



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

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

3:00 PM

Board Members Present: Gretchen Knauff, Chris Blake, Farrah Garland, Michelle Johnson, Corey Lee, Mark Linabury, Rich Luby, Jaclyn Pinney, Darrell Ruopp, Melissa Thompson-Dooley, Emily Zambrello

Board Members Absent: Melissa Cullen-Carter, George Michna*, Kim Smith

Candidates in Waiting: Marc Anthony Gallucci, Joe Shortt

***Denotes non-voting member.**

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

Guests: Eileen Healy, Executive Director - Independence Northwest (IN); Sharon Heddle, Executive Director - Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut (DNEC); Michael Solakian, Solakian and Company CPA

ACTION	AGENDA ITEM
Call to Order	The meeting was called to Order at 3:05 pm - Quorum established.
Welcome and Introductions	Gretchen Knauff called the meeting to order and welcomed board members and guests to the meeting, noting the importance of the audit presentation and ongoing CT SILC Council work.
Good News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich Luby shared progress with his new business, My Interview Coach, including a pending proposal with a large nonprofit and securing a contract to teach career readiness skills at Bristol Technical Education Center. • Mark Linabury shared that his son accepted a new position in business development for a sports management agency. • Corey Lee shared that his son was accepted into an engineering and technology high school program and plans to pursue architecture. • Molly Cole shared positive news regarding receipt of documents through a FOIA request related to the Southbury Training School workgroup. • Michelle Johnson shared her mom was doing well after suffering a medical emergency and being able to get to the hospital in time.
Public Comment	There was no public comment.
Audit presentation and discussion: Michael Solakian	<p>Michael Solakian of Solakian & Company presented the audit for FY 2025 (October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025).</p> <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audit received a clean opinion, with no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses identified. • Financial records were complete and accurate, with no audit adjustments required. • CT SILC experienced a net decrease in net assets of approximately \$45,000,



	<p>primarily related to the timing of revenues and expenses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CT SILC maintains approximately 90 days of operating expenses in unrestricted liquid assets, reflecting a stable financial position. • Required disclosures, including Form 990, were reviewed with no concerns noted. <p>Discussion: Recent changes to Connecticut audit thresholds were reviewed. Although CT SILC currently falls below the revised statutory thresholds for required audits, the Board noted that existing state contracts continue to require submission of an annual audit. Members discussed the option of revisiting audit requirements in future contract negotiations, balancing fiduciary responsibility and cost considerations. In accordance with audit best practices, the Board held a brief executive session with the auditor without staff present.</p> <p>ACTION: A motion to accept the audit for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, was made by Jaclyn Pinney and seconded by Emily Zambrello.</p> <p>ACTION: An amended motion was made by Jaclyn Pinney and seconded by Melissa Thompson-Dooley to defer the vote and conduct the audit acceptance vote by email following the meeting, in accordance with CT SILC Bylaws.</p> <p>ACTION: Following the March 18, 2026, meeting, the Board completed an electronic vote by email. The amended motion to accept the audit was approved, and the audit was formally accepted by the Board.</p>
<p>Minutes from January 21, 2025</p>	<p>Motion to accept the minutes by Melissa Thompson-Dooley. Mark Linabury seconded.</p> <p>ACTION: The minutes were approved. Corey Lee, Emily Zambrello, Marc Anthony Gallucci, Joe Shortt abstained.</p>
<p>Treasurer’s Report</p>	<p>Mark Linabury presented the Financial Report Summary for the period ending February 28, 2026.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CT SILC reported a net income of approximately \$46,000 year-to-date. This balance includes approximately \$34,000 related to general CT SILC operations and \$12,000 related to SPIL Objectives 1 and 2. • Ongoing uncertainty continues related to Part B funding, resulting in minimal activity in that area. • The bank account has been reconciled through February 28, 2026, without issues. • CT SILC's financial position at the end of February 2026 remains stable. • CT SILC maintains a stable fund balance of approximately \$418,000. • Mark emphasized that, despite ongoing funding uncertainties at the federal and state levels, CT SILC’s overall financial position remains sound, and the organization is well positioned to meet current obligations while monitoring future expenditures carefully. <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 on recent funding receipts and outstanding financial matters. CT SILC received \$8,500 from REV UP to support voter education, voter



registration, and Get Out The Vote activities. For the Candidate's Forum, the CT SILC also received \$10,000 from the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council), with the expectation of an additional \$10,000 payment later in the year, consistent with the Council's funding cycle. CT SILC also received \$1,000 from Aging CT and has an outstanding \$1,000 invoice submitted to the Connecticut Association of Centers for Independent Living (CACIL).

In addition, CT SILC received \$10,000 through a contract with the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) to support Supported Decision Making (SDM) activities, also including sign language interpretation, Spanish translation of materials, and related training expenses. The UCEDD is expected to provide an additional \$10,000 later in the summer, primarily to support the Candidates Forum.

Molly reported continued challenges related to delayed state administrative processes. At the time of the meeting, there was no active Q90 contract between OILP and Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS), preventing review and processing of Program Performance Reports. An invoice to ADS covering the period January through March remains outstanding, and no Notice of Award has been issued. While CT SILC maintains a healthy cash balance, staff continue to monitor outstanding payments closely.

- **Projects and Initiatives:** Molly reported that the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance (CCDLA) is now meeting weekly to coordinate cross-disability advocacy efforts. CCDLA continues to focus intensively on multiple disability-related legislative priorities. CT SILC co-sponsored a disability-focused press conference with CT ADAPT on March 5. Key advocacy priorities include Community First Choice and other policies affecting long-term services and supports.

