



TONI N. HARP  
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COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES  
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ROBIN TOUSEY-AYERS  
Chairperson

**Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes**

City Hall 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room

**January 13, 2014**

Present: Jenifer Blemings, Matthew Ranelli, Maria Rivera, Robin Tousey-Ayers and Jack Tsai

Staff: Michelle Duprey, Paula Pernal

Absent: Cecile Brodsky

Guest: Patrick DePaolo

Meeting called to order at 5:22 p.m.

**Minutes**

Robin asked the Commission members if they had any changes to the December minutes. No one responded.

Matthew made a motion to accept the December minutes.

Jack seconded the motion.

December minutes are approved unanimously.

**Chairman's Report**

Robin discussed the Governor's appointment of Jonathan Slifka, the newly created cabinet position on behalf of the state's disability community. She stated that the press conference is available "on demand" on the CT-N network website at: <http://www.ctn.state.ct.us/ondemand.asp>. Michelle stated that the disability rights community is upset that they were not informed about this appointment and that there was not a selection process for this position. Robin asked the Commission members if the Commission

should invite Jonathan Slika to a future meeting. Michelle agrees with Robin that the Commission should invite Mr. Slika to an upcoming meeting. Robin asks Michelle for the official department that Mr. Slika is assigned. Michelle responds that Jonathan Slika is assigned to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS). Robin stated that she will draft a letter to Jonathan Slika inviting him to a meeting and send a carbon copy of the letter to Mayor Toni N. Harp.

Matthew mentioned that the Commission should send the Mayor of New Haven, Toni N. Harp, a follow-up letter to the previous questionnaire or preferably reach out informally first to see if we could meet with the Mayor about disability issues. Robin agreed with Matthew and would pursue a meeting with the Mayor.

### **Department Report**

Michelle stated that her budget was submitted with a zero increase, except for items controlled by collective bargaining unit agreements.

Michelle stated that she made recommendations and priorities to Yale New Haven Hospital in an effort to encourage the hospital to appoint an ADA Coordinator to handle accessibility issues before complaints are filed.

Michelle mentioned that she was asked to write an article for the CT Law Tribune, "What's Next in 2014". She stated that she had a conversation with the CT Law Tribune regarding web accessibility. She will meet with the CT Law Tribune early this year to discuss this topic in greater detail. Michelle noted the web site that writes regulations on web accessibility is: [www.w3.org](http://www.w3.org) and the web checker that she uses is: [www.webeim.org](http://www.webeim.org).

### **Old Business**

Robin asks the Commission members to review Article IV, Section 1 Commissioners in the By-Laws concerning defining Active Member and Inactive Member. Robin stated that she made a revision to the Inactive Member section. Matthew made two (2) suggestions for additional revisions to the Inactive Member section:

The new Inactive Member section shall read as follows: “Inactive Member: An inactive Commissioner is an active Commissioner who requests a defined temporary leave of absence from the Commission no longer than six (6) months and receives approval for said defined leave by the Chair. The inactive Commissioner can request a defined extension of their temporary leave of absence from the Chair of the Commission. Inactive members do not count toward the number of members required to achieve a quorum.”

After a motion and second, Robin took a Roll-Call to accept the revisions to the By-Laws:

Robin Tousey-Ayers-Yes

Maria Rivera-Yes

Matthew Ranelli-Yes

Jenifer Blemings-Yes

Jack Tsai-Yes

The Revisions to the By-Laws approved are approved unanimously.

Robin mentioned the proposed meeting with the Board of Alders. She asked the Commission members for suggested dates for this meeting. The Commission members agreed on March 17<sup>th</sup> for the meeting with the Board of Alders. Matthew asked Robin about the compilation of discussion topics. Robin stated that she will email David Hicks and speak to Michelle concerning ideas. She will send a list to all members at the February meeting. Michelle suggested that all of the Alderpersons receive a letter of invite from the Commission.

Robin stated that Patrick DePaolo is present and interested in becoming a Commission member. She mentioned that Jack knows of an individual that is interested in becoming a Commission member. Michelle stated that the appointment of Tricia Palluzzi is before the Board of Alders.

### **New Business**

Jenifer, as the official contact from the Commission to the International Festival of Arts & Ideas (Festival), stated that she connected with Marylou

and will share with her what the Commission has in mind for the Festival. Robin and Michelle suggested using local drama and dance groups, poets, theater from the deaf and vsa arts to name a few. Michelle will forward Jenifer information from a festival in Chicago. Robin stated that the Commission should compile a listing of local groups.

### **Other Business**

None

### **Public Comment/Announcements**

Patrick DePaolo stated that he has experience with Continuum of Care.

Robin made a motion to adjourn meeting.

Matthew seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 6:29 p.m.