



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

Wednesday, June 17, 2026
3:00 PM

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

Board Members Absent: Michelle Johnson, George Michna*

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)

ACTION	AGENDA ITEM
Call to Order	The meeting was called to Order at 3:04 pm - Quorum established.
Welcome and Introductions	Gretchen Knauff welcomed board members, staff, and guests to the meeting and expressed hope that everyone was enjoying the beginning of summer. She noted that the meeting agenda included several important CT SILC business items and discussion topics.
Good News	• Melissa Thompson-Dooley shared that she and her husband celebrated their sixth wedding anniversary with a trip to Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao. • Corey Lee shared that his child was graduating from eighth grade and preparing to begin high school. • Michele DuBois shared that her son would graduate from high school the following week. • Melissa Thompson-Dooley shared that her oldest grandchild also graduated from eighth grade and would be entering high school. • Marc Anthony Gallucci expressed his appreciation for the start of summer following the end of the school year. • Gretchen Knauff announced the birth of her new grandson, Malcolm. • Mark Linabury shared that his family recently welcomed a new Sheepadoodle puppy. • Farrah Garland shared that she had been appointed to her town's K-12 School Building Committee, where she is helping incorporate accessibility considerations into the planning and design of new school facilities. • Emily Zambrello shared that she is involved in similar school construction projects and serves as chair of the Wethersfield School Building Committee, which is overseeing the rebuilding of five elementary schools.



	Members discussed the importance of incorporating accessibility into school design and creating welcoming, inclusive environments for students with disabilities.
Public Comment	There was no public comment.
Approval of Minutes from April 15, 2026	Motion to approve the April 15, 2026, minutes by Farrah Garland. Corey Lee seconded the motion. During discussion, Gretchen Knauff noted a correction to the Supported Decision Making section, clarifying that the Connecticut Bar Association should not have been included among the organizations opposing the legislation. Members agreed to revise the minutes to remove the Connecticut Bar Association and accurately reflect the organizations that had expressed concerns regarding the legislation. MOTION TO AMEND: Melissa Thompson-Dooley moved to amend the minutes to reflect the agreed upon correction. Rich Luby seconded the motion. ACTION: Motion to approve the minutes as amended was approved. Rich Luby abstained as he was not present at the April 15, 2026, meeting.
Treasurer's Report	Mark Linabury presented the Financial Report Summary for the period ending May 31, 2026. - CT SILC reported a net income of approximately \$67,000 eight months into the federal fiscal year. - Due to continuing uncertainty surrounding Part B funding for SILCs and CILs, financial activity remains limited, with the majority of expenditures focused on core operations and SPIL activities. - The bank account has been reconciled through May 31, 2026. - CT SILC's financial position remains strong, with a fund balance of approximately \$438,000. - The organization continues to monitor expenditures carefully while awaiting additional guidance regarding federal funding for the upcoming fiscal year. No formal vote required for the Treasurer's Report.
Executive Director's Report	Molly Cole gave the Executive Director's report. Operations: CT SILC continues to pursue additional funding opportunities while remaining mindful of ongoing federal funding uncertainty. Molly noted that CT SILC is serving as the fiscal agent for CT ADAPT until the organization completes its nonprofit application, with CT SILC receiving an administrative fee for managing the grant. Molly also reported that CT SILC anticipates receiving additional revenue from technical assistance activities, Supported Decision Making (SDM) and ASL reimbursement through UConn, and additional funding from UConn and the DD Council to support the 2026 Candidates Forum. Although these are relatively small funding sources, she emphasized that each contribution is important as CT SILC continues to carefully manage resources while awaiting additional guidance regarding federal funding for the upcoming fiscal year. Molly reported that CT SILC recently resubmitted its amended Program Performance Report (PPR). She shared that several SILCs experienced similar

requests for revisions and expressed frustration with the review process and the timing of requested changes. Members discussed delays in the federal review process, as well as the continuing uncertainty surrounding future funding and grant administration.

