

**Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board
January 27, 2010 Meeting Minutes**

Approved

A meeting of the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board was held on January 27, 2010, in the Conference Room of Building 158, North County Complex, Hauppauge at 2:15 pm. Chairwoman Beverly Cody presided.

PRESENT:

GROUP A

Frank Krotzchinsky	Representing County Executive Steve Levy
Legislator Kate M. Browning	Chair, Health and Human Services Committee
Jack Caffey	Representing Legislature Presiding Officer William Lindsay
Linda O'Donohoe	S.C. Department of Social Services
Lew Johnson	Representing S.C. Department of Public Works, Design & Construction Division
Alice Young	S.C. Department of Labor

GROUP B

Beverly Cody	Member, Secretary & Acting Chair
Debbie Epple	Member, S.C. Department of Civil Service/Public Info

GROUP C

Teresa Strum	Member, Western Suffolk BOCES
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GROUP D

Jodi Nicastro	Rep., Ingo Gloeckner, Member, VESID
Mitchell Shapiro	Member
Glenn Campbell, Esq.,	Member
Roy Probeyahn	Member

GUESTS: Kevin Darcy, SCDPW Transportation

STAFF: Heidi Zeitler, Senior Clerk Typist, Suffolk County Office of Handicapped Services

EXCUSED: Judy Record, Joseph Sanseverino, Valerie Lewis, Barbara Falkman, Paulette Bartunek, Jim Sorrentino, Kleo King, Esq., Terry Maccarrone

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 2, 2009: Beverly asked if there were any changes to be made to the minutes as distributed. There were none. Roy made a motion to accept the minutes as distributed and Jack seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were unanimously approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: Beverly had nothing new to report.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Architectural Barriers – Lew said he hasn't had a chance to visit the Costco which Mitch spoke about at the last meeting.

Community Partnership – Frank went to a J.E.E.P. (Joint Emergency Evacuation Program) meeting in Yaphank last week where they discussed emergency evacuation procedures for people with disabilities. Right now there are 450 people registered with JEEP, but they feel there should be considerably more people who should be registered. They discussed trying to make it easier for people to register and also what is necessary for an evacuation plan in the event of an emergency. They also discussed changing the name of JEEP to something more along the lines of a special needs registry to make it more obvious.

Frank attended a meeting with DSS and representatives from the Welfare to Work Commission at Touro Law Center in December. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ADA Compliance issues as they pertain to DSS.

Mitch wanted to know if our emergency evacuation procedures are being looked at more closely because of what happened in Haiti. Frank indicated that he is working with FRES to increase participation in the Special Needs Registry, but this is not related to the tragedy currently unfolding in Haiti.

Glenn thought that there was a centralized evacuation site. Frank said there are a series of shelters and some have accessibility issues. Leg. Kate Browning said she has been to many FRES (Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services) meetings where they have organized drills to practice for emergency evacuations. FRES hopes that if they give 72 hours notice to evacuate, people will listen and evacuate before the worst of the storm hits so they are out of harms way.

Mitch asked about shelters on Long Island that were designated as bomb shelters back in the 1960's. Leg. Kate Browning said some of the shelters do have generators and they also have large containers with supplies in them but after time these items expire. Frank said with something like a hurricane the intent would be to try and distribute supplies where they will need them.

Beverly asked what if there was a biological attack or something of an immediate emergency with no fore warning. Leg. Kate Browning suggested we invite FRES to one of our SCDAB meetings to discuss and address some of these issues. Frank suggested having FRES come in the spring because they start setting up for hurricane season. Beverly made a motion to have FRES come to our SCDAB meeting May 2010 and address the board on emergency preparedness and disability issues. All were in favor and the motion was unanimously approved.

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Education - Teresa said one of things she was going to share with us is already in the handouts, the extension of the Regents competency test safety net. It has been extended to all students entering the 9th grade in 2011. They will be eligible to take the test throughout their high school career up until graduation or 21 years of age.

Back in February's 2009 SCDAB report, Teresa spoke about discussions taking place to review the status of the IEP diploma. There had been meetings to determine whether or not the IEP diploma option should remain in place, or if some other diploma type should be created. The decision at the time was to keep the IEP diploma option in place for students classified by the Committee on Special Education who are unable to meet the rigorous standards of the Regents and RCT tests.

