

# Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board

October 29, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Approved

A meeting of the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board was held on October 29, 2014 in the Conference Room of Building 158, North County Complex, Hauppauge at 2:15 pm with Chairperson Roy Probeyahn presiding.

## **PRESENT:**

### **GROUP A**

Frank Krotschinsky, Esq.	Representing County Executive Steven Bellone
Chris Chatterton	Representing SCDPW Transportation Division
Barbara Falkman	S. C. Dept. of Health Services/Div. Services for Children with Special Needs
Lorena Gonzalez	S.C. Human Rights Commission
Tim Carew/Jim Eddings/ Ken Klassert	S.C. Department of Labor

### **GROUP B**

Joseph Delgado	Member
Valerie Lewis	Member
Michelle Santantonio	Member

### **GROUP C**

Teresa Strum	Member
Carolyn Schick	Member

### **GROUP D**

Roy Probeyahn, Chairperson	Member
Douglas King	Member
Beverly Cody	Member
Sandy Silver	Member
Clifford Hymowitz	Member
Diane Gaines	Member

**GUESTS:** Erin King, Brenda deJong, Robin Mayr, Patty Furino, Meesha Johnson-Intern at SILO

**STAFF:** Heidi Zeitler, Principal Clerk, Office for People with Disabilities

**EXCUSED:** Albert Rizzi, Mitch Shapiro, Joani Madarash, Garrett Hulett, Glenn Campbell, Esq.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF September 17, 2014:** Roy said the approval of September's minutes will be postponed until December because the minutes need to be re-worked.  
**Approval of the Minutes of September 17, 2014 & October 29, 2014 will be done in December.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Roy said the board sent a letter to Douglas Miller, Director-Suffolk County IT Department as motioned, to thank him for all his help in bringing Suffolk County websites into 508 Compliance.

Roy announced that long term member Kleo King resigned from the board to become the General Counsel for the N.Y.C. Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. We all extend our deepest thanks to Kleo for serving on the board and we wish her well in her new endeavor.

Roy read a thank you letter that board member Douglas King received from Director Jennifer Blaske at the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission and also on behalf of Chairperson Rabbi Dr. Steven Moss for taking the time to speak in support of IR 1620. These amendments will help to ensure meaningful protection for all those who live and work in Suffolk County. The Commission will not only investigate complaints alleging discrimination in employment and public accommodation but the County will also have the ability to hold an administrative hearing when appropriate.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:** Roy reported that OPWDD had two video conferences and one was with the Commissioner. Parents had a lot of negative comments about consolidated support services, soon to be known as self-determination or directed services. Roy was unable to attend but submitted his testimony in writing.

Phase II Front Door policy has been suspended indefinitely without further notice.

Task Force on Aging Out next meeting is scheduled for November 19<sup>th</sup> and is located on Oser Ave.

Board members discussed sheltered workshops.

OPWDD is moving away from a continuum of services.

OPWDD is launching an Enhanced Employment Program for the individuals they serve and increasing funding.

OPWDD is going to move into the mental health arena to facilitate the integration of newly diagnosed individuals into acute care system.

SCDAB

October 29, 2014

Page 3

**Architectural Barriers** – Vacant. Frank said he was asked to contact DPW Commissioner regarding this vacancy and the Commissioner said he will find a replacement for Lew.

Frank also discussed with the Commissioner all of the concrete work which is being done over at the H. Lee Dennison Building. Frank said the ramp is way too long and since they put the Traffic Court in the Dennison building, access has been a real problem. The stair case in the building is going to be replaced so Frank suggested that maybe they can redesign the access too. Frank also told him he would be happy to meet with someone and go over the access problems. They also discussed some of the ongoing problems with the North County Complex such as sidewalks, curb cuts and parking lot signs.

