

Mayor's Council on Disability
Chattanooga, Tennessee
Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2010

Chairperson, John Jackson, Creative Initiative
Vice Chair, Bryon Kluesner, UTC OSD Office
Secretary, Carol Martin, UTK Center on Disability & Employment
Parliamentarian, Jill Hindman, Dev Disability Council, Region 3

Council Members

Sandra Booher, Moccasin Bend Hospital
Jim Queen, CARTA Care-A-Van
Tommy Gates, Siskin Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation
Carolyn Boyd, Signal Centers
Phillip Stevens, City of Chattanooga
Karl Epperson
Nichol Myers, AIM Center
Robert White, Epilepsy Foundation
Katie Jones, Merrill Lynch (Special Needs)

Mayor's Office Participants

Matt Lea, Assistant to Mayor
Jay Piercy, OMA City Compliance Officer
Kathie Fulgham, Mayor's Office

Absent members:

Robert White
Nichol Myers
Karl Epperson

Visitors:

Chris Jackson, TN DIDS
Dennis Dodson, Mental Health Advocate
Elaine Adams, City Therapeutic Recreation
Constance Ruff, Pres., Southside Chamber
Danielle Hooper, CABIA
Ron Hanners, TN Div of Rehab Services
Virginia Piper, Life Line
April Taylor, Moccasin Bend
Bea Lyons, Hearing Loss Assoc.

John Jackson welcomed the group and asked the Council members to introduce themselves. Carol Martin asked if there were any changes to the minutes. With no changes, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Matt proposed that the Carta Care-A-Van Council position, currently held by Jim Queen, who would be rolling off the Council this month, should be made a permanent position on the Council. He suggested that this Council spot be opened to a new member and that the CARTA position be a liaison such as he, himself, holds. Matt said he wants this position to be held by the Director of Care-A-Van, not a representative. The Council unanimously approved this.

Bryon discussed the guide dog support group that was coordinated by Terri Rice. There were ten members who attended to hear a guest speaker, a UTC student who is a new guide dog user. He demonstrated a GPS Trekker which really interested the members. Bryon said he took this opportunity to try to sell UTC to some of the members, who may pursue their education. He also talked about the fund raisers being held to raise money for the study abroad trip coming up in July. The next fund raiser will be held on Saturday, April 10th at 8:00 a.m. at 4407 Comet Trail, Hixson. He requested anyone having items to donate please contact him.

Virginia Piper, Project Director for the Chattanooga Area Resource and Education Center, discussed the upcoming Transition Academy on April 17th for students aged 14 to 21 to assist them in their transition into the community following school. Virginia said she would like for service providers to attend. She also announced that she has been invited to participate in the National Summit on Disability Policy in Washington, D.C. on July 25th.

Dennis Dodson said he just came from the Crisis Intervention Team School which was training a second group. The trained officers are

now de-escalating situations instead of arresting and putting these folks in jail.

On the other side of the problem, Samantha Bales and Anna of the Public Defenders Office are spearheading the Bridge Project for offenders with mental illness. The Bridge Project has three or four people that are working to start the program of basically taking people with mental illness or co-occurring disorders such as mental illness and substance abuse disorder out of the justice system, whether they are already at Silverdale or still in jail or out on bond, and get them into treatment. The hope is to break the cycle of returning to the old habits and committing crimes and returning to jail. Two years ago the Public Defenders Office, as a subcommittee for the region 3 Policy and Planning Council, had a Criminal Justice Committee with the goal of creating a mental health court. Although Hamilton County is not large enough for this, the Public Defenders Office took on the Bridge Project. They now have a grant for a full time case worker. If there are any questions, contact Samantha Bales.

Jill Hindman announced that Hamilton County Emergency Management is registering people to be alerted in the event of an emergency. Register online at www.hamiltontn.gov or call 209-8393. She also announced that Siskin Children's Institute is organizing a conference at First Centenary Church called Connections Conference for families of children with special needs. See Jill if you would like to be an exhibitor or sponsor.

Jill attended a state wide planning and policy making meeting. Their annual assessment to discover the different needs in all eight regions of the state showed that the lack of appropriate housing was the number one need.

