

**ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION FOR PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES**

Julie Randall, Chair
Cynthia A. Brown, *Commission Liaison*



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Daniel L. Morris, Commissioner

**Commission for People with Disabilities (COPD)
January 18, 2011
Room 14 Governmental Center/Potomac Building**

Minutes

Attendees: Susan Erichsen, Julie Randall, Rocco Aiello, Carole Woodward, Bob Schaller, Kelly Reynolds, Jolanda Campbell, Lois Coryell, Bill Nicholas, Sam Brown, Janet Smith, Mary Ann Coontz, Rebecca Kessler, Cynthia Brown

Guests: CDR Dan Luers, NAVAIR Wounded Warrior Program
Nancy Danganan, NAVAIR Wounded Warrior Program
Benjamin Huggins, Best Buddies Program

Staff: Adrienne Raines

Excused: Paula Andreas, Marie Robinson, Sheral St. Clair, Christina Bishop

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m. by Chairperson Julie Randall.

The October minutes were approved as written.

NAVAIR Wounded Warrior Program: Bob Schaller, Department of Economic and Community Development Director, and CFPD Vice Chair Susan Erichsen introduced CDR Dan Luers, NAVAIR's Wounded Warrior Program Manager. B. Schaller informed the Commission that the Elk's Lodge held several fundraisers for over a year and donated the \$20,000 in proceeds to the Wounded Warrior program. CDR Luers proceeded to give the Commission an overview of the Program, which focuses on combat-wounded veterans. The Navy has adopted a national goal that 2% of their workforce be individuals with disabilities (IWD). The Wounded Warrior Program identifies injured veterans, puts them through a review process to be medically cleared and determine what resources, training and education veterans will need to re-enter the workforce. CDR Luers informed the Commission that approximately 50% of injured soldiers remain in active duty status. On average, the review and evaluation process for disabled veterans takes 9 months. 10-15 veterans per month have gone through the review process and are available and looking for work. The numbers are larger for the veteran population as a whole, and a large number of retired veterans are 10%-30% disabled. J. Randall requested the goals for NAVAIR's local installation, and CDR Luers' office will provide the information.

Last year, 19 combat-wounded veterans were hired nationally. J. Randall inquired as to whether NAVAIR will require contractors to implement the 2% IWD hiring goal. CDR Luers stated that there are no enforceable regulations dictating this, however, staff is being trained in implementation and will focus on contractor requirements in the near future.

CDR Luers stated that Learning Education Centers (LECs) are utilized to provide wrap-around services such as career guidance and training, and to ensure that veterans have the resources to survive in the area they choose to settle in. Each plan is individualized, focusing on the specific and unique needs of each veteran. The plan addresses issues such as transportation, access to medical treatment and living accommodations specific to the individual. Services for the Wounded Warrior Program are funded in large part by the Veteran's Administration.

J. Randall stated that NAVAIR represents 85% of the County's economy. CDR Luers informed the Commission that Gabe Castleberry is the point of contact at the La Plata LEC. J. Randall suggested that C. Brown and B. Schaller be Commission/County points of contact since the La Plata LEC will be providing wrap-around services for St. Mary's County residents. She would like CDR Luers to introduce County representatives to Mr. Castleberry at the LEC and help facilitate a meeting.

Best Buddies of Maryland: J. Randall introduced Benjamin Huggins, Program Director for Best Buddies of Maryland, a program that pairs adult and youth volunteers with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. B. Huggins gave the Commission an overview of the Best Buddies Programs. Through its different programs, Best Buddies volunteers serve as mentors, companions, pen pals and friends to those with disabilities. The program is successful in that many youth volunteers transition into the adult program, continuing their involvement once they've graduated high school.

Mr. Huggins stated that assistance would be helpful in promoting the E-Buddy and Citizen Buddy programs in Southern Maryland. With volunteers required to meet with their buddies twice a month and via phone once a week, the time commitment is not extensive. The application process for volunteers consists of a background check and a home interview. Best Buddies typically works with individuals with mild to moderate disabilities, with no volunteer training provided. B. Schaller stated that he would work with Mr. Huggins to help connect him with referral resources in St. Mary's County. R. Aiello stated that the Best Buddies Programs are doing very well in the St. Mary's County Public Schools. J. Randall stated that the Commission would disseminate Best Buddies information.

Retreat: The retreat originally planned for December 16th was rescheduled due to inclement weather. S. Erichsen stated that she will take over re-scheduling the Commission's retreat, and will communicate via email with members to determine a date.

New Officers: The nominating committee, through email communications, solicited nominations and presented the slate to Commission members. J. Randall informed the Commission that nominations would be accepted from the floor. None were brought forward. After a motion from B. Nicholson and a 2nd from S. Erichsen, the Commission voted on new officers. By unanimous vote, Christina Bishop will serve as the Chair and Yolanda Campbell will serve as the Vice Chair.

S. Erichsen announced that this would be the last meeting for Chairperson Julie Randall, as her term has ended. She and the other Commission members thanked her for years of effort, dedication and service.

Intern Program: Cynthia Brown reported the Director of Human Resources for County Government has been working with DORS to implement an intern program. County directors are invited to meet with the Human Resources Department to determine how best to utilize the program.

19th Annual Southern MD Caregivers Conference: R. Kessler announced the event, taking place on April 15th at the Higher Education Center. Sessions include body mechanics, adaptive/assistive equipment, Medicare, hands-on demonstrations and advocacy. For the first time, the Conference will also include information on chemical and substance abuse. Registration fee is \$20; R. Kessler stated that she has limited funds available if someone cannot afford the fee.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Adrienne Raines.