**Community Partnership** - Frank had nothing new to report.

**Education** - Teresa said that Western Suffolk BOCES received a letter from Disability Rights of N.Y. inquiring about one of the programs they have at their Jr./Sr. High School where they have a workshop activity center. Students go into this workshop 1 period a week to learn work responsibilities and how to set up direct deposit accounts. Disability Rights of N.Y. are questioning the fact that they might be housing a sheltered workshop and want to come in to speak to them and see what is going on. Western Suffolk BOCES asked their contacts at OPWDD to come in before the meeting to see if they are breeching any laws. Teresa anticipates that their meeting will go well and they will be able to explain that they are not housing a sheltered workshop. Teresa said there is great value to a child being trained in specific tasks and responsibility.

Board of Regents proposed the Multiply Pathways Initiatives and is putting it out for public comment. It's still geared towards obtaining a regent's diploma but what they are proposing to remove one of the five mandatory regents, not for all students but for those students that would benefit from this plan and replace that regent with the C-DOSS, CET or Arts pathway.

It will help students that might not have the capability of passing all five regents, it limits them but also gives them another pathway to excel in another area and still walk away with a diploma.

**508 ADA Compliance Committee** - Frank said the testing application was sent out and volunteers needed to have some knowledge of computers in order to test the website. They asked the volunteers to work with SILO and Blind Spot to complete these applications. Once completed they were to click submit and they would be forwarded to IT Dept. but there was a glitch with the applications being forwarded to the IT Dept. The testing will be re-scheduled and hopefully we will have more volunteers for next time. They also want to consider people with other disabilities besides the visually impaired. The proposal was to have this project completed in phases and the first phase was to be done with the visually impaired.

Douglas asked about sending an email blast out to get volunteers to test the website and Frank said that OPWD does have a provider list that could be used.

SCDAB

October 29, 2014

Page 4

Meesha said she was one of the testers for the website. She said she forwarded the application to her caseworker at NYS Commission for the Blind and also to National Foundation for the Blind where she is a member. Some of the comments that came back to her were that the pdf format was very difficult for people who are blind because it's not accessible. Even though the pdf format was a deterrent for some individuals that are blind, Meesha said she was able to complete the application with no problems.

Valerie said she has been on this board for 12 years and even after all these years she still hasn't received any handouts in accessible format and feels that it's a disgrace.

Roy updated everyone that at the last meeting Glenn Campbell was nominated and voted in to take over as Chair of the 508 Committee but he has since declined this position.

Frank made a motion to make Valerie the new Chairperson of the 508 Committee, Cliff seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

**Housing** - Michelle announced that the next Fair Housing training will take place in early December. Michelle will email information to Heidi so she can forward to the board.

A conference is scheduled at Hofstra on December 10<sup>th</sup> which is also Human Rights Day. They will be releasing results from a study concerning current lending patterns on L.I. and giving an over view about fair housing laws.

Fair Housing Accessibility First asked L.I. Housing Services to be a prime sponsor at a major conference in the spring on Long Island. It will be related in large part to people with disabilities and their rights in the housing realm and they will also be looking for co-sponsors.

Frank asked everyone on the board if they have something to distribute to board members please send it in word document so the visually impaired members can read it.

Cliff spoke about a Federal project in Gordon Heights which was eligible for housing choice vouchers but the landlord didn't want to have housing choice voucher eligible apartments anymore. Congressman Bishop actually got housing choice vouchers for every apartment and now the Town will be responsible for all those units.

Cliff was asked by the Town Supervisor to look into section 202 housing to ensure the right amount of accessible apartments are being provided to residents. The first ones Cliff will be addressing are the ones they are going to build where the Coram Cinema used to be.

SCDAB

October 29, 2014

Page 5

**Legislation** - Douglas said the Legislative Breakfast that was held on October 17, 2014 was very well attended with almost 500 people.

CDPAP Program was brought to his attention. If a consumer has over 40 hours of time for a worker to come in, that person now has to hire another person for the CDPAP Program as an employee. Douglas is looking into it further.