Jim Queen, Carta Care-A-Van, said that Carta had their annual banquet and a driver, who is retired Chattanooga firefighter and who has been with Carta for 20 years, received the Tommy (Cheatham) Award, after a bus driver who died in the line of duty. He said Carta's executive Director will attend the Legislative Days in DC to visit with Representatives for several days to try to get more funding.

Jim said that he attended an ADA Conference in Nashville and learned that service animals such as reptiles, snakes, spiders and monkeys will no longer be considered service animals. He also said that his goals for the coming year include adding three to five vans and this was approved depending upon matching funding. Jim said that STS and Carta are working on Coordinated Transportation. They are going to test this for a couple of days to see how the dispatchers, the software, the compatibility and transferring of rides between STS and Care-A-Van works. There is no legal requirement to do this but it will expand resources of both entities so that one is not sitting idle or two are going to the same place. There should be more detailed coordination after SETHRA's Transit Center opens and they can join this coordination effort. Jim also added that he is humbled by Matt's proposal to have a permanent CARTA Council representative.

Bryon announced that the Deaf-Blind Camp will be April 22nd through 25th at the Dogwood Lodge in Soddy Daisy. Lana Newton is still gathering donations for this. She is also looking for volunteers.

Bea announced that the Hearing Loss Association of America is having a kickoff brunch on Saturday, March 13th from 10am until noon. Please RSVP to Bea. Her contact information is on the agenda. The walk itself will be May 15th at Chattanooga State on the River Walk. They are currently looking for teams, people to donate. Chattanooga is the only city in Tennessee that is doing this walk. Last year's walk earned just under \$25,000. The goal this year is \$30,000. With last year's money, they purchased an LED lighted caption board for the Chattanooga Theater Center.

Jill said that The Disability Day on the Hill in Nashville is scheduled for March 10th for East Tennessee and encouraged people to attend. One major concern is TennCare cuts.

Chris Jackson said that the DD Council's Region 3 Policy and Planning Council meetings have very few participants. The Mental Health along with the A&D side had about 45 participants, while the DD side had only two. She asks that anyone interested in serving please send a resume to her or Jill so they can pass it onto the Governor's

office for approval. They don't have to have a disability, just be interested in disability issues. This is a quarterly meeting. With the combining of MI, DD and A&D, there was supposed to be an Adult Services committee and a Children's Services Committee. Now everyone is showing up for these meetings and MI is not happy about everyone being forced together. The organization is not following the mandated structure. Jill Hindman added that another reason that MI is not happy about the combination is that if there is any state money, it is now divided into three. And, Children's Services was an area that was handled by local agencies for children with disabilities of any kind. After age 22, these services can no longer be used.

Elaine Adams said that the agenda included all of the Therapeutic Recreation news.

Sandy Booher said that the Partnership for Families, Children and Adults is organizing "Walk a Mile in her Shoes" on April 17th at Coolidge Park at 3:00 p.m. Men will be walking in high heels. This walk is to call attention to the fact that 40 to 80% of people with disabilities are sexually assaulted in their lifetime. See www.walkamileinhershoes

Jay Piercy said that last month the City Council adopted by resolution a Hate Crimes Response Network that the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) is putting into place. There was a strong upsurge in reported hate crimes and bias incidents, especially against the disability community. If an organization is interested in joining this network, contact Jay. He said the network has already had their first meeting with First Responders and will be holding regular meetings to keep the network updated. It was established to help the City coordinate a unified response to any type of hate crimes or bias incidents.

Jay announced that the OMA is in the final stages of printing an updated version of the ADA community Resource Directory. There should be about 250 copies. There will be 100 copies in Spanish. Any organization interested, may request copies by contacting Jay.

He said they have asked the IT Department to upload the document to the website so hopefully, it may soon be available online. Jay was asked if individuals could serve on the network. He said they really want agencies that can serve as support but if anyone has any questions, they can contact Beverly Cosley. Her e-mail address is listed on the City's website.

Danielle Hooper announced that the Brain Injury Conference will be held at the Doubletree Hotel on March 25th. There is a special rate of \$40 for survivors and students. It is primarily for caregivers and nursing students, PT's, OT's and Speech Therapists. Some scholarships are available.

John thanked everyone who attended the meeting today and announced that the next meeting will be April 5th at 3:00 at the Development Resource Center. He requested that Board members stay for a private meeting to discuss nominees for the Council.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Carol Martin, Secretary
Mayor's Council on Disability