

**Watertown Commission on Disability
October 21, 2009**

Attendees: George Donahue, Chair; Marilyn Devaney; Kim Charlson; Anne Doughty; Fred Isaacs; Alex Liazos, Chair-for-the-meeting; Carol Menton, Gayle Shattuck

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair George Donahue.

Roll Call

Guests were: Mike Driscoll, Town Manager; Tamarah Green, Cable Access Center; Jonathan O'Dell, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Carol Wilson-Braun, a Watertown Resident; and Kelly Madry and Whitney Patterson, students from Regis College.

Stefanie Farrell, our CART provider, played a dual role, since we drew on her expertise for our Cable Access discussion.

Cable Access Discussion.

We held a brief cable access discussion to update the Town Manager and to resolve a few open issues.

We responded to a question from the audience that closed captioning was feasible whereas having an ASL interpreter inserted into the picture would require more resources than are available.

Tamarah Green, Director of the Cable Access Center, summarized our agreement so far as being that we have decided to go with an on site captioner for the municipal meetings. The Watertown Community Access Center will purchase digital encoders. The Watertown Commission on Disability will set aside money to pay for the captioner. We have asked Stefanie if her firm would be able to do the captioning and what that would involve. She stated that the interpreter would be able to handle no more than a 4-hour meeting and would need a 10 to 15 minute break after an hour and a half, depending on the pace.

Ms. Green will get a firm decision from her board by our next meeting.

There was discussion of other things which could be captioned in the future. For example, the news could have its first showing uncaptioned with subsequent showings captioned and this could be done non-interactively..

Our potential captioning audience is greater than one might think; it also includes those with ADD, elderly with hearing loss, and those learning English.

Chair's report - George Donahue

We received a letter from Steve Rothstein of the Perkins School for the Blind thanking us for funding the newsline service. Kim has the check and the contract from the Watertown Tab. It is now being hooked up. Users will have access to information on the Tab's website as well as what is in the newspaper.

There were 8 postings to WCOD.org. The SPEDPAC calendar was posted to both the town website and to WCOD.org as well.

George made a site visit to the Watertown House of Pizza. [The Isaacs family has made several unofficial site visits; we like the food.]

Commission terms and resignations. George and Carol have both sent letters to re-enlist. George has cleared his agenda and feels that he can serve again as Chair. Bob Hall has resigned from the commission. We should send him a letter thanking him for his service and include his name tag. We need to have interested candidates send letters in.

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to have our Chair and the ADA representative speak to the Town Manager about whether filling positions vacant due to resignations was restricted to the same time cycle as filling normal vacancies..

Alex pointed out that Jonathan Hecht had proposed the ordinance which rotates the appointment dates for town boards and committees. We could ask him to clarify what he intended.

Minutes

Approval of the minutes was tabled.

Treasurer's Report

It was moved., seconded, and passed unanimously to accept the treasurer's report.

Special Ed Report—Fred Isaacs

We discussed disability awareness education. Newton has an Understanding Our Differences curriculum; Beth Mendel is the contact for that. The Labeled Disabled video is a good source, too. [I did searches based on these and passed on the information to the SPEDPAC leadership - FPI.]

Closed Captioning—Carol Menton

We traditionally provide CART interpreters for The League of Women Voters candidate nights. There is one tomorrow evening. The forums last for 2 hours. It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to appropriate up to \$500 to cover the cost of CART interpretation at tomorrow night's League of Women Voters candidate night at the library.

Faire on the Square. We had 3 interpreters. We shared them with the Perkins table. We should partner with Perkins next year. We need a Commission banner for the Faire.

Safety and Access - Kim Charlson

It's been quiet. The signal at Nonantum and Galen Street has been fixed. It took a while to get the parts.

We need to facilitate getting the information on pick-up days from the DPW to the disabled community. Gayle will talk to the deputy DPW head.

Old Business

Gayle is working with the town election commission to recruit poll workers. The

November 3 election is coming up soon. Hours are 6:00 AM to whenever the polls close. Workers must be registered to vote in Watertown. The pay is \$100 per day. Disabled voters can vote at the town clerk's office during the 2 weeks prior to an election.

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn at 8:40 PM

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Fred P. Isaacs.