**Transportation** - Valerie said next transportation sub-committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. Valerie announced that they have a new member on the committee named Glen and she feels he will be a great asset to the committee.

**Employment** - Tim said in conjunction with Suffolk County OPWD and Suffolk County Dept. Labor /Licensing & Consumer Affairs they held a Job Fair in Recognition for National Disability Employment Awareness month and about 330 people attended. They wanted to thank everyone for their help in getting the word out about the fair.

#### **COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:**

**Suffolk County Office for People with Disabilities** - Frank reported he attended a 2 day ADA training in Buffalo which was hosted by the Great Plains ADA Center. They covered reasonable accommodation, architectural barriers and effective communications with people with disabilities but they didn't talk much about transportation in relation to the ADA.

Frank recently spoke to a County administrator who feels strongly that the County needs to develop a countywide ADA policy. Most Suffolk County departments have ADA policies in place but they are not consistent. The County did initiate a policy of complying with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in terms of the language access so Frank suggested they combine the effective communications with the print disabled community into this policy. Frank will report more on this at future meetings.

Frank said he recently became a member of the Domestic Violence Task Force. Frank felt it was important to be on this task force because there is a real issue with domestic violence and abuse of people with disabilities in the home.

Diane mentioned that a disabled woman recently came to a safe house, which is a safe haven from domestic violence and she ended up having an episode and now she is in jail.

**S.C.D.P.W./Division Transportation** - Chris said based on meetings with Marilyn Tucci and the SILO committee it was agreed that there isn't enough space for someone's service animal to travel comfortably with their owner on some of the smaller SCAT buses.

SCDAB

October 29, 2014

Page 6

Chris said transportation just acquired four new buses of the same size but in order to accommodate the service animals some of the seats were moved back so the dogs could fit comfortably.

Paratransit statistics were discussed.

**S.C. Parks** - Terry was absent.

**S.C. Department of Social Services** - Traci Barnes was absent.

**S.C. Dept. of Health/Division of Children with Special Health Care Needs** - Barbara reported that they had a transition workshop for parents of children who are transitioning to the preschool program. They also had a social and emotional development conference for young children on October 21, 2014 and it was very well attended and 193 people registered.

Barbara also reported that there are 4,630 children ages 3-5 years of age in Suffolk County receiving services in the Early Intervention Program and 1,850 children ages birth-3 years of age.

**S.C. Human Rights Commission** - Lorena reported that the new housing law was filed with the Secretary of State on October 23, 2014 and will go into effect on January 21, 2015.

**S.C. Community Development** - Vacant.

**SILO** - Joe said SILO will be starting up a new Diabetes II Self-Management Program in the near future in conjunction with the University of Albany School of Excellence.

Post graduate SEPTA starting up at SILO, families still need opportunity to advocate.

SILO is also working on a new initiative with Rev. Patti to look at what Suffolk County is doing with the Emergency Preparedness Plan for People with Disabilities.

This Friday they will be having a consumer Halloween Holiday Party at SILO, free admission, free food and time will be 12:00 p.m.

**ACCES-VR** - Sandy reported that Frank was honored at breakfast for "Advocate of the Year". Access VR exceeded goals for the month and hope to continue to lead in New York State. Four more staff persons were added to the Riverhead office and they continue to need more work space in order to work efficiently. Their office has upgraded to Outlook 365 so all email address have changed but old emails will still work too. They are also making improvements to their orientation process so they can email appointment confirmations and include travel directions.

There is a new law that will have Access-VR entering the High Schools 2 years before the students graduate.

SCDAB  
October 29, 2014  
Page 7

**Suffolk County Rehabilitation Council** - Joani was excused.

**Old Business** - None

**New Business** - Roy said Mike Stoltz asked for a sabbatical and said he would try and send a representative to future meetings.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Douglas made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Michelle seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m. The November and December meetings are combined into one so the **next meeting will be held on December 3, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. in the Conference room, Building 158, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Heidi Zeitler*