Sullivan, and Kate Banzhaf.

Jim R - Called Meeting to Order

Welcome all, Introduction First Selectman, Jim Marpe

Jim Marpe: - Introduction & Reflection on his 8 years, and this may be his final CPD meeting. Formation of CPD Is on his top five, most proud, in his service as Selectman. Spells out what monies will be used for - and getting things ADA compliant, Town Hall, Health District, etc., and a big thank you to Elaine Daignault (absent due to family emergency)

Jim Ross - circles back to the close work done with Human Services and another thank you to Elaine Daignault and the CPD commission members.

Marina: Presents overview of the Employment is for Everyone Initiative: Along with slide presentation - Hope to hit each business, provide ongoing efforts, continued tracking, support, maintenance, and promotion...as we work in combined partnership with agencies and groups and resources in our area.

1st presenter: Abilis: Matt Miceli:

Slides presented

Their members are all supervised by their own manager (not the agency)

All customized employment

2nd Presenter: Ability Beyond Kate Travis:

Gave History & grows of Agency

61 East Ave Norwalk, CT

Employment Specialist - Training, working, thru independence.

multiple finding options available
Agency or Private Pay, or through school contracts.
coming in 2022 Transition - DDS funds
Slides presented

3rd presenter: BRS Aging & Disability Services - Fran Hornick

Prepare, find, and keep a job, work with counselors too - thru Level Up help students prepare for adult services through BRS.

Most have Physical or Mental disability.

4th - BRS: Alexa Sobora: 860-819-4147

Gap between work to employment - they come as a bridge to connect people to employers; Teach how to use tax credits, ADA, AT, She does disability awareness training of staff, etc and works with other agencies present her today.

5th - Kennedy Center: Sara Purdy Schwartz:

DO DMHAS Funded work, service programs

16 group homes, residential locations in New Haven & Fairfield County.

Slides Presented

IPS - follow Individual Placement Specialist

On site, off-site Job Coaching

Peer-Mentoring services provided for, Substance abuse, trauma, ID

Have placement department, work with DDS, transitional skills, and BRS can help finite the skills to find a job - their wrk is time limited. move from group support to Competitive employment.

6th - STAR - Kate Banzhaf:

History of STAR, Norwalk based

CE - Customized Employment

Discovery, profile, CE plan, follow.

Slides presented

Jim Ross; How can we provide/create an environment where businesses are fully aware & participate.

7th- Laurel House; Daria Sullivan:

She is a counselor - they provide help for persons with Mental Health issues - find employment, work toward successful sustainable employment.

Cover Greenwich-Westport

Supported education, housing, recovery treatment, have mental health experts, provide some \$ to individuals, use individual support model - tricky part is keeping the job.

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8th - DDS - Brian Grescko & Amber Burke

Employment first Agency

new CE Curriculum, rolling out this month

Slides Presented

Impact Delivery of services

Employment & Day Services Division:

SELN - State employment Leadership Network

Project Search

JDLN - Job developers Leadership Network

DDS giving state funds, money for start-ups and 2 new project search locations

Discussion

Joe Ananstasi:

Excited to raise awareness in our Town with provers, with the Commission, Town politicians giving their support. What comes next?

We are all excited to Brainstorm together

Kate B:

Can CPD make introductions to Companies?

Jim R:

Q:what are the top challenges:

A: Job developing & getting foot in the door

Gary Mayerson:

NY Attorney, Don't lose site of a bad fit. Best Ambassadors are Satisfied Employers.

They will sell this platform.

And, a Job coach, someone who stays on long term

Need to dispel the stigma & misinformation

Education - Awareness

Overcome fears

Diane J:

Keep in mind not all are eligible for agency monies or agency services - and these people still need supports, like many on Autism spectrum... and we, as a group, CPD, we can collaborate and facilitate, but we are not an agency that can do the work.

Also - how do we do next steps FAIRLY - to include all.

Let's continue to meet.

Human Services (through Elaine) is best place to follow up and set contingent meetings.

Thank you/Meeting adjourned -10:30m