No new information has come to light on possible changes to diploma titles, which may include a diploma for Career and Technical course completion.

In addition, the new State IEP format has been created and shared with all school districts. This new revised format is to be adopted by all school districts for IPs for the 2011-12 school years. The schools have their work cut out for them, revising their electronic format for their ID development and goal banks. The revisions will necessitate re-training all professional staff and implementing the new IEP format for the 2011-2012 school years.

Teresa mentioned that some of the Western Suffolk BOCES schools where they service students with cognitive disabilities, developmental disabilities and medically fragile students, they received Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) papers on several students. These are students that reside in Avalon Gardens in Smithtown. This is a new issue never dealt with in the school setting before. For the past two weeks they have been meeting with different agencies to put in place a viable policy on how to work together as a team with a student who has DNR papers.

Housing – Vacant.

Legislation – Vacant. Frank reported that the State Assembly had an "Awareness Day" where they proposed a number of laws that would benefit people with disabilities. Information about this is included in the hand-out packet. Most of the laws were passed by the Assembly but then died in the Senate. There were 3 pieces of legislation that made it through both houses but were ultimately vetoed by the governor.

Jack mentioned that Assembly 520 concerns the topic we discussed earlier regarding localities preparing for and responding to disaster by requiring counties to maintain a registry of people of ages with disabilities who may require evacuation assistance and shelter during a disaster.

Beverly asked about Assembly 584-A which requires polling places to be accessible to voters. Frank said that was one of the two that was vetoed by the governor. Frank said he thinks the governor vetoed it because it doesn't give the state enough time.

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There was discussion over the accessible voting machines and which one would be replacing all lever voting machines in the near future.

Roy reported that OMRDD is in the process of going through Request for Proposals to spend some new money they received. The Task Force on Aging out will be having Legislative Brunch on February 12, 2010, 11:00 a.m. at 415A Oser Ave., Hauppauge. Open to everyone and no fees.

Transportation - Cliff was absent. Beverly spoke to Bruce via email about the cuts that are being proposed for Long Island Bus. Bruce said Long Island Bus cuts affect Nassau County Paratransit and bus routes only. Long Island Bus is part of the MTA which cutting Long Island Railroad service to Eastern Suffolk too. Bruce suggests that SCDAB send a letter protesting cuts to all State Senators and Assemblyman from Nassau & Suffolk and copy all Legislatures in Suffolk County.

Bruce said you might want to also ask DPW Transportation Division Representative Kevin Darcy to report what plans if any, they have to cut SCAT service now and in the near future. Kevin Darcy's answer should lead to any further steps you might want to take, please say hello to everyone.

Kevin said at this point and time there are no cuts planned.

Jack made a motion for SCDAB to send a letter protesting Long Island Bus cuts to all State Senators and Assemblyman from Nassau & Suffolk and to copy all Legislatures in Suffolk County as well. E-mail would be the easiest and fastest way to contact them. Mitch seconded the motion all were in favor to send the letter.

Jodi/VESID said that a co-worker who uses SCAT brought two recent incidents on the bus to her attention. On one occasion the bus driver didn't lock down another passenger's wheelchair and when she pointed this out to him, his response wasn't so nice and she reported the bus driver. Another time a passenger who might have had emotional issues started to get a little panicky and again the bus driver didn't handle it well. Jodi's co-worker asked if the bus drivers are trained to work with people that have a variety of disabilities.

Kevin said the bus drivers do get sensitivity training which is conducted every year and it addresses all the issues Jodi mentioned. Jodi said that a couple of weeks after her co-worker made that complaint against the bus driver, the same bus driver informed her that he knew she was the one that had made the complaint against him.

Kevin said they address these issues as soon as they get the complaint. If they know the time, date, bus driver and bus number they look into it, action will be taken and has been taken in the past. Kevin told Jodi to have her co-worker call him directly and he will look into it further.

Jack asked where we stand regarding the Braille bus stops signs.

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At the last SCDAB meeting Kevin had mentioned that no one had gotten back to him regarding the Braille bus stop signs so Mitch volunteered to take the task on and make some calls. Mitch reported that he found two resources so far, one in Connecticut and the other is in East Northport, Long Island.

