

Mayor's Council on Disability
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Meeting Minutes
April 07, 2008

Sandra Booher, Chairperson
Bea Lyons, Vice Chair
Katy Jones, Secretary
Jill Hindman, Parliamentarian

Council Members:

Dr. Rick Rader
Jim Queen
Mary Ann Schenk
Tommy Gates
Gina Turley
Carolyn Boyd
Carol Martin
Phillip Stevens
Karl Epperson

Meeting called to order by Chairperson, Sandy Booher.

In attendance:

Sandy Booher
Carol Martin
Carolyn Boyd
Mary Ann Schenk
Katy Jones
Rick Rader
Karl Epperson
Jim Queen

Excused Absence:

Bea Lyons

Visitors:

Kim Printz
Beth Coleman
Elaine Adams

Jill Hindman
Phillip Stevens
Matt Lea

Melanie Smith
Holly Brown
Tom Dugan

Chairperson Booher began the meeting with the roll call of Council members and acknowledgement of visitors in attendance. She introduced Tom Dugan, Executive Director of the Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) who presented an update on happenings within CARTA. Good things include increased rider-ship for 8 or the past 10 years, Care-a-Van rider-ships at highest level in history; other items include increased diesel costs amounting to approximately \$500,000 for 2007; rate increases for Incline effective April 01, 2008; and series of hearings scheduled for May to review bus fares and Care-a-Van fares. In comparison Knoxville receives twice the funding as Chattanooga even though they began at same funding levels in 1999. CARTA funds were significantly reduced by the City in 2003-2004; Chattanooga is in crisis mode in terms of current funding for public transportation. 2008 budget proposal includes 8 hours of daily service on Care-a-Van vehicles which must increase due to bursting at the seams in terms of services as shown by the high rider-ship. Currently Red Bank, Soddy Daisy, East Ridge, Lookout Mountain, Signal Mountain and Collegedale do not have Care-a-Van services even though SETHRA does provide transportation to some areas. CARTA colleagues are addressing civic organizations, St. Elmo organization, Hill City, and 15 to 20 neighborhood associations and sharing the news. The City Council continues to be supportive of public transportation. CARTA budget proposal has already been submitted to both city and county officials; CARTA will meet on May 08, 2008, at the joint city-county budget hearings.

When comparing Chattanooga and Knoxville, both cities are very similar in terms of budget size; however, in terms of amount invested, Knoxville funding resources are significantly higher than Chattanooga funding resources. Two factors that impact service levels and rider-ship are more service, more riders and higher fuel costs, more riders. Current fares are \$1.25. During 2007 City parking and parking revenues were moved over to CARTA for management. These revenues include parking garages and parking lots such as ones on the North shore; Jim Bowen, new staff person, is reviewing parking issues from a policy standpoint, not from revenue generation.

A lengthy discussion of funding procedures for public transportation and their impact on non-driving seniors continued. It was noted that the state of Tennessee has no new road projects funded for 2008. The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) funding is fairly stable but not growing. For additional information about CARTA or to schedule a group presentation, Tom Dugan may be contacted at 423/629-1411 or 423/629-1313.

Matt Lea, as lobbyist for the City, reported on the AT&T U-Verse technology related to the cable bill currently being discussed in the Tennessee General Assembly. In a press conference in Nashville (04/07/2008), Speaker of the House Naifeh has taken the 2007 bill, brought AT&T, the lobbyists, and the Tennessee Municipal League (TML) together to create a perfect bill if that's possible. The big concern deals with our rights of way and the three grades of telecommunication quality: U-Verse Technology, Coaxial Cable, and Fiber Optics. Franchise agreements must be made including policies and procedures for cutting on roads;

if state takes over a state-wide franchise, there must be assurance that our citizens' rights of way are protected. There appear to be some major concerns about AT&T and these large boxes and citizen rights of way; hopefully the bill will take care of the concerns. The issue is that they must not block sidewalk access for seniors and people with disabilities. Mayor's Council on Disability members may contact legislators and tell them they are in favor of maintaining local control of citizens' rights of way.

