



**JOHN DeSTEFANO, JR.**  
*Mayor*

**COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**  
CITY OF NEW HAVEN  
165 CHURCH STREET  
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06510  
(203) 946-7833 - VOICE (203) 946-8582 - TTY/TDD  
(203) 946-8587 - FAX



**DAVID HICKS**  
*Chairperson*

**Commission on Disabilities Minutes**  
City Hall 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
**November 19, 2012**

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

Meeting was called to order at 5:25 p.m.  
Robin Tousey-Ayers was present via telephone for half of the meeting.

**Minutes**

David asked the commission members to review the October minutes.  
David asked the commission members if they wish to make any amendments to the October minutes.  
Jack suggested a change to page two of the October minutes, specifically where it referenced PTSD.  
David made a motion to accept the October minutes as amended.  
Cecile seconded the motion.  
Robin abstained from voting.  
October minutes approved as amended by majority vote.

**Chairman's Report**

David explains that the New Haven Works, Jobs Pipeline Working Group is a City of New Haven initiative that involves the entire community. It began with the City and a small committee from the Chamber of Commerce and ultimately has grown much bigger. David distributes a draft letter from the New Haven Commission on Disabilities concerning the New Haven Works, Jobs Pipeline Working Group. David discusses that the letter may be directed to any one of the individuals listed at the top of the letter: Mr. Bruce Alexander is the Vice President of Yale University. Mr. Hugh I. Manke, Chairman, and Mr. Anthony Rescigno, President, are the Senior Officers of the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Joe Carbone is from a non-profit called the Workplace that finds employment for individuals who have been out of employment for a relatively long period of time. David states that Mr. Carbone used to be the top aide to Mayor Biagio DiLieto. David mentions that Mr. Carbone was recently on 60 Minutes because of his work with the Workplace. David states that he emailed the Workplace and has scheduled a telephone meeting with Mr. Carbone for next week. David states that a recent story in the New Haven Independent covered a meeting between Mr. Carbone and the Jobs Pipeline Working Group. David mentions that the Workplace conducts training and psychological programs for individuals.

David asked the other commission members for suggestions concerning the letter. Michelle suggested that David include in the letter that the Department of Disabilities partnered with the Chamber of

Commerce on the Connect-Ability grant. David agreed and commented that he will discuss this further with Michelle. David & Michelle have a discussion about training programs and BRS.

David mentions that the New Haven Independent has been reporting the progress of the Jobs Pipeline Project. David states that there are about six (6) articles that he can forward to the commission members.

David made a motion to move to continue working on the letter and finalize it with Michelle and Paula will distribute it.

Jack second the motion.

All the commission members approved working and finishing the letter.

Robin mentions that she spoke to Sharon Denson from Travelers who suggested researching corporate websites for job information. David mentioned that the Jobs Pipeline is largely concerned with young individuals and this could have been the reason the Board of Alderman were unwilling to consider adding a representative who has a disability to the Jobs Pipeline Working Group's board. Michelle states that Sharon Denson is on the CT Business Leadership Network (CBLN). Michelle mentioned that the City of New Haven also partnered with CBLN as part of the connectability grant.

### **Department Report**

Michelle states that she was appointed to the Governor's Developmental Disability Council (DDC) of Connecticut and is on the Legislative Committee. Michelle mentions that she should have the legislative information for the commission by next month. Michelle states that her first legislation is sexual assault.

Michelle states that there was a Legislative Hearing on Accessibility on State Facilities last week, but she was unable to attend. Michelle mentions that it was not widely attended due to the fact that it was scheduled earlier in the day, and this time can be a problem for people with disabilities who have to arrange for transportation to attend

Michelle states that the budget information for the Department of Disability Services should be available shortly. David asks Michelle about the direction of the budget. Michelle guesses that with the State deficit, the budget will probably remain flat or have reductions.

### **Old Business**

David asks Robin to discuss the successful Panel Event she organized at Wilbur Cross High School. Robin explains the event was part of Disability Awareness Month and the original idea consisted of viewing a movie entitled, "Music Within", but the movie contained a couple of scenes that school officials found unacceptable. Robin states that Jack identified two (2) speakers from the Veterans Affairs (VA) who work on outreach. Robin mentions that Mary Lane from Wilbur Cross introduced approximately 8 students to the panel. These students were mostly upper classmen, with some level of disability, most of them learning disabilities, though one student had a mobility disability. Robin states that it was very well organized with handouts and refreshments. Michelle, who participated in the event, explained to the students the process she went through in making career choices. Michelle has pictures of the event, but was very careful not to include the faces of the students. Robin and Michelle discuss the questions from the students. Robin states that the guest speakers discussed their own disabilities, struggles, experiences in the service, college attendance, and careers. Michelle mentions that Mary Lane communicated to her that many recruiters do not attempt to speak to the students with disabilities; therefore, this event was very positive. Robin states there was also a speaker from the School Health Service to discuss health issues. David asked about the possibilities of conducting this type of panel next year. David asked about conducting this panel at other schools. Michelle mentioned that other schools do not have a "Mary Lane" to assist in the same manner.

Robin distributes materials for viewing during the commission meeting from the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). Unfortunately these materials arrived after the event, but will be useful for similar future events.

Jack asked about mentoring young adults. David asked for details about how a mentoring program would work for the students. Michelle suggested starting very small and that the VA could become a part of the program. Michelle states that the mentoring program could be folded into the students' special education class or community service requirement. Robin, who sees Mary Lane frequently, will take up the idea of a mentoring program with Mary Lane and Jack shall inquire at the VA about mentors.

Robin asked David about thank you notes. David states that he, Robin, Michelle & Jack shall work on the thank you notes.

The commission discussed various movies relating to disabilities. The commissioners agreed that most of the movies discussed are not appropriate for young adults. David asked Michelle if television stations weren't in the habit of making acceptable viewing versions of these movies. Michelle states that a lot of the movie would be lost without certain sections. Michelle states that she recently had seen "The Sessions". Cecile mentioned that "The Last Quartet" is about Parkinson's disease. Robin asked if anyone had seen the recent Turner Classic Movie Channel series dealing with disabilities on Tuesdays where a man, apparently an expert on disabilities, discusses the movie before it is aired. Michelle mentions that there has always been a lot of upheaval that actors without disabilities are playing characters with disabilities.

### **New Business**

Michelle states that if anyone knows of anyone interested in becoming a commissioner, please let her know. Michelle and David will inquire about the status of Jennifer Blemings.

### **Other Business**

Robin states that she has discounted tickets to the Nutcracker this weekend at the Shubert this Sunday if anyone is interested in purchasing tickets.

Michelle states that there were no major issues with Storm Sandy. Michelle states that last year a PCA left an individual with significant care needs at shelter. Michelle states that this did not happen this year. Michelle states that the City has a better strategy this year in that FEMA provides a telephone number to contact a DPH individual at the State of CT for a PCA during a Presidential Declaration for such an event. Michelle mentions that there was not a large volume of telephone calls because of chairs needing to be charged.

Robin mentions that a fellow colleague performed secret shopper with her daughter in the Hartford area with the voting survey and documented the results.

### **Public Comment/Announcements**

None

David made a motion to adjourn meeting.

Cecile seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn approved unanimously at 6:20 p.m.