The one on Long Island is called "Signs by Tomorrow". Mitch suggested another Task Force meeting to decide what exactly we need the signs to look like, how many, etc. Mitch said he has also been in contact with Louisville, Kentucky Dept of Transportation/Signs Division.

Jack said he would prefer we deal with local people to help provide jobs. If these companies don't respond than we can move on to others. Jack said he would call his contact again and ask him to reach out to Kevin and Mitch once more.

Mitch said the two contacts he reached out to were for resource purposes.

Mitch also mentioned a Newsday article in today's paper about plans to improve safety on Main Street in Smithtown where a little girl was recently struck and killed by a car as she was crossing the street. The article is included in today's hand-outs. Mitch would like SCDAB to write a letter to the DOT Traffic and Safety in support of putting in audible signs rather than the conventional signs mostly for the visually impaired and blind people.

Leg. Kate Browning has contacted DPW on several occasions because she feels the timing of the lights is not long enough to allow a person to safely cross the street.

Glenn said they have been working on a campaign regarding the red light cameras so if Mitch would like to draft a letter regarding this problem SILO would be glad to help advocate for it.

Frank added that our Suffolk County Disability Board might want to put a letter together as well.

Employment – Alice reported that a new store called Whole Foods Market will be opening in Lake Grove Commons Shopping Center in Lake Grove on March 17, 2010, and they will be looking to hire about 130-150 people. They will be paying \$10.00 an hour to begin with and paid time off, pro-rated benefits with a goal of working towards full time benefits. You must apply on-line at www.wholefoods.com starting the first week in February and they will be conducting phone interviews only. The store is run on the concept of team effort and they promote from within. They also have stores in Jericho and Manhasset. The applicant must be willing to work on the weekends otherwise they won't even consider the applicant. If you want to work part-time you must give the ability to work Friday, Saturday, Sunday and holidays.

Alice also handed out information about "The Soldier's Project", which offers psychological counseling to military service members/vets who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. They also offer counseling to their loved ones – girlfriends, boyfriends, spouses, children, stepchildren, parents and grandparents and counseling to bereaved family members.

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There is no insurance necessary and all their services are **free** and confidential. There is no limit to the number of visits or appointments. They are not attached to the military. You can contact them directly by calling (516) 284-7531 and their website is www.thesoldiersproject.org

Alice also mentioned the VESID Outreach on site at the One Stop Employment Center is now offered 4 times a month instead of 3 times a month and the orientation is provided by SILO.

Beginning on March 23, 2010 the One Stop Employment Center will be offering monthly appointments with a Community Work Incentive Coordinator who is subcontracted through social security to provide individual benefits appointments for SSI and SSDI clients.

COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:

Suffolk County Office of Handicapped Services – Frank had nothing new to report.

Suffolk County Parks - Terry was excused.

S. C. Department of Social Services - Linda reported as of December 2009 there are 395 open CDPAP cases.

Also Effective April 2010 there will be no more face to face interviews required for Medicaid.

As of January 2010 per a State Administrative Directive there is no more Resource Test (Assets) for Medicaid eligibility for those under age 65.

S. C. Office of Public Information - Debbie reminded everyone that agencies and individuals can now sign up to receive an email notification when a new Civil Service Exam Announcement Summary has been posted. Those interested can sign up on the county home page (Subscribe to our E-updates).

She also reported that in the past the County Public Information Office has worked with the Office of Handicapped Services and FRES to help publicize the JEEP program and in light of the earlier discussion on the JEEP program, she will be happy to do so again.

VESID – Jodi had nothing new to report.

Old Business – None

New Business – None

S.C. Department of Health/Division of Children with Special Health Care Needs

Barbara was excused.

S.C. Department of Public Works/Transportation Division - John retired.

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Glenn/SILO - Glenn had nothing new to report.

S.C. Human Rights Commission - Paulette was excused.

S.C. Community Development – Joseph was excused.

S.C. Library System – Valerie was absent.

ADJOURNMENT: Jack made a motion to adjourn and Mitch seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m. The next meeting will be held on February 24th at 2:00 pm in the conference room, Building 158, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge.

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi Zeitler