



**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  
**June 11, 2012**

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

Meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m.

**Minutes**

David made suggestions for modifications to May minutes. No one objected.  
David made a motion to accept the May minutes with modifications.  
Dana seconded the motion.  
May minutes approved unanimously as edited.  
Christopher Hicks abstained from voting as he is not a commission member.

**Chairman's Report**

David reported that during his medical rehabilitation, he has been trying to keep up with the emails from the White House Disability group and the disability arm of Mathematica Policy Research ([disabilitypolicyresearch.org](http://disabilitypolicyresearch.org)). He will provide the links to all the Commissioners.

**Department Report**

Michelle stated that her department budget for FY 2012-2013 passed unchanged.

Michelle stated that she has modified and updated the website for her department. David commented that the website is now clearer. Robin stated that she will provide Michelle with a link to a national disability clearing house. Michelle stated that she has narrowed the website down to: housing, transportation, ADA issues, advocacy, miscellaneous, and projects. At one point Michelle was thinking of including a description for each of the 45 links, but decided that it would be overwhelming. Michelle mentioned that the resource information on the website needs to be organized. In addition, she stated that the following links have not yet been added but will in the future: Disability.gov, Concrete Change and Disability History.

Robin asked Michelle if she tweeted. Michelle responded that she mainly tweets for personal enjoyment. However, Michelle suggested that she can tweet disability-related information to the other Commission members if they wish to become twitter followers.

### **Old Business**

Dana and David discussed that there might be a problem facing Metro Taxis in that their taxis' are only equipped to transport one motorized wheelchair at a time. Michelle stated that she will confirm if this is accurate information. Michelle mentioned that her understanding was that Metro Taxis was designing a taxi to fit more than one powered chair. She also mentioned that the Voucher Program for individuals with disabilities is greatly underutilized. Michelle stated that an individual with a disability may register with the Greater New Haven Transit for a 50% discount on transportation in greater New Haven; for up to \$100 per month in taxi rides. Michelle mentioned that the registration requirements are different than those with My Ride.

Dana asked Robin if the rate of suicide among adolescents with disabilities is higher than adolescents without disabilities. Robin stated that most Commissioners and the Commissions they serve are more excited about looking into suicide rather than suicide among individuals with disabilities. Robin also mentioned that the Department of Public Health for the State of Connecticut is constantly after these Commissions to include looking into suicide among individuals with disabilities. David asked Robin if there are separate statistics. Robin stated she will have to inquire if there are separate statistics. She stated that the Department of Public Health while keeping people healthy in the State, they work by collecting data, but collecting data on this topic is a constant battle.

Dana stated that there is a lack of interest in sexuality for young adults with disabilities. Dana mentioned that she attended a neuroscience conference at Yale where Dr. Ruth was a guest speaker. Dana stated that due to her questions at this conference, Dr. Ruth mentioned to the audience that more data needs to be collected regarding individuals with disabilities on human sexuality. Dana also mentioned that Dr. Ruth mentioned that she learned more from individuals with disabilities at this conference than they did from her, and she will never teach on that subject matter again. Dana also stated that she feels that once an individual with disabilities reached puberty, there is a lack of interest. Robin stated that the topic of sexuality is not potentially included in general education. Robin stated that the Department of Public Health is constantly making efforts to ratify data when it is collected to ensure that individuals with disabilities are included.

### **New Business**

Michelle stated that Dawn Lambert from the Governor's office shall attend that next meeting.

### **Other Business**

None

### **Public Comment/Announcements**

David asked prospective commissioner Christopher Hicks to tell the commissioners how he could assist individuals with disabilities and the Commission. Christopher stated that he was in Marine Corp for eight years and is a veteran. Christopher stated that he is a member of the Veteran's Affairs. Christopher mentioned that he went on the city website in order to find ways to take part in civic activities. Christopher stated that he is a good fit for this Commission since he is 60% service-connected. Christopher stated that he was drawn to this Commission because it could be a platform for other disabled veterans. Michelle explained to Christopher the nomination process to the Commission. Michelle stated that Christopher may still attend the meetings during this process.

David made motion to adjourn meeting.

Robin Tousey-Ayers seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn approved unanimously at 7:15 p.m.