

**Protection and Advocacy Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2011
Conference Room B**

Attendees: Art Quirk, (Board Chair), Eileen Furey, Ray Elling, Vivian Cross, and John Clauson; via conference call: Rachel Bogartz, Joyce Peters, and Phyllis Zlotnick.

Absent: Peter Tyrrell, Muriel Tomer, Chad Sinani, and Sheila Mulvey

Staff Members: James McGaughey, Executive Director; Gretchen Knauff, Assistant Director; Peter Hughes, AID Program Director; and, Beth Leslie, Legislative Regulations Specialist.

Call to Order & Quorum: The meeting was called to order at 4:05, and the presence of a quorum was noted. Art gave a round of applause for P&A escaping the massive layoffs that were scheduled prior to the union concession agreement approval.

- 1) **Consideration of minutes:** No changes. Eileen made a motion to approve, Ray seconded, all approved. Minutes for June 16, 2011, Board Meeting approved.
- 2) **Discussion with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Commissioner Terry Macy - Overview of DDS 5 Year Planning Process & Board recommendations regarding safeguards for DDS client rights.**
 - a) Since taking the position four months ago, Commissioner Macy has faced the budget crisis, 500 potential layoffs, Hurricane Irene, and numerous other crises.
 - b) The Commissioner has been conducting a “listening tour” with self-advocates, families and non-profit organizations. DDS’ own staff will be the next group listened to. He felt very proud of the work and commitment the community of providers, both private and public, exhibited toward DDS clients and their families during the recent Hurricane Irene crisis, they went above and beyond.
 - c) Listening tour conversations about the future of DDS focus on: “What can we do better?”. Using a new position the “family advocate” DDS will work with families differently than before, encouraging dialogue on family needs, expectations, and self-advocacy.
 - d) DDS wants to expand the respite care program and family services.
 - e) Southbury Training School (STS) is under a federal consent decree and while following the mandates of the decree, clients of the school with their families are considering alternative community placements. It is encouraging to see the potential for inclusion in the community many residents have never embraced before.
 - i) As the number of residents decrease staff at STS can be trained in different jobs.
 - ii) The staff is very dedicated to the residents, but the financial cost per resident dramatically rises each year as the number of residents decrease and the staff does

P&A Board Minutes
September 15, 2011

- not. While this fact may eventually spur action by funders, DDS has no plans to accelerate placements or close STS. The Court order lays out a process for individual consideration and opportunities – that’s what the Department intends to follow.
- iii) Prejudices against community housing for persons with disabilities continue to exist at STS. This is mostly based on misinformation or lack of information, and there is evidence that it is dissipating.
 - iv) Community providers have a place in the transition of residents, fear of the unknown looms over STS clients and their families. This will take time, but the mission of DDS is clear, in that we strive to provide the caring supportive environments for our clients. We are working on developing full life plans that include dying at home if that is the person’s desire.
 - f) The successful closing of Mansfield has provided us with many lessons learned in our moving forward.
- 3) **Executive Director Report & Graphic Discussion** – Jim is working on the P&A graphic, he and board members agreed that at the center and heart of P&A a “Person Centered” image is essential. The people who call and come to P&A do so for a variety of reasons and needs; they are as diverse and numerous as the multitude of services we provide. Whatever the need or reason the person then generally surmises this is the main work of P&A, a great misnomer. There is great value in being able to develop a P&A graphic that accurately depicts what we are about. Board Members support professional assistance in the development of this graphic based on Jim’s original drawing.
- 4) **Lead Poisoning Update – Vivian Cross, Ph.D.** – Connecticut is making great strides in combating lead poisoning in children. Connecticut is one of the few states that mandates, under the age of 6 lead level testing, by state law. Connecticut needs additional guidelines, to ensure that that all children are tested, as required by law. Children who have even low levels of lead can and do experience learning difficulties and are falling through the cracks in many schools. Jim has agreed to participate in the planning and development of a major legislative push on addressing this horrific issue. Handouts are attached for inclusion in the minutes.
- 5) Ray invited any interested Board Members to join CC=A, which will hold its next meeting October 5, at 1:30, New Horizons Village. Senator Beth Bye will be attending as we work on developing a community discussion around the notion of including the “otherwise” able people.
- 6) December 15, 2011 – is the next Board meeting.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn made by Eileen, seconded