Alliance partners also coordinated the submission of a joint letter to the Governor regarding disability priorities. At the time of the meeting, no response had been received.

- **Supported Decision Making (SDM):** Molly provided an update on progress related to Supported Decision Making (SDM) legislation, which remains in committee. Public testimony has been completed, and advocacy efforts are now focused on securing additional legislative co-sponsors. Board members were reminded that Supported Decision Making is a SPIL priority, and participation in advocacy efforts, including submission of written testimony, is strongly encouraged.

Molly also reported on testimony addressing the use of functional assessment versus IQ-based eligibility criteria at the Department of Developmental Services. Additional bills related to disability rights, including codifying elements of the ADA, continue to be monitored.

- **Southbury Coalition:** Molly reported that CT SILC received documents through a Freedom of Information Act request related to the Southbury Training School workgroup, including meeting notes and a final report regarding potential future use of the property. The workgroup's process had not been publicly accessible,



	<p>and these materials provide long-requested transparency. CT SILC plans to share the documents with Board members and anticipates reconvening the Southbury Coalition to review the findings and determine next steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging and Disability: Molly reported continued outreach and coordination with disability and aging partners, including participation in advocacy efforts, public events, and coalition-based initiatives. These partnerships remain critical to advancing shared policy and community goals. • Federal Funding Update: Molly concluded her report by addressing ongoing uncertainty related to federal funding. Current funding is secure through September 30, 2026; however, no final federal budget agreements or Notices of Award have been issued for subsequent periods. The possibility of continuing resolutions or other funding disruptions remains a concern. CT SILC will continue to monitor developments closely and adjust planning, as necessary. <p>Board members engaged in discussion following the Executive Director’s report, including questions and comments related to funding status, legislative priorities, and ongoing advocacy initiatives.</p>
<p>Committee Reports:</p>	<p>DATA TECH COMMITTEE: Eileen Healy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee is focused on improving consistency and quality of consumer case notes across Centers for Independent Living. • Eileen, along with Melissa Thompson-Dooley, Molly Cole, and Michele DuBois, met with the proposed trainer, Dr. Jen. • The committee reported a positive impression, noting that the trainer demonstrated a strong understanding of Independent Living philosophy and practical case note documentation. • The proposed training is intended to help establish a more cohesive and consistent approach to writing case notes and documenting consumer goals. • The committee anticipates that this training will support improved reporting, data quality, and alignment across Centers. • Planning is underway to schedule the training and extend participation opportunities to Center staff. <p>EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: Molly Cole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning is underway for an upcoming sheltering-in-place training, with dates being coordinated. • The committee is also planning a training on emergency envelope programs, including the yellow, blue, and green envelopes. • The emergency envelope training is planned to be offered as a lunch-and-learn and shared with Center staff. <p>SPIL COMMITTEE: Chris Blake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee is working on two surveys, including a consumer satisfaction survey and a survey to inform development of the next State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). • Discussion focused on how best to approach survey design and gather meaningful feedback related to Independent Living services. • The survey results will be used to guide future planning and SPIL priorities.



	<p>BOARD RECRUITMENT: Rich Luby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee has identified approximately twenty-five community and disability-related organizations as potential recruitment partners. • Outreach has included distribution of introductions and board application information, with twenty-two contacts successfully sent and a small number returned due to incorrect contact information. • Additional outreach is planned prior to the next Board meeting, along with follow-up communications to existing contacts. • The committee’s goal is to broaden representation and engagement within the disability community. <p>Board members shared brief comments and observations related to the committee updates.</p>
<p>REV UP: CT SILC’s role in Get Out The Vote initiatives in 2026</p>	<p>Gretchen Knauff provided an overview of CT SILC’s anticipated role in REV UP and Get Out the Vote (GOTV) initiatives for 2026. CT SILC plans to support voter registration, voter education, and outreach activities, with a particular emphasis on engaging people with disabilities. Potential initiatives discussed include voter ID education and assistance to help individuals understand documentation requirements and access needed identification. Gretchen shared information about VoteRiders, an organization that offers free voter ID education and training and discussed the possibility of hosting a webinar in collaboration with them. Opportunities were also discussed to conduct polling place accessibility surveys, with potential involvement from Centers for Independent Living. Board members were encouraged to participate in REV UP efforts and assist in identifying opportunities for collaboration and community engagement to support voter participation.</p>
<p>Discussion: Annual Meeting?, Guest Speakers and topics, Virtual/In Person</p>	<p>Annual Meeting: The Board discussed plans for the September annual meeting and the desire to hold the meeting in person. Alternative venues were considered to ensure accessibility, adequate space, and cost-effectiveness.</p> <p>Guest Speakers and Topics: Ideas were shared for reformatting the meeting to include impact stories rather than full program reports, potentially highlighting outcomes for individuals served.</p> <p>Virtual / In-Person: The Board agreed that the annual meeting should remain in person to support engagement and participation, even if other meetings remain virtual.</p> <p>More discussion will be held at the next board meeting.</p>
<p>Elections in September</p>	<p>Gretchen Knauff noted that elections will be held at the September annual meeting. The President position will be up for election, as Gretchen completes her second term. Other officer positions are not up for election this year.</p>
<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Motion to adjourn by Melissa Thompson-Dooley; second by Mark Linabury and Emily Zambrello. Adopted unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:02 PM</p>