- **Projects and Initiatives:** The Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance (CCDLA) concluded the legislative session with limited success. Updates were provided on several priority initiatives, including Supported Decision Making (SDM), revisions to DDS eligibility criteria, and ongoing Community First Choice advocacy. CT SILC and its partners will continue their work on these initiatives beyond the legislative session.
- **Supported Decision Making (SDM):** SDM legislation has been referred to a legislative workgroup for further review prior to the next legislative session. Gretchen Knauff noted that, although the legislation did not advance as hoped, key definitions related to SDM were successfully established in statute, including definitions related to agreements, supporters, and decision makers, providing an important foundation for future legislative efforts. The SDM Coalition will continue working with stakeholders, including the Connecticut Hospital Association and others, to build greater understanding of and support for future legislation.

CT SILC also continues to work with Jonathan Martinis on the development of a SDM toolkit. Molly reported that the toolkit is expected to be released this fall through a rollout event designed to introduce the materials and provide practical guidance on implementing Supported Decision Making.

- **Southbury Coalition:** The Southbury Coalition is placing greater emphasis on increasing opportunities to transition residents from Southbury Training School into community settings while continuing its long-term advocacy efforts. The Coalition plans to highlight successful community transitions by sharing stories of individuals who have moved from Southbury into the community to demonstrate successful outcomes and the benefits of community living.

The shift was prompted by a significant increase in the number of residents classified as "unable to move" from Southbury Training School. Molly expressed concern that the number of individuals classified in this category had increased substantially and emphasized the Coalition's commitment to expanding opportunities for community transitions whenever appropriate.

- **Candidates Forum:** Planning for the 2026 Candidates Forum continues. CCDLA has begun developing questions for both state and federal candidates. Molly noted that the Wheelchair Repair Coalition submitted a proposed set of questions and encouraged additional organizations to provide input to help ensure the forum addresses issues important to people with disabilities. As questions are finalized, background research will also be completed to support preparation for the forum. A sponsorship packet has been developed and is being distributed to prospective sponsors. While the packet has generated some interest, it has not yet resulted in additional funding. Board members were encouraged to share the packet with organizations and businesses that may be interested in supporting the event.

- **Accessibility at the State Capitol and Legislative Office Building:** CT SILC sent a letter to the members of the Joint Committee on Legislative Management requesting a meeting to discuss accessibility concerns at the Legislative Office Building and the State Capitol. She reported that Senator Cathy Osten responded to the request and met with CT SILC representatives to discuss accessibility issues. As a result of the meeting, CT SILC plans to request a meeting with the full committee following the election and is exploring the possibility of an informational hearing to highlight accessibility barriers and needed improvements.

The July 27 ADA Celebration at the Legislative Office Building will provide an opportunity to highlight ongoing accessibility barriers at the Legislative Office Building and State Capitol. She noted that the event will include examples of existing accessibility challenges as part of CT SILC's continuing advocacy efforts.
- **TRAINING:** CT SILC will host a sheltering-in-place webinar on July 9, 2026, in partnership with the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies (PIDS) as part of the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) emergency preparedness goals. Board members were encouraged to register for and participate in the webinar.

CT SILC will also host a statewide documentation and case notes training for Center of Independent Living (CIL) staff on September 10, 2026. Molly reported that CT SILC is working with Dr. Jen Berton to tailor the training to Independent Living services, documentation practices, and the CILs First database. She noted that the training is mandatory for CIL staff and that interested Board members may attend upon request.
- **National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Conference:** Molly reported that she and Board member Melissa Thompson-Dooley will represent CT SILC at the NCIL Conference in July. She noted that, due to limited travel funding, CT SILC was able to fund attendance for one representative and one personal care attendant (PCA). Board members and CIL representatives planning to attend the conference were encouraged to notify Molly so she could coordinate Connecticut's congressional visits and other conference activities.
- **REV UP:** CT SILC has received voter outreach and registration materials from the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD). Molly noted that CT SILC is developing Connecticut-specific voter education materials and continues working to expand voter registration and civic engagement among people with disabilities. CT SILC is also exploring opportunities to provide voting rights training through webinars. Board members were encouraged to share additional ideas through the REV UP Coalition. She emphasized the importance of these efforts during the current election year.
- **Outreach:** CT SILC continues to seek opportunities to expand community outreach through colleges, high schools, and community events and are looking for additional opportunities to host informational tables and distribute voter education and CT SILC materials to reach a broader audience of people with disabilities. Board members were encouraged to share potential outreach opportunities and community contacts.



