



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

**Wednesday, January 21, 2026
3:00 PM**

Board Members Present: Gretchen Knauff, Chris Blake, Melissa Cullen-Carter, Marc Anthony Gallucci, Farrah Garland, Michelle Johnson, Mark Linabury, Rich Luby, George Michna*, Jaclyn Pinney, Darrell Ruopp, Joe Shortt, Kim Smith, Melissa Thompson-Dooley

Board Members Absent: Corey Lee, Emily Zambrello

***Denotes non-voting member.**

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

Guests: Sharon Heddle, Executive Director - Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut (DNEC)

ACTION	AGENDA ITEM
Call to Order	The meeting was called to Order at 3:08 pm - Quorum established.
Welcome and Introductions	Molly Cole welcomed attendees and offered opening remarks before beginning the agenda.
Good News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich Luby shared today was his wedding anniversary. • Mark Linabury shared that his daughter recently adopted a sheepadoodle puppy named Levi and noted the dog’s impressive energy and athletic jumping ability. • Melissa Thompson shared that she and her husband were planning a weekend trip to the Catskills for a ski resort visit, where she planned to enjoy snow tubing. • Kim Smith shared that her niece welcomed a baby girl the previous evening.
Public Comment	There was no public comment.
Minutes from November 19, 2025	Motion to accept the minutes by Jaclyn Pinney. Melissa Thompson-Dooley seconded. ACTION: The minutes were approved. Rich Luby, Marc Anthony Gallucci abstained.
Treasurer’s Report	Mark Linabury presented the Financial Report Summary for the period ending December 31, 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CT SILC's financial position at the end of December 2025 remains good, with a minimal net loss of approximately \$1,500. The net loss is minimal with use of some of the reserves budgeted for this year. • There continues to be uncertainty for Part B funding for the CT SILC and CILs. • Waiting to hear about the possibility of a continuing resolution by the end of this month from the federal government. • The bank account has been reconciled through December 31, 2025, without issues. • The fund balance remains robust at approximately \$370,000. • Ongoing caution remains regarding federal funding uncertainty and the Board, and staff remain cautious about spending. A brief discussion followed regarding the financial report and current funding



	<p>considerations.</p> <p>No formal vote required for the Treasurer’s Report.</p>
<p>Executive Director’s Report and Federal Funding updates:</p>	<p>Molly Cole gave the Executive Director’s report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations: Molly reported that CT SILC received payment from the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) for the period covering October through December 2025. With the submission of the quarterly report in January, an invoice was also submitted for the next period, covering January through March. At this time, payment for the January through March period remains outstanding and will depend on the availability of appropriated funds. Molly also reported that the Program Performance Report (PPR) has been completed and is ready for submission pending final review and signature. <p>Molly also reported that she spoke with Dr. Bruder at the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) regarding CT SILC’s funding challenges. UCEDD agreed to provide \$10,000 to help offset certain expenditures, including Supported Decision Making (SDM) activities beyond what is currently allocated through the State Plan for Independent Living. UCEDD will also assist with covering the cost of sign language interpreters and Spanish translation of materials through the end of June. Beginning July 1, UCEDD will provide an additional \$10,000 toward the planning of the 2026 Candidates Forum. In return, Molly will provide legislative training for UCEDD’s LEND fellows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects and Initiatives: Molly reported that the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance (CCDLA) is now meeting weekly to coordinate cross-disability advocacy efforts. Current discussions among coalition members have focused on several key policy concerns affecting people with disabilities, including healthcare, medical protections related to utility shutoffs, the lack of accessible lifts in hospitals and other medical settings, and Medicaid-related issues. Molly also reported that planning for the 2026 Candidates Forum has begun, including early discussions about developing questions that address key issues impacting people with disabilities. <p>Molly also reported meeting with Mary Ann Langton, who recently helped form a Connecticut chapter of ADAPT after the organization had been inactive in the state for many years. Discussions included potential collaboration between CT SILC and CT ADAPT and coordination around a joint press conference highlighting disability issues. Discussed the need for greater unity within the disability advocacy community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Decision Making (SDM): Molly provided an update on SDM legislative efforts. She reported that proposed legislation has been revised to focus on ensuring that SDM agreements are formally recognized by institutions such as banks, healthcare providers, and other service systems. The intent of the legislation is to ensure that individuals who have an SDM agreement can present it with their supporter and have that agreement recognized without being denied services or required to pursue guardianship. <p>An advocacy webinar is scheduled for January 29 from 6:00 to 7:30 PM to help build a network of SDM ambassadors and advocates. The goal is to encourage</p>



