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COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Minutes
City Hall 4th Floor Conference Room
May 14, 2012

- Present: Cecile Brodsky, David Hicks, Matthew Ranelli, Robin Tousey-Ayers, Jack Tsai,
Excused Absence: Dana Canevari
Staff: Michelle Duprey, Paula Pernal
Guest: Jenifer Blemings

David Hicks joined the meeting by telephone. Matthew Ranelli chaired the meeting.

Meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m.

Minutes

Cecile made a motion to accept the February, March & April minutes.

Jack seconded the motion.

February minutes approved unanimously as edited.

Jenifer Blemings abstained from voting as she is not a commission member.

Chairman's Report

David reported that it was unfortunate that the Commission was unable to be more involved during this last session of the legislature.

Michelle stated that just prior to the meeting there was a discussion concerning the Personal Care Assistant. David reviewed the Public Acts and located Bill #12-33 Family & Child Care Providers. David stated that this Bill was agreed on to create a process for family and child care providers and Personal Care Assistants to collectively bargain with the State. Matthew pointed out last minutes changes to the Public Act that removed the task force idea and authorized certain professionals to negotiate through another entity such as a union, but it prevents them from requiring union dues. David stated that the Personal Care Assistant's are unionized even though some individuals were not ready to join the union. Matthew reads the summary of the Amendment. Michelle asked if it mentions the makeup of the council. Matthew said that it does not mention the makeup of the council in the summary. Michelle mentioned that there was a problem that there was no requirement that a member of the council must have a disability. David stated that the Bill highlights that the council be comprised of representatives for people with disabilities. There is no language in the Bill stating that the council members must be individuals with disabilities.

Michelle suggests asking Dawn Lambert at the Governor's office as a guest speaker. Matthew agreed. Robin asked whether the Commission should open the discussion to an open-floor or open-panel format. Robin asked if the State had any data relating to Personal Care Assistant's when the Bill was being draft. Michelle stated that the State had first-hand knowledge because there are more than 5000 Personal Care Assistant's statewide. The Bill only applies to those individuals paid by the State.

Department Report

Michelle stated that there is an effort of a film festival with individuals with disabilities that was already completed. She believes that already forwarded an email relating to this matter to the commissioners. Michelle has received numerous emails from the City-Wide Youth Coalition, Inc. concerning an event on Friday, May 18, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. She will forward the emails to the commissioners.

Robin discussed that the New Haven Ballet is beginning to conduct Shared-Ability where they work with youth with disabilities to teach them how to dance and it requires members of the New Haven ballet to partner with the youth.

Matthew asked Michelle about the status of her department budget. Michelle stated that she presented and testifies in April before the New Haven Board of Alderman but that there has not been a decision as of this date. She does not expect any changes to her budget. Robin asked Michelle if the Commission could assist in this process. Michelle responded not at this time.

Michelle stated that there are numerous accessible taxi cabs. She also informed the Commission that Kristin Barber is no longer working at Metro Taxi. Robin mentioned that the only drawback that she has heard from other individuals with disabilities pertained to transporting one person who uses a wheelchair per trip. Michelle was not aware of this issue or problem and will look into this and get back to the Commission.

Old Business

Michelle mentioned that the Commission last discussed employment. Michelle stated that she will contact the Human Resources Department of Yale New Haven Hospital upon her return next week. Robin mentioned that there is an Internship Program at the Hospital of St. Raphael where several individuals with disabilities participate in the internship program and many eventually are hired. Michelle noted that that Commission should meet with both Yale & St. Raphael in order preserve this Program and discuss others. Robin stated that she will contact both institutions.

New Business

Robin asked if the Commission will participate in the Arts & Ideas festival this year. Michelle responded that Arts & Ideas has not contacted her, but that the Commission may certainly contact the Arts & Ideas festival program coordinators.

Matthew stated that he had first meeting with State Commission on Deaf & Hearing Impaired & BRS. Matthew stated that the intent is to continue with providing the interpretator services. There are 1 or 2 vacant commission positions. Matthew mentioned that the commission itself is influx. He stated that they are meeting quarterly and he will update this Commission.

Michelle stated that Amy Meek, Coordinator of the Prison Re-Entry Program for the City is resigning. Once the position is filled, the Commission should meet with the new Coordinator.

Robin mentioned that there is a statewide coalition of different groups that is in its early stages of suicide prevention. The Adolescent Health Coordinator, a social worker at the State of Connecticut who sits on

this Council, met with the coalition last week to begin its strategic planning. Robin asked the Coordinator to include consideration for suicide among adolescents with disabilities.

Other Business

Matthew mentioned placing useful links to the COD website with dates.

Public Comment/Announcements

None

Robin Tousey-Ayers made motion to adjourn meeting.

Cecile seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn approved unanimously at 6:30 p.m.