



CT State Independent Living Council (CT SILC) Board Meeting Minutes

**Wednesday, February 19, 2025
3:00 PM**

Board Members Present: Gretchen Knauff, Chris Blake, Carmen Correa-Rios, Farrah Garland, Michelle Johnson, Rich Luby, Jaclyn Pinney, Darrell Ruopp, Kim Smith, Emily Zambrello

Board Members Absent: George Michna*, Mark Linabury,

***Denotes non-voting member.**

Staff: Molly Cole, SILC Executive Director; Michele DuBois, Data Coordinator/Office Administrator

Guests: Charlie Conway, Executive Director - Access Independence (AI); Eileen Healy, Executive Director – Independence Northwest (IN); Sharon Heddle, Executive Director - Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut (DNEC); Russell Blair, Director of Education & Communications - Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission; Corey Lee, Guest; Melissa Thompson, Advocate – Independence Unlimited

ACTION	AGENDA ITEM
Call to Order	The meeting was called to Order at 3:03 pm - Quorum established.
President’s Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gretchen Knauff welcomed everyone, opened the meeting, and reviewed the agenda. • It was noted that the agenda did not include the approval of minutes, which would be addressed later.
Good News	Gretchen Knauff and Melissa Thompson shared positive news with the rest of the board.
Public Comment	There was no public comment.
Freedom of Information: Overview	<p>Russell Blair from the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of Freedom of Information (FOI) laws was provided, emphasizing transparency and public meeting requirements. • Key points included the importance of posting agendas and minutes, public access to meetings, and the definition of a public meeting. • Discussed the rules and specifics for executive sessions. • Highlighted the importance of recording votes and attendance in meeting minutes. • Highlighted the importance of avoiding unnoticed meetings and ensuring proper communication. • Russell answered questions and agreed to send the presentation to Molly Cole for distribution to the meeting participants. <p>ACTION: Send the FOI presentation to participants once received by the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission</p>



<p>Minutes from January 15, 2025</p>	<p>Motion to amend the agenda to add consideration, review and approval of January 15, 2025, minutes made by Michelle Johnson. Chris Blake seconded.</p> <p>ACTION: The motion to amend the agenda was approved unanimously.</p> <p>Motion to accept the minutes by Michelle Johnson. Rich Luby seconded.</p> <p>The minutes were amended with the following edits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed “January 15, 2024” to “January 15, 2025” in title. • Changed “Chairman” to “President” under Announcements. <p>ACTION: The minutes were approved with edits. Carmen Correa-Rios abstained.</p>
<p>Treasurer’s Report</p>	<p>Gretchen Knauff reviewed the Financial Report Summary for the period ending January 31, 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CT SILC's financial position at the end of January 2025 remains very good. • CT SILC has collected the funds from the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) for the period ending December 31, 2024, and that the financial position remained strong with minimal payables at the end of the month. • CT SILC has invoiced ADS for the quarter ending March 31, 2025, and are waiting for those funds. • The bank account has been reconciled through January 31, 2025, without any issues. <p>There was no objection to the Treasurers Report.</p>
<p>Executive Director’s Report</p>	<p>Molly Cole gave the Executive Director’s report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract and Reports: The payment from ADS ending December 2024 has been received. Another invoice for January through March has been sent out. The CT SILC audit is in draft form and once reviewed by the finance committee will be shared with the board. The PPR is back in process. Q90 is back online. • Projects: We are monitoring our finalized list of Legislative priorities and monitoring several other bills. One Bill to reestablish the Department of Aging Services which would appear to split off aging and disability. The Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance (CCDLA) is back to weekly calls on Fridays from 12-1 PM and everyone is welcome. • Supported Decision Making: Bill in Judiciary Committee. Our first webinar of a four-part series is coming up this Thursday with sixty people registered so far. • Aging and Disability: Continue to participate in the Aging and Disability Collaborative. • Katie Beckett Waiver Work Group: The work on the Katie Beckett waiver is nearly complete. Recommendations include expanding funding to eliminate the waiting list and developing supports for those still on the waiting list. The goal is to prevent people from being in limbo without knowing their status or available supports. • Webinars and Training: A series of webinars on independent living is being planned, linked to the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). Input on content and speakers is welcomed by all members. The SPIL committee will organize the webinars, but suggestions from the broader group are encouraged.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan: Researching potential strategic planners, seeking recommendations. Waiting to hear back from a couple of people. Come up with a job description and share with Rich Luby so he can reach out to some contacts from LinkedIn. • Federal Cuts: Potential impact on CT SILC and CILS, importance of educating legislators about the consequences. <p>ACTION: Molly Cole to send job description/expectations for Strategic Planner to Rich Luby.</p>
<p>Committee Reports</p>	<p>DATA TECH COMMITTEE – Eileen Healy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on consistent data collection across centers. • Adjustments for tracking multiple disabilities. • Discussed the importance of consistent data collection and the challenges of aligning data across different centers. • Members expressed appreciation for Michele's efforts and the progress made in improving data collection processes. • Highlighted the importance of collaboration among centers to ensure accurate and comprehensive data. <p>EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE – Kim Smith.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of go bags for distribution, including emergency blankets, can openers, chargers, and flashlights. • Kim attended a regional ESF-8 meeting and facilitated setting up a training on human trafficking for the centers and the public. • Members discussed the logistics of distributing the go bags and ensuring they reach those in need. • Highlighted the importance of community engagement and education on emergency preparedness. <p>EQUIPMENT REPAIR WORK GROUP – Farrah Garland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance issues with National Seating and Mobility, and New Motion. • Actions taken include cease and desist letters and press releases. • Farrah mentioned that the advisory council meeting provided insights into compliance rates and the need for continued pressure on the companies. • Discussed the challenges of ensuring compliance with repair timelines and the impact on individuals who rely on wheelchair services. • Highlighted the importance of holding companies accountable and the steps taken to address non-compliance. • Members discussed the potential impact of non-compliance on the community and the need for continued advocacy. • Farrah shared that New Motion had not posted for a technician position locally, raising concerns about their commitment to improving services. • Discussed the importance of transparency and communication with the companies to ensure they understand and meet compliance requirements.



	<p>SPIL COMMITTEE – Chris Blake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation tool developed to track objectives.• Chris mentioned the importance of selecting appropriate training topics and locations for the independent living centers.• Discussed the progress on the strategic plan and the need for input from various stakeholders to ensure its effectiveness.• Members discussed the importance of regular evaluations to track progress and make necessary adjustments.
Discussion: By-Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tabled for the next Board of Directors Meeting. The Board was reminded to review the documentation and policy sent out.
Adjourn	<p>Rich Luby made a motion to adjourn. Michelle Johnson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:08 PM.</p>