

Commission for People with Disabilities (COPD)  
December 16, 2008  
Room 14 Governmental Center/Potomac Building  
Minutes

Attendees:

Julie Randall  
Christi Bishop  
Sam Brown  
Pam Main  
Jolanda Campbell  
Marie Robinson  
Tomica Scriber  
Rocco Aiello  
Bill Nicholas  
Jaime Jones

Excused:

Vicky Brown  
Sheral St. Clair  
Susan Erichsen  
Cathy Zumbrun  
Dennis Phillips  
Cindy Phillips  
Jennifer Irving  
Paula Andreas  
Visitors:  
Linda Heisner

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm by J. Randall. The meeting minutes were distributed and reviewed by attendees. Minutes were presented and approved.

Introductions were made by commission members. J. Randall announced that J. Jones is now going to be the staff support for this commission, which will be supported out of the Department of Human Services. C. Bishop who had been the staff support for many years will remain on this commission as a member.

Finance Report/ ADA COORDINATOR

C. Bishop reported that the FY10 budget was reviewed by finance and there were no problems with adding a donations budgeting line item. This amount includes \$2000, which is split between 3 expenses: advertisements in the Etiquette book, purchasing and sponsorship of awards, and table rentals for Disability Awareness Day. The Revenue coming in would be from vendor fees for Disability Awareness Day. Expenses won't happen if donations do not come in. Finance assured C. Bishop that would not affect appropriated funds from the commissioners. The budget was also passed through Bennett Connelly for his approval as well. M. Robinson asked why mileage was dropped off this year. C. Bishop stated that she has to use county vehicles; therefore, mileage is no longer needed. J. Randall asked why there were no funds in membership and C. Bishop stated that originally the membership funds were to cover the cost of membership for her with a particular organization but she never had time to be involved and therefore the money hasn't been used since it had been in there. JR recommended leaving membership at \$150.00 in the event it is needed by C. Bishop or J. Jones and is not covered by their respective departments. Members are in agreement with new budget. C. Bishop informed the group that after this meeting J. Jones will now handle the budgetary and finance reporting.

Committee Status Reports

- ADA Accessibility - C. Bishop spoke with Mr. Erichsen regarding the capital budget priorities. Mr. Erichsen stated that all projects in the original transition plan have been completed to date. The only items that haven't been completed are what the commission added to their priority list last year. C. Bishop handed out the new list, which indicates what should be finished by the end of the fiscal year. C. Bishop asked the commission if they had anything they wanted to add to this list at this time. R. Aiello asked about the status of the automatic doors at Great Mills pool. C. Bishop said that she had been assured that the pool would be done by end of the fiscal year. M. Robinson asked if we

needed to identify restroom facilities for ADA compliance in the County Highways break room (#6 on the list). C. Bishop hopes that the Accessibility Committee will go through the buildings to identify areas. Accessibility needs to become a priority. Rocco is the chair of the ADA Accessibility Committee but was pulled away over past year. R. Aiello agreed that this year he could take the lead on it. There is a need for more people on this sub-committee. J. Jones will email goals and objectives of sub-committees to the members. J. Randall would also like accessibility committee to look at publicly used, privately owned places as well. Additionally, R. Aiello and C. Bishop will meet with staff from the College of Southern Maryland and St. Mary's College to discuss accessibility for the CSM pool and the St. Mary's College planning for route 5 crossing (bridge). For this year the commission members agreed to go forward with the current list of projects.

- Needs Analysis - L. Heisner was present and shared her progress on the needs assessment she is working on for the Department of Human Services. She reviewed the St. Mary's County Department of Health, Needs Assessment of Service to Adults with Disabilities, May 2000, which was about 40 pages. L. Heisner passed out a condensed version of the report to the group in order to go through and see if any of the recommendations in the report had been completed and to see if these are still issues that need to be addressed. L. Heisner asked about the status of the following recommendations/goals:
  1. "Was a temporary employee/consultant appointed to work with folks to establish interagency collaboration and improved communication, more customer friendly system to access services." To the commissions knowledge this was not done, cut from budget. J. Randall indicated that although this hasn't been done this could be the role of the new Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS can coordinate grant requests; offer to be the coordinator for various agencies to come to the table to collaborate and to go after additional funding with county matching funds.
  2. "Was an advisory group to Resource Coordination program formed?" To the commission members' knowledge this hasn't been formed but it is an area of interest and the commission members are still interested in moving forward with this recommendation.
  3. "Did the Workforce Investment Board evaluate the feasibility of initiatives related to personal care and report back to county commissioners? The Workforce Investment Board may be able to support the startup of consumer owned businesses that provide personal care or administrative support." J. Randall stated that there was a Workforce Investment Board for many years but was disbanded. However, recently it was reconstituted and is now under Tri-County Council.
  4. "Resource Coordination's original budget included \$6,800 in state funds for respite services, is this still available? What is the current amount?" Commission members are unaware of the current amount and advised L. Heisner to contact Resource Coordination. The members agree that respite is still a huge issue and need in the county and believe there is less respite funding available than in 2000. P. Main mentioned DSS supplies Respite monies, not necessarily for emergencies. They actually have the Respite grant here in St. Mary's County.
  5. "The Resource Coordination Program would utilize staff who have personal experience with disabilities to function as extenders. Extenders could be consumers or family members who can assist professional staff in working with level 1 or 2 consumers." Commission members are unaware if this was done.

Another issue that was brought up involves the lack of employers who are willing to hire individuals with disabilities and the lack of proper training that job coaches have to assist

the individuals with disabilities obtain and maintain their job. L. Heisner made the suggestion of creating a transitional program for students between the navy base and the school system. If the base could provide the work and the school staff provides the training, the result could be an employment opportunity for these students after they leave the school system. J. Randall stated that the developmentally disabled population has the highest unemployment rate and that most jobs at the base are technology and engineering based and requires a college degree. In addition, even if we could collaborate with the school system to provide this training, we aren't prepared to support clients once they leave the school system. We would need to have a bridge plan before starting this initiative. The agencies that provide services to our adults don't have the proper resources to provide training for qualified job coaches and job developers. J. Jones asked if anyone is aware of any county or agency in Maryland that is a leader in supported employment to use as a model. L. Heisner will speak with her state contacts to find out statewide/nationwide who is excelling in this area.

One more significant issue that J. Randall brought up was the lack of health and wellness programs for the students leaving the school system. This is important for all people with disabilities but especially students coming out of the schools since they were so involved at school. C. Bishop stated that registration is low for her programs and she has even had to cancel programs in the past. She believes this is due to the lack of transportation. J. Randall stated that the lack of participation may stem from where the programs/activities are located and would recommend that programs go to where the people are, essentially take the classes to them. C. Bishop indicated that some of the most successful programs go to the agencies.

Next meeting date – February 17, 2009 at 4:30 pm.