

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, Dec. 16th, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Chair Kim Charlson.

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair; Steven Corbett, Town Councilor; John Hawes; Fred Isaacs, Vice-Chair; Carol Menton; Megan O'Halloran; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator; and Carol Wilson-Braun. Absent- Jeanne O'Connell.

Audience- Helen Chatel, Exective Director of Watertown Community Access Center, Ellen Bey and Maria Baia from Watertown SPED PAC, and Kathy Button from the World in Watertown.

GUEST SPEAKERS- 1) Helen Chatel reported that all the equipment is installed and phone lines tested. There are new cameras and audio system in the town council chamber. They found that a software update had pushed the closed captioning too far down on the screen, so that is being dealt with. Caption First is the remote vendor. The contract needs to be signed, and Gayle said she would talk to the auditor. There is a question about the cost. Fred asked about how to involve a sponsor. Kim said we need to write up a "road map" for how this whole process was done. Helen offered to talk to Mass Access when this is all done. She said to call or email her with questions.

2) Ellen and Maria for SPED PAC reviewed that their Sept speaker was Michelle Fallon addressing basic rights, Oct was a Q & A with the Spec Ed director and school committee candidates, Nov was about music therapy, and Dec about Special Ed law. The rest of the year includes the topics of Mindfulness in January, IEPs in Feb, Care for the Caregiver in Mar, Awards in April with speaker Dr Bill Henderson, a pioneer in inclusion. The COD is invited, they said. Their meetings are attended by 15-40 people, up to 100 for special events. Their funds are used for speaker fees and a grant pays for Mass PAC membership. Fred said that we usually fund them \$3000/yr for 2 years and it needs to be renewed in the summer. Kim instructed them to submit a funding request in writing.

CHAIR'S REPORT- 1) Kim presented a plaque to outgoing commissioner Steve Corbett expressing appreciation for his 5 years on the commission. 2) Kim recommended funding scholarships for the Mental Health First Aid Program. It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to give \$500 for scholarships for the Mental Health First Aid Program. Fred encourages caregivers to attend the training. 3) It was moved, seconded and VOTED, except for Fred abstaining, to give \$1500 to the Watertown Autism Support Group. Some of it will be used for music therapy. A question was raised if there are restrictions for what they are allowed to spend the money on. 4) It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to cover the expense of CART for the Watertown Unity Breakfast on Jan 18th for \$400. 5) The Commission is invited to the Jan 4th swearing in for elected officials at the Arsenal Mosesian Theatre at 7 p.m. CART and Braille programs are being provided.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to accept the minutes from the November meeting. Copies of the minutes may be requested from the Town Clerk's Office.

TREASURER'S REPORT- It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report for November. Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

- 1) Plans- Steve said that the big issue of mixed use will be coming up. Otherwise John said it is quiet.
- 2) Closed Caption and Special Ed- No reports. See above.
- 3) Safety and Access-Kim said that detectable warnings are showing up on curb cuts.

NEW BUSINESS-

- 1) Carol M said she had visited the Power Café, which hires disabled workers, and observed that it had a "funky vibe"! She said the owner would love to come to talk to us. She was a middle school teacher in special ed. Kim will invite her. Carol also mentioned that Massachusetts was awarded an anti-terrorism grant. BMC started a resiliency center, reaching out to people impacted by the Marathon bombing and shoot-out. One big result was people with hearing loss. Stacy Corin and Shannon Sylvestri are working with that program and would like to come talk to us in Jan. or Mar. about their program and how to reach out to the community. Carol also mentioned an article she read about firefighters suing a siren company for hearing loss. They are at high risk for hearing loss.
- 2) Kim said on Nov 12th she went to the N. Attleboro COD and was also on the local radio there. Thurs the 17th of Dec. she will participate in a conference call with the MA COD and will report back in January.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on January 20th at 7 p.m.

These minutes are recorded and respectfully submitted by Carol Wilson-Braun, Secretary.