



TONI N. HARP  
Mayor

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

**February 10, 2014**

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

Staff: Michelle Duprey

Absent: Cecile Brodsky, Jack Tsai and Paula Pernal

Meeting called to order at 5:45 p.m.

**Minutes**

Robin and Michelle discuss the new policy for making changes to the Minutes: Michelle states that all changes shall be made within one (1) week of the meeting and the Minutes shall be sent out to all Commission members to ensure a timely receipt.

Robin discusses revisions to the January minutes.

Robin made a motion to accept the January minutes as revised.

Matt seconded the motion.

January minutes as revised are approved unanimously.

**Chairman's Report**

Robin discusses about the VSA in Washington, D.C. Michelle states that there is a VSA in Connecticut. Jenifer states that the COD wants to suggest to Marylou where she might be able to find other VSA programs.

Michelle mentions about the materials that she has forwarded to Jenifer.

She also mentions about the New York film festival in March.

Robin states she has not prepared a follow-up letter to Mayor Toni N. Harp to the previous questionnaire.

Robin states that she did get in touch with the Board of Alders through the Director of Legislative Services, Al Lucas. Robin states that a briefing and reception with the Board of Alders has been scheduled for the next Commission meeting, March 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:15 p.m. Michelle confirms that she has reserved the conference room.

### **Department Report**

Michelle states that she is preparing for the training of all the city departments that deal with the public on how to accommodate people with communications disabilities. Michelle states that this training must be completed by the end of May 2014 as part of the settlement agreement requirement. Michelle states that some departments require specialized training that may require additional time. She says that this will depend on how much time she has available. Also Michelle mentions that the Library requested that she conduct training for small businesses and non-profits on ADA compliance. She selected March 19, 2014 for this training.

Michelle states that the City had another incident where an interpreter was hired, came to City Hall, but was unaware that the event was a public meeting with the news and cameras in attendance and left the meeting. Michelle contacted the interpreter's supervisor last week and left a message. She has not heard back from the supervisor as of today. Michelle surmises that she did not provided enough information concerning the meeting.

Michelle states that the Legislative Session began last week and that it will be a short session.

## **Old Business**

Robin asks for suggestions about the Board of Alders briefing and reception next month. She informs the Commission members that they have thirty (30) minutes to meet, greet and brief the Board of Alders in addition to the reception. The Commission members discuss the possibility of providing food at the reception. Michelle reminds the Commission members that there is no budget for the reception. The Commission members discuss and agree to bring baked goods, drinks and paper supplies.

Robin and Michelle discuss the agenda for the briefing with the Board of Alders. Michelle agrees that she will prepare an overview of the Department. Robin mentions providing the Board of Alders with the By-Laws. Michelle suggests combining the department overview into a one-page summary of the Department and Commission. Matt mentions the Jobs Pipeline speaker that suggested to the Commission that they should create their “asks” when going before the Board of Alders. Matt suggests that the Commission prepare a wish list or handout consisting of about five (5) items to present to the Board of Alders. Matt discusses the following: The Jobs Pipeline and other job-related programs; transportation issues and pedestrian complaints such as plowing; housing; and, unemployment. Matt also suggests informing the Board of Alders of the concerns while mentioning the success stories. Michelle suggests that the Commission should prepare a summary and an agenda. Matt and Jenifer discuss the issues of plowing and snow & ice on sidewalks; especially in the downtown area. Robin states that these subjects will be part of the transportation piece and then the Commission shall include the unemployment issue. Robin asks the Commission members to prepare a list for their constituency. Matt and Michelle state that the Board of Alders already has a list for their constituency. Matt asks Michelle about the issue of handicapped parking. Michelle mentions that it is a manpower issue. Michelle suggests that Maria can make the pitch for new Commission members. Matt suggests that the Commission informs the Board of Alders that the Commission has previously met with other city departments in an effort to make them more inclusive. Matt suggests that the Commission

discuss three (3) items that the Commission has accomplished; three (3) items that the Commission will accomplish in the future; and two (2) issues to present to the Board of Alders. Michelle states that she will discuss the introduction. Robin states that she will discuss the Mission of the Commission; the three (3) items that the Commission has accomplished (housing, parking and outreach (e.g., Veteran's presentation at Wilbur Cross) ; and, the three (3) items that the Commission will accomplish in the future (ADA Anniversary, Arts & Ideas Festival and youth awareness project, jobs and transportation). Matt states that he will discuss transportation and Jennifer will discuss employment. Matt mentions that Maria may say a few words about new membership and Jack may want to speak regarding Veteran's issues.

### **New Business**

Matt states that the deaf and hard-of-hearing community is upset that Bureau of Rehabilitation Services ("BRS") is now overseeing the interpreting services that were once a part of the State Commission on the Deaf & Hearing Impaired.

### **Other Business**

Robin asks Michelle about the new resignations and new members. Michelle provided Patti Lawlor with the required information and documentation. Michelle asks the Commission members if she should ask previous members if they wish to come back to the Commission.

Michelle mentions that the Connecticut Association of Municipal Attorneys ("CAMA") recently discussed about electronic attendance at public meetings. Michelle states that this is acceptable as long as there is a designated place where the public may physically go to the meeting.

### **Public Comment/Announcements**

None

Robin made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Matt seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 7:00 p.m.