



CT State Independent  
Living Council

**Annual Meeting**  
**January 25, 2023**

**Members in Attendance**

Gary Allen  
Todd Johnston  
Gretchen Knauff  
Rich Luby  
Melissa Taylor  
Jaclyn Pinney  
Carman Correa-Rios  
Emily Zambrello  
Michelle Johnson  
Darrel Ruopp  
Katie Smolinsky  
Jonathan Sigworth  
Barbara Lombardi  
Kim Smith  
Josiane Alix  
Farah Garland  
Molly Cole - Executive Director of the CT SILC

**Absent**

Sarah Rizzuto  
David Morgana

**Guests**

Eileen Healey  
George Michna  
Sharon Heddle

**Approval of the Minutes:**

A revised version of the minutes was sent out. Carman Correa-Rios made a motion to accept the minutes. Josiane Alix seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted with corrections.

**By-laws Revision:**

The by-laws were read for the second time and include the following changes:.

- A definition section.
- clarification that members of the State Independent Living Council are actually board members.

- qualifications to meet the requirements of the State Independent Living Council.
- Titles and pronouns were updated.
- Clarification of the fiscal year.
- Clarification that any board member can request a board meeting and voting methods were changed.
- Clarification that members of the Centers for Independent Living cannot serve as president or vice president, but can serve as treasurer or secretary of the State Independent Living Council.
- The Conflict-of-Interest disclosure was updated.
- Jacklyn Pinney made a motion to accept the by-laws' revision, Carman Correa-Rios seconded the motion. The by-laws were accepted unanimously.

#### **Treasurer:**

The State Independent Living Council needs a new treasurer due to the untimely death of Keith Mullinar. Rich Luby volunteered to take over as treasurer. A motion was made by Gary Allen and seconded by Barbara Lombardi to elect Rich Luby Treasurer. The motion was accepted unanimously.

#### **Member at Large:**

There was an election for the at-large position on the Executive Committee. The nominees were Carman Correa-Rios and Michelle Johnson. Michelle Johnson won the election.

#### **Finance Report:**

Gretchen Knauff explained the finance report. Barbara Lombardi made a motion to accept the report. Gary Allen seconded the motion. The motion was accepted unanimously.

#### **Director's Report:**

Molly Cole briefly talked about the directors' report. The report was sent out to everyone on the committee.

#### **Board Orientation:**

Molly Cole conducted a board orientation for all of the SILC members. She talked about the Centers for Independent Living. She talked about the services that are available and the Philosophy of Independent Living with the core value being consumer control. A PowerPoint presentation was sent out to all SILC members.

#### **Membership committee:**

Karen Roseman and Beth Kidder have both said that they will remain on the membership committee. Todd Johnston, Michelle Johnson, and David Morgana are also on the committee. We had 18 members.

We have two vacancies that have to be filled by people with disabilities in order to keep our balance and keep the board consumer-driven. Brynn Hickey is stepping back and Kim Smith is going to replace her.

### **Emergency Prep:**

Rich Luby talked about the year-to-date so we can develop goals and answer SPIL goals for 2023. Twenty participants were certified in CPR from 4 of the 5 CILs. The committee wants to make sure that we have the knowledge and resources to competently support our consumers before, during, and after an emergency. In response to this feedback, we are collaborating with the Red Cross to offer additional trainings. The next training will be on Red Cross Ready and how to prepare consumers before, during, and after an emergency.

### **Data Tech Committee:**

Eileen Healy spoke on the goal of the Data Tech Committee being to streamline reporting and prepare centers for a variety of different kinds of electronic databases. Ms. Healy said that we would like to do some training around how to be more consistent across the state and how we are deciding what kinds of activities the CILs are actually doing. They have a meeting with the developer of the data management program that all the centers are using. The SILC can look at what all the centers are doing as well as how individual centers are doing.

### **SPIL Committee:**

Melissa Taylor and Molly Cole talked about the SPIL. They spoke about the mixed results that they received from the survey that was sent out. The SPIL is going to start planning focus groups around the state. They are going to ask the same questions to all focus groups, inquiring on perceptions of independent living and what strategies work best for consumers. Ms. Cole said that the plan is going to be driven by the consumer input. They want to get the input and put it in a draft plan and send it out again to get input regarding the changes. This plan will be driven by data collected from the CILs, data collected by the SILC, and data collected by the Census Bureau, along with public input.

### **State Rehab Council & BESB:**

Gary Allen talked about the new director of the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB). She is a person with a visual disability and was previously employed by the Nebraska Commission of the Blind. She was employed as a rehabilitation counselor, and she advanced to the position of deputy director for the Nebraska Commission for the Blind. Gary talked about the VR success story. They also had a presentation for Aira. This is an app for smart phones that gives people audio descriptions of their surroundings. There is an 18-month pilot program in Connecticut. They are concerned that not enough people have signed up for this program. The annual report was submitted to Amy Porter. Andrew Norton said that there are no proposed bills being submitted in this legislative session.

### **Equipment Repair Group:**

Molly Cole talked about the origin of the group. Mike Demico has introduced The Right to Repair Bill in Connecticut. We are also looking at the legislation that was introduced in Massachusetts that can be a model for legislation in Connecticut. Disability Rights Connecticut has started to receive calls from people around the state who have complaints about wheelchair repair. Disability Rights Connecticut has

opened this up as one of their focus areas. Molly would like to get the committee together again because of two significant issues, the Right to Repair Bill and the involvement of Disability Rights Connecticut.

**Committees:**

Gretchen Knauff talked about the different committees. Molly Cole sent out a list of all the committees, listing who is and is not on a committee. Molly Cole would like every SILC member to sign up for a committee. A number of members have signed up for committees or changed to a different committee.

**Supported Decision Making:**

An individual with a disability gathers people that will support them in making certain decisions, i.e. financial or healthcare decisions. The person with a disability directs the decision-making process. Connecticut does not have supported decision making. We would like to educate the public during the year and then work on some legislation that will address the issues. Jonathan Martinez has agreed to train people in Connecticut. A motion was made to designate funds toward supported decision-making by Rich Luby to accept and move forward in the process, taking on supported decision-making. Gary Allen seconded the motion.

**New Business:**

Gretchen Knauff talked about restructuring the reporting to reflect the SPIL, having the board make decisions that are part of vision, instead of looking in the rear-view mirror.

**Meeting Frequency:**

We would like to change the frequency of the meetings from four times a year to every other month (six times a year). The meetings will be shorter, two hours instead of three hours. Reporting will remain the same. Barbara Lombardi made a motion to change the frequency of the meetings to every other month and we put out a survey to determine what days and times would be best for attendees. Rich Luby seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Adjournment:**

Barbara Lombardi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Melissa seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.