

Mayor's Council on Disability
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Meeting Minutes
January 05, 2009

Sandra Booher, Chairperson
Katie Jones, Secretary
Jill Hindman, Parliamentarian

Council Members:

Jim Queen
Mary Ann Schenk
Tommy Gates
Carolyn Boyd
Carol Martin
Phillip Stevens
Karl Epperson

Meeting called to order by chairperson, Sandy Booher.

In attendance:

Carolyn Boyd
Jim Queen
Sandy Booher
Jill Hindman
Tommy Gates
Karl Epperson
Phillip Stevens
Jay Piercy, OMA Compliance Officer

Excused Absence:

Katie Jones
Carol Martin

The first order of business was a presentation from Delores Feeney Brown, a member of CARTA Care-A-Van Commission; she is a retired public health nurse from both Hamilton County Health Department and St. Barnabas Nursing Home. Ms. Brown spoke on her experiences living with Charles Benet Syndrome, a condition with visual hallucinations and no treatment available. She told her

story of becoming blind due to glaucoma and developing the syndrome. Hallucinations start anytime once or twice per month; then they increase, now everyday. She attended the Helen Keller National Institute where she stayed for eight months of training. She is available to advise others who also have the syndrome and need assistance. Ms. Brown thanked the Vital Center, Vocational Rehabilitation, Signal Center, Red Bank Lions Club and other individuals who assisted her during her ten-year struggle with the condition; she shared brochures that are available upon request.

Chairperson Booher shared NAMI newsletter article about Deaf citizens not receiving services that they need, and mental health centers not having interpreters. She plans to share this information with the support group for Deaf and hard of hearing. She also shared an article about a "tactile zoo" from the Cleveland newspaper; Girl Scouts did a program and raised \$70,000 to have life size bones of an elephant and a giraffe for people with vision loss to touch to learn about the animals.

Regarding nominations progress, Ms. Booher received a letter of intent and resume from Dr. Sadowitz to pass along to the Nominations Committee for review.

Jill Hindman reported on the Stigma Project and news of the Developmental Disabilities Council. Family support programs across Tennessee are facing major funding cuts. She encouraged Council members to contact our local representatives in the Legislature to share the value of these programs and to stress the need for families under the Family Support Act. The DD Council will meet again at the end of January.

Phillip Stevens reported on the web site and inquiries; there was one inquiry from woman in Minneapolis who wants to move to Chattanooga. He expressed his concern about

accessibility of the City of Chattanooga and Mayor's Council on Disability web sites. The Bobby program didn't work out as a tool to help; Bobby software program now belongs to IBM and is very expensive. He requested suggestions from group for ensuring that the web sites are accessible. It was suggested that he contact Molly Littleton in the technology center at Signal Center and the Federation of the Blind technology center in the DC area/Baltimore MD for additional assistance.

CARTA Care-A-Van has received funding from the Community Foundation and will begin new route on February 2nd, one additional route 7:00am – 5:45pm, Monday – Friday; this route will have a dedicated vehicle primarily for individuals with disabilities who are employed to get to and from work each day. CARTA will start taking reservations for this new route on January 20. Jim Queen also reported that new trained staff and new drivers are coming.

CARTA turned on its GPS system for the fixed route fleet of vehicles, but GPS system is not yet available on Care-A-Van buses. When questioned by bus drivers about service animals, the only questions that can be asked is: "Is that a service animal?" If answer is yes, there can be no more questions. Service animals are welcome on CARTA vehicles as long as they're under control of individual.

Jim Queen also reported that Greg Smith and Greg Helms from Hamilton County Emergency Management Services held a successful meeting three weeks ago at the Police Services Center with groups involved with evacuation processes in the event of an emergency event.

Announcements/Comments:

April 23-25, 2009: Representative from Helen Keller Center on-the road program will present a workshop at Signal Center. Lana Newton, program coordinator Deaf-Blind

Services of Tennessee, reported that this program works with people with vision and hearing losses and families to cope with their loss, enhances independent living skills, and enhances communication skills.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Chapter is preparing a mental health information packet to disseminate to others.

United Way grant entitled "Opening Doors" that is essentially for people with disabilities and encourages local businesses to hire people with disabilities will support an awareness training session on January 22, 12:00noon until 4:00pm, at Signal Center; this training is for Human Resources persons from corporations who may be involved with the Corporate Volunteers Council (CVC).

A situation at BiLo stores was shared with MCD members. Using debit machines at checkout counter, person with visual impairment can't see screen so needs assistance; cashier is not permitted to assist. Person in wheelchair also cannot reach machine to do swipe of debit card, totally inaccessible. This situation could be addressed by the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce through their regular newsletter. New technology has actually made situation more difficult than in past for persons with disabilities. Suggested solution is to put machine in position and angle where people can reach them and enlarge print on screens.

A question was raised about whom to call for piled up leaves on sidewalk; call 311, put in service request to Public Works Department.

Traffic at Gateway and West MLK Blvd. construction area: John Van Winkle, traffic engineer, is very involved with the project to ensure safety of many seniors living in area. Blue Cross Blue Shield will create growing pains that will have to be resolved in time.

Meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting of the Mayor's Council on Disability will be held Monday, February 02, 2009, at 3:00pm, at the DRC.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Katye Jones

Katye Jones, Secretary
Mayor's Council on Disability