



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

**COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**  
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**DAVID HICKS**  
*Chairperson*

**Commission on Disabilities Minutes**  
City Hall 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
**December 10, 2012**

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

Meeting was called to order at 5:23 p.m.

**Minutes**

David asked the commission members to review the November minutes.  
David asked the commission members to raise their hands if they had not had a chance to review the November minutes. Many commission members raised their hands.  
David asked the commission members if they had any changes to the November minutes. There are no changes to the November minutes.  
David made a motion to accept the November minutes.  
Cecile seconded the motion.  
November minutes are approved unanimously.

**Chairman's Report**

David explains that he prepared four (4) letters and forwarded them to Paula via email to finalize and mail. David mentions that he would like Robin to review the letter thanking the veterans who participated in the panel discussion at Wilbur Cross High School. One of the letters David wrote is addressed to Mr. Joe Carbone of the Workplace. David states that he had a telephone conversation with Mr. Carbone a week after the last meeting. David states that Mr. Carbone is also the head of the "Platform to Employment" program that was profiled on 60 Minutes. David states that Mr. Carbone is supportive of the Disability Commission's efforts. David mentions that Mr. Carbone is willing to attend a meeting and show a power point presentation detailing the way Platform to Employment helps people find employment.

Another letter David wrote is addressed to Mr. Bruce Alexander at Yale University. David states that Yale University's participation in the Jobs Pipeline Working Group has to do with its commitment to working with the city. The Jobs Pipeline is designed to help New Haven residents find employment, and has a specific focus on aiding young people to make the transition from school to the workplace.

David mentions that Michelle forwarded a link to an article in the New Haven Independent to all of the commission members. David states that the way that Yale is working with the city focuses on three themes; the number of jobs that Yale has and how many are filled by New Haven residents, the second one is called "human development" and targets young people, the third is "Neighborhood Partnerships". David points out that "human development" seems a natural way to frame the employment needs of people with disabilities.

The last letter is to Mr. Anthony Rescigno of the New Haven Chamber of Commerce. David states that the letter mentions that the Chamber has been supportive in the past, and has worked with Michelle on its Connect-Ability grant.

Robin asks David if the letters should request input concerning the appropriate individual to represent the disability community on the Working Group. David mentions that this issue could be brought up directly to the people addressed at a meeting if they agree to meet with the Commission. Robin states that sometimes the Board of Aldermen may have a very different view concerning appropriate individuals for the Working Group.

Robin suggests contacting the Center for Independent Living in Connecticut. Dana arrives and agrees that the commission should contact Marc at the Center for Disability Rights, one of the Centers for Independent Living. Dana also suggests contacting Chapel Haven. David mentions that the first thing that the commission members should do is to find out if these organizations are aware of the Jobs Pipeline Working Group and inquire if any of their members are inquiring about employment. Robin states that the commission needs to connect with other groups. Dana suggests contacting Marrakech. Michelle also suggests contacting Easter Seals. Michelle states that Chapel Haven, Easter Seals and Marrakech are the triad. Dana also mentions contacting Workforce Alliance. Dana mentions that the commissioners should also contact the local colleges such as Southern Connecticut State College and Gateway. Robin mentions that it makes a better impression if there is a coalition. Dana states that David could draft a letter to all organizations at once.

### **Department Report**

Michelle states that the budget material for the Department of Disability Services is available, but she has not completed it yet.

Michelle states that she was appointed to the Governor's Developmental Disability Council (DDC) of Connecticut as a replacement. Michelle states that she received an email last week from DDC with the proposed budget cuts. Michelle states that the budget cuts are pretty substantial to the state agencies that serve people with disabilities with the exception of the Office of Protection & Advocacy. The agencies such as DDS, DES, Children & Youth with Special Needs, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, all will experience significant cuts. The ultimate cuts in the end will be larger than the governor's proposed cuts of 5%. It is certain that disability services will be impacted given the budget deficit this year and next year.

Jenifer states that Connecticut non-profits are organizing a call-in tomorrow & Thursday. Jenifer forwarded the information to Michelle with a link for the commission members. Jenifer states that DMHAS is providing web sites and telephone numbers where clients may call with scripts and follow-up scripts.

Robin states that there was a newspaper article a few days ago that Connecticut Association of Learning Disabilities is closing after 45 years due to budget cuts.

Michelle discusses that one of the big issues is around community-based services as opposed to institutional-based services. Michelle states that the big battle this year is minimizing damage from the cuts. Michelle will forward call-in information and the proposed budget cuts to the commission members.

Robin requests a contact list of groups discussed at this meeting to communicate with on a routine basis. David recommends reading the information the Michelle forwards to everyone.

Cecile states that revenue is needed.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

None

**Other Business**

Robin states that the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services is now a free-standing agency with its own Commissioner. It is no longer under the Department of Social Services.

**Public Comment/Announcements**

None

David made a motion to adjourn meeting.

Cecile seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn approved unanimously at 6:12 p.m.