

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 19th, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Kim Charlson, Chair.

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair, Town Councilor; John Hawes; Fred Isaacs, Megan O'Halloran Vice-Chair; Carol Menton; Jeanne O'Connell; Mohammad (Mo) Sayed; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator;
Absent. Carol Wilson Braun, Lisa Feltner

Guests- Kathleen Desmarais SPED Director, Will Twombly, Marshall Home Foundation; Caitlin Browne, Assistant Library Director; Helen Chatel, Executive Director, Watertown Community Access Center; Elan Rohde, president of Watertown Autism Family Support Group and prospective commissioner.

1) Kathleen Desmarais SPED Director talked about her background and her educational philosophy of "Think about abilities not disabilities".

Kim talked about 3rd and 4th grades funding of Understanding Our Differences Curriculum the past by the WCOD. Kathleen said she is familiar with that curriculum and hoping to start training in the spring at the Lowell school. Fred said it was difficult to get enough parent volunteers. SPEDPAC did contribute volunteer time. Kim said the WCOD was happy that the previous program was successful and would support future training.

2) Will Twombly gave a brief overview of the Marshall Home Fund. The building has been sold and developed into low income housing units; a 2005 fund for financial assistance to serves to agencies in town, and some individuals in need.

Carol Menton has recently joined their board and would like the WCOD to consider help with supporting CART services. There are two meetings- the Annual meeting on 4/27/2017 and the Grant Awards meeting of 5/17/17. We want to increase inclusiveness of meetings. Carol Menton stated that the Annual Award meeting is like the SPEDPAC awards meeting which the WCOD provides CART. Can the WCOD fund CART for my first Board meeting and going forward I work with the Board on accessibility.

Kim asked if there was a motion to approve CART for the April, May, and June meetings and have Will come back with a plan for funding CART at future Board meetings.

John said that we will need to consider that other organizations may also have needs.

Carol asked that the motion be to provide CART up to \$800 for those three meetings and that she has someone scheduled to CART for the April 27th meeting. The motion was seconded and voted to approve.

3) Caitlin Browne said that the Library installed T-Coil loop in the Watertown Savings Bank room. The Library is requesting a grant from the WCOD of \$2500 to defray some of the cost. Carol Mention said that she thought this will be the first community room with a T-coil loop and asked how the library came up with this idea.

Caitlin said that The Movies Mondays patrons have requested the T-coil and it made sense. Kim said that the Library deserves to be recognized for leadership in accessibility and the request will be on the agenda for the May meeting for discussion and vote.

4) Helen Chatel is looking for volunteers to review DVD of the last Town Council meeting for closed captioning accuracy. She said that she is looking into a new vendor that automatically captions by voice recognition and we should get 90% accuracy on captioning. There are other caption services. Before invest in a new vender and before you contract another year she would like feedback on the current state of closed captioning.

Helen said that she would like to test a new system but it will cost \$3,500. She would like to caption more local meetings. Please email Helen with your availability to watch the Caption First DVD of the Town Council meeting of 4/11/ 17 for feedback.

Carol commented that live captioning is challenging.

Kim- send Gayle some dates and times of availability so that Helen can try a mock meeting to test the new equipment.

7:50- 8:05pm break

Chair's Report

Kim- asked for a motion to consider finding request of \$500 for Palaver Strings Music Therapy for SPED students. Motion was made, second and voted to approve.

Kim discussed the recent Guide dog denial of Uber driver for a ride. The first driver was told the law can't deny a ride just because he has phobia and was dismissed; the second driver was given a warning.

Kim made a Presentation of the plaque to Fred who is stepping down. Everyone wished him well for all his years of service to the Town and the WCOD.

Elan had emailed her request to be a commissioner. She had come before the WCOD in the past for funding for IPADS for SPED students. Now she is with the Watertown Autism Parents Group. As a parent of an autistic son, she hopes to replace Fred. She is an advocate in a small grassroots group.

Kim- asked for a motion to recommend to the Town Manager Elan for Fred's vacant seat. Motion was seconded and voted to approve. Gayle will send the Town Manager a memo on behalf of the WCOD to recommend her appointment to complete Fred's term.

Carol talked about the SPEDPAC award ceremony and the request from last month for CART services. Past member, George Donahue was the award recipient this year. A motion and second to fund CART services was approved.

A request was made for CART funding of the May 4th community meeting on housing forum. Megan stated that if we fund the accessibility we should have credit as the other town organizations that are sponsoring the event have credit. There was a discussion of a donation of half the CART funding from the WCOD if the other organization can cover the other half. We'd like to help the community groups to think about accessibility. The WCOD should have been **part** of the conversation of this event earlier in the planning.

A motion was made, seconded and voted to support 50% of the cost and encourage the others to provide financial support.

Motion was made to accept the March minutes, seconded and approved.

Treasurer's report- Gayle reviewed the Treasurer's report; a motion was made and seconded and voted to approve.

Plan review – John talked about 101 Morse street. He said the architects have done what he's asked them to do. Of 44 units, 5% need to use accessible (2.2) if we approved the plan change we should request to round up to 3 accessible units and a 2- bedroom need to be one of the 3.

1. The Board was pleased with the revised entrance and its direct, visible relationship to the elevator and the street. This seems a reasonable compromise given the difficulty of existing conditions. Tenants should be encouraged to use the entrance for pedestrian use as a vehicular access on Morse Street is poor whereas the lower entrance is fully accessible for cars
2. The revised plan for the first floor two apartments is satisfactory.
3. The MAAB formula for the 5% accessible apartment total results in 2.2 apartments. This should be rounded to 3.
4. In order to allot accessible apartments across the range of apartments offered, one of the 2 bedroom units should be accessible.

New business

Megan has a list of businesses to help sponsor closed captioning, she will email a draft.

9:00 PM motion made, seconded and vote to adjourn.

Kim asked that invitations to the next few meetings be made to someone from police to talk about handicapped parking ticketing as well as the Director of the Watertown Community Foundation.