Committee Reports:	DATA TECH COMMITTEE: Eileen Healy • The committee continues working with Dr. Berton to support development of the upcoming statewide documentation and case notes training for the CILs. • Eileen reported that committee discussions identified differences in how Centers use CILs First and other documentation practices across the five CILs. • She emphasized that the goal is not to make every Center identical, but to establish consistent documentation standards that support quality reporting and service delivery. • The committee will continue this work at its July meeting. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: Kim Smith • Kim provided a brief update on the upcoming Sheltering in Place webinar. • She announced that Melissa Thompson-Dooley will assume the role of Committee Chair beginning with the September committee meeting. • The committee discussed planning a fire safety training focused on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities, including voluntary emergency registration programs, accessible fire alarms, and collaboration with the American Red Cross, local fire departments, and the Connecticut Tech Act Project. The training is tentatively planned for September. • Board members discussed voluntary municipal emergency registries for individuals with disabilities and emphasized the importance of consumer education and emergency preparedness planning. SPIL COMMITTEE: Chris Blake • Chris reported that the committee finalized the community needs assessment survey questions and is preparing for statewide distribution. • Molly noted that the surveys will be distributed electronically and at community events, with plans to conduct at least one focus group at each CIL to gather additional input for the development of the next SPIL. • Board members discussed the committee's current focus on the needs assessment process as the first step in developing the next SPIL. BOARD RECRUITMENT: Rich Luby • Rich reported that the committee's outreach efforts have not yet resulted in any Board member applications despite contacting more than 100 individuals and organizations. • He reported that the committee is revising its recruitment strategy by encouraging members to personally contact individuals within their own networks rather than relying solely on centralized email outreach. • The committee also discussed distributing printed Board recruitment materials at CILs, community events, and other outreach opportunities to increase awareness and encourage applications. • Molly provided an update on delays in the gubernatorial appointment process and encouraged Board members awaiting appointments to contact the Governor's Office to help facilitate completion of pending appointments.
Discussion: Annual Meeting, Elections at the annual meeting,	Annual Meeting: The Board discussed plans for the 2026 Annual Meeting, which will be held in September in accordance with the CT SILC Bylaws. The meeting will be held at the Chrysalis Center in Hartford, which was selected for its accessibility and ability



Orientation for CT SILC board members, Topics/speakers for future meetings	to accommodate the meeting's logistical needs. Pam Fields of MidState Arc was identified as the preferred guest speaker to present on assistive technology to support independent living, with Arlene Lugo of the Connecticut Tech Act Project identified as an alternate. Members also discussed providing transportation assistance, as needed, and allowing guests to attend the meeting. Elections at the annual meeting: The Board discussed the officer elections to be held at the 2026 Annual Meeting in accordance with the CT SILC Bylaws. Members reviewed the election process and the need to identify candidates and prepare election materials in advance of the Annual Meeting. Orientation for CT SILC board members: The Board discussed establishing an annual orientation for new Board members while also encouraging current members to attend as a refresher. Molly recommended holding the orientation following the Annual Meeting and noted that it would include an overview of federal and state requirements, the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL), Board responsibilities, and nonprofit governance. Members also discussed recognizing the October Candidates Forum as the Board's October meeting due to the event schedule Topics/speakers for future meetings: The Board discussed incorporating guest speakers into future meetings to provide educational and informational presentations. Members were encouraged to suggest future speakers and topics of interest. Molly noted that required presentations on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and ethics would be scheduled in early 2027.
Adjourn	Motion to adjourn by Melissa Thompson-Doooley; second by Melissa Cullen-Carter. Adopted unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:53 PM