	<p>individuals with disabilities, families, and supporters to share personal experiences and advocate for the legislation. Participants will be provided with talking points, introductory materials, and an “elevator speech” to support legislative outreach and public education efforts. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that people with disabilities retain the same civil rights as others and that guardianship should not be the default option when individuals are capable of making decisions with appropriate supports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southbury Coalition: Molly reported that the Southbury Coalition continues to meet and coordinate efforts related to the future of the Southbury Training School. Coalition members remain focused on strategies to support the transition away from large institutional settings and toward community-based living options for individuals with disabilities. Discussions continue around advocacy efforts and policy considerations related to the closure of Southbury Training School and the importance of ensuring individuals currently living there have appropriate supports and opportunities to transition into community settings. • Federal Funding Update: Molly provided a brief update regarding ongoing uncertainty related to federal funding. The situation continues to be monitored closely due to the potential impact on Independent Living programs and future funding allocations. <p>Board members engaged in discussion following the Executive Director’s report regarding current initiatives, legislative priorities, and potential impacts of federal funding uncertainty.</p>
<p>Committee Reports:</p>	<p>DATA TECH COMMITTEE: Michele DuBois</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Data Tech Committee is working to develop a training focused on case notes and goal documentation to better align practices across the CILs. • The goal of the training is to help standardize how case notes and goals are written, as different centers are currently approaching documentation somewhat differently. • The committee has connected with a trainer from the School of Social Work to assist with the training. • Eileen and Melissa Thompson-Dooley will be involved in the effort, along with Molly and other data staff who may wish to participate. • The training is intended to ensure that Independent Living philosophy and terminology are consistently reflected in documentation practices moving forward for better data collection output and needs assessments. <p>EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: Kim Smith</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Preparedness Committee is currently working on several training initiatives. • One upcoming training will focus on the “envelope” programs used in emergency situations, including the yellow, blue, and green envelopes, and will provide broader information about their use. • The committee also discussed scheduling a shelter training related to sheltering in place and emergency response planning. • That training is now expected to take place later in the spring to allow additional time to prepare materials and develop a PowerPoint presentation.



	<p>SPIL COMMITTEE: Chris Blake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is currently focused on the needs assessment that will inform development of the next State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). • It was noted that priority areas and goals for the SPIL cannot be finalized until the needs assessment is completed. • The committee reviewed data collected during the previous needs assessment and determined that additional information will be needed. • As part of this process, the committee is exploring conducting surveys and focus groups to gather more comprehensive feedback from the disability community to inform future planning. <p>BOARD RECRUITMENT: Rich Luby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Recruitment Committee is being relaunched and taking a step back to reconsider its approach to board recruitment. • The committee previously developed a recruitment strategy and is now reviewing it to determine how it can be simplified and strengthened. • Discussions include identifying different communities within the disability community and working to ensure broader representation on the Council. • The committee currently has approximately ten individuals involved and will continue working to refine recruitment strategies moving forward. <p>A brief discussion followed regarding committee activities and next steps.</p>
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>What is your role as a CT SILC Board Member? A discussion was held regarding the role of CT SILC Board members and the importance of board participation in advancing the Council’s mission. Board members reflected on their responsibilities to support the principles of independent living, participate in advocacy efforts, and share information within their communities about the work of CT SILC and the broader Independent Living network.</p> <p>What are your greatest concerns about issues affecting people with disabilities? Board members discussed several concerns affecting individuals with disabilities, including transportation barriers and housing instability, including homelessness. Members noted that these issues can significantly impact an individual’s ability to live independently and fully participate in their communities.</p> <p>How should CT SILC address these concerns? Board members discussed ways CT SILC can continue addressing these concerns through advocacy, collaboration with partner organizations, and engagement with policymakers and community stakeholders. Members emphasized the importance of strengthening partnerships and continuing to elevate the voices and experiences of individuals with disabilities in policy discussions.</p>
<p>Announcements</p>	<p>Gretchen Knauff reminded members about the upcoming SDM ambassador training scheduled for January 29 from 6-7:30 PM. Board members were encouraged to share the flyer and invite individuals who may be interested in supporting advocacy efforts and helping advance SDM legislation.</p>
<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Motion to adjourn by Rich Luby; second by Kim Smith. Adopted unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:58 PM</p>