Jill Hindman reported on "Fulfilling the Promise" legislation (HB2569) indicating that the bill passed one subcommittee then was placed behind the budget along with numerous other bills waiting for allocation funding. The Developmental Disabilities Council requests that citizens contact persons serving on these subcommittees; Senate Finance Ways & Means Committee will make the ultimate decision.

Karl Epperson presented a listing of charities and organizations providing services to persons who are homeless; the listing included the name of the organization along with the services rendered and telephone contact information. One program, Volunteers in Medicine, provides free medical care in clinics and walk-in clinic care for homeless persons without Medicare or Medicaid. Services include everything from groceries by the box to financial services through some of the community agencies, marriage, family, adolescents, clothing, toys, diapers, milk, and more.

Phillip Stevens reported on the website; the Mayor's Council on Disability website was completely updated on Thursday, April 03, 2008. If there are links to be added to the web site, send those directly to Phillip for placing on the web site.

Regarding the fact that the MCD website is difficult to find, Phillip provided a navigation path: to locate the MCD web site, go to www.Chattanooga.gov , click on the Mayor's Office link then click on the MCD logo found on the Mayor's page to access the website. A question of the website being accessible was raised; yes, the website is accessible: hold down control key and roll the bar to increase size of screen for ease of viewing.

Phillip also mentioned that UTC Disability Student Services is planning to send a group of students to Australia and possibly other locations during the summer months to conduct an accessibility study overseas. They're looking for suggestions of organizations and businesses to serve as sponsors for this effort. Please provide names of any prospective sponsors to Phillip for sharing with the university.

The question of appropriate procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations for Neighborhood meetings was mentioned. Citizens must request reasonable accommodations such as real-time captioning services through the Office of Multicultural Affairs with a minimum notification of at least 24 hours. Procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations should be more visible and more easily located on the City website. Policy statement needs to be very clear regarding person to contact with both telephone number and email address provided. Actual procedure is in final process of approval by Dan Johnson, Chief of Staff. Contact the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) to be directed to the appropriate department; calling 311 will also direct citizens to the correct office as well.

Chairperson Booher would like to bring closure to the completed MCD Retreat and results by scheduling a meeting with the Mayor to discuss those results. Matt Lea will take care of setting up a meeting with the Mayor.

The following announcements were shared:

Bea Lyons had successful surgery and will be having chemotherapy treatments over the summer months. She sends her thanks to everyone for all the email messages, cards and especially the beautiful flowers sent from the Council.

Chattanooga Speeders, wheelchair soccer team under the leadership of Rick Watkins, won a championship. They've been invited to a Mayor's Council on Disability meeting and feel it will be June or July before they can attend. When they visit, we'd like to recognize them for their accomplishments.

Chattanooga Greens Public Input Meeting: April 24, 2008, 6:30-8:30pm, at The Chattanooga.

The Chocolate Lovers Fling, Epilepsy Foundation: Sunday, April 27, 2008, 2:00-4:00pm, at Bessie Smith Hall; tickets \$20.

Mega-Conference in Nashville, end of May: few stipends still available; contact ARC of Tennessee: www.arctenn.com or 1-800-835-7077.

Job announcement: Director, Chattanooga Area Brain Injury Association opening in June; to apply contact Center for NonProfits.

United Health Care Children's Foundation: www.uhccr.org , grants up to \$5,000 for health care services for children

An adaptive golf cart, solo rider cart, has been purchased at Brown Acres.

Katye Jones presented the meeting minutes for the March 03, 2008, meeting for consideration; minutes were approved as prepared.

Chairperson Booher adjourned the meeting by expressing appreciation to all the visitors who attended today's meeting. We appreciate your support and participation.

Next meeting of the Mayor's Council on Disability will be held Monday, May 05, 2008, 3:00-4:30pm, at the DRC located at 1250 Market Street.

Respectfully submitted:
Katye Jones, Secretary