

**CITY OF PITTSBURGH/ALLEGHENY COUNTY
TASK FORCE ON DISABILITIES
APRIL 16, 2007
MINUTES**

Location: First Floor Conference Room
Civic Building, 200 Ross Street
Pittsburgh, PA

Members Present: Jeff Parker, Chairperson, Aurelia Carter, Janet Evans, Liz Healey, Paul O'Hanlon, John Tague

Members Absent: Katherine D. Seelman, Co-chair, Linda Dickerson, Sarah Goldstein, Milton Henderson, Rich McGann

Others Present: Judy Barricella, Elizabeth Brown, Alysha Carroll, Cassa Collinge, Dianne Gallagher, Donna Joyce, Chuck Keenan, Danielle Lenge, Denise McArthur-Turner, Richard Meritzer, Charles Morrison, Teresa Nellans, Elzine Plundett, Kenneth Puckett, Paula Lackore Rule, Sally Jo Snyder, David Stragar, Evelyn Stypula

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Parker at 1:05 PM.

Introductions:

Everyone introduced themselves.

Approval of the March 2007 Minutes:

Ms. Evans moved TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES. Ms. Carter seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Financial Report:

Jeff Parker passed out copies of the report. The balance through the end of March is \$14,166.52. If you remove the money we committed to Disabilities Connection from the balance, the remaining balance is \$3,966.52. March interpreting charges were higher than usual because they included extra interpreter services for the meeting with County Executive Onorato. Diane Gallagher of the Center for Hearing and Deaf Services has offered to reduce our fees for interpreters, and we have accepted her offer with thanks. Mr. O'Hanlon moved to ACCEPT THE FISCAL REPORT. Ms. Evans seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Community Development Block Grants:

Donna Joyce, Manager of Operations for the Department of Economic Development and Cassa Collins, Assistant Manager for the Housing and Human Services Division spoke. They handed out a time line for proposals that the County was in the process of mailing out. They fund projects in the City, but only when they service the County population. The City of Pittsburgh, Penn Hills and McKeesport also get Community Development Block Grant funds. Her email is DJoyce@county.Allegheny.PA.US. Mr. Meritzer said he would get her the Task Force mailing list. It is a year round process. They go to meetings of groups. They also have an annual hearing. They did not know about the City County Task Force on Disabilities until we contacted them.

Mr. Parker explained what the City County Task Force on Disabilities was. He went on to say that the Task Force had discussions on activities involving employment that the grants go to. Ms. Joyce pointed out that they can only give grants to groups that apply for them. Mr. O'Hanlon responded that the priorities should be determined by the citizen participation process. Ms. Joyce said they look to the proposals for that. They receive over 450 proposals a year, all of which are reviewed. Ms. Collins said they look at the public participation in evaluating proposals. But they still need a proposal in hand before they can fund it. Mr. O'Hanlon asked where that was in the policies and Ms. Collins answered in the procurement process. Mr. O'Hanlon then asked if no one applies for something you don't do anything about that? Ms. Collins said they can give technical assistance to help people develop proposals. Mr. O'Hanlon said that advocacy groups have been saying for years the County needs to conduct a fair market housing study. Ms. Joyce said the application process is part of the needs assessment. Anyone can submit an application.

Ms. Healy suggested they treat the responses they get in the citizen participation process as if they were seeking funding. She suggested they set up some basic criteria that will ensure proposals support inclusion not segregation. Mr. O'Hanlon suggested that if we request an issue be dealt with, you send out a request for proposal (RFP) for that activity, much like a foundation would. The City has issued this type of RFP for Job Training Partnership Act (JPTA) funds. The RFP needs to happen quickly, by the end of May. There could be a request for a housing study. Do the CDBG regulations have any language for set asides?

Mr. O'Hanlon pointed out that there is nothing in the process time line that deals with citizen participation. The County held a meeting and mostly staff showed up. The disability community held a meeting and over 150 people showed up. Many of them testified. They submitted four pages of recommendations. None of them were reflected in the CDBG budget.

Ms. Healy responded rather than hash over the past let's create a set of policy guidelines. Can we have a discussion in mid-May about priorities, both principles in measuring programs and targeted RFPs? Could this be done by the next meeting? Mr. Parker asked how that works with Ms. Joyce's schedule. Ms. Joyce responded that this hit her all of a sudden. She knew there was a disconnect. She was surprised by the response she received in January. She had not heard this before. Ms. Healy pointed out they would like to be proactive and helpful. Mr. Parker asked if the Task Force can work with her over the next couple of weeks. Ms. Joyce responded she has supervisors and would need to check with them. Her Director is Dennis Devan and her supervisor is Jack Exler. Mr. Tague suggested we make recommendation to them through Ms. Joyce.

Ms. Joyce pointed out that this is the third year of a five year plan. The County will start their five year planning process in 2009. Mr. O'Hanlon asked wasn't the analysis of fair housing an independent part of the plan. Ms. Joyce said it was done and is currently being updated. Mr. O'Hanlon said the current plan was done in 2000 for the last five year plan. Ms. Joyce asked that recommendations be sent to them to forward to their supervisors. This could be worked into the current process.

Mr. O'Hanlon added people have lots of different disabilities. The plan is not in an accessible format. Ms. Joyce said we could fix that. Mr. Parker suggested they summarize these ideas. Could this be done in a week? Ms. Joyce said the Director is out of town until next week. Mr. Parker said they could work on the guidelines while she gets permission to do this. Ms. Joyce said she is open to anyone who needs technical assistance. She will get a digital form of the Time table. Mr. Meritzer said he would get it out to the groups. Ms. Joyce said this is great.

Emergence Service Issues:

Judy Barricella reported that she was invited to a meeting with the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for Allegheny County and Director of Customer Services for the City of Pittsburgh. They discussed three situations:

- They go into a home of an adult with a disability and the care taker has to go to the hospital, leaving the person with the disability alone;
- The care taker of the person with a disability goes to the hospital in the middle of the night and the person with the disability wants to accompany them in a wheelchair;
- Someone in a motorized wheel chair needs to be rushed to the hospital. What do they do with the wheelchair?

She is sending out questionnaires to all County EMS to come up with a uniform response.

Mr. Parker said one component of this issue is the Para transit system. Access worked with Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR) on a grant that PAAR had to deal with emergency transportation. For the first situation Mr. Parker suggested that we could ask attendant care providers to fill in for the caregivers. For the second situation, Mr. Keenan added that Yellow Cab can help. However, Mr. Parker responded that Yellow Cab no longer provides Para transit. And although Port Authority had a grant to assist to set up Para transit on a cash cab basis, no cab companies in Pittsburgh are able to provide this service.

Ms. Healy asked how we want to proceed. Do we want to brainstorm now or work outside the group? Ms. Barricella pointed out the meeting was two months ago. They want recommendations. Mr. Parker suggested the Task Force establish some committee work time and work on it then.

Evelyn Stypula said she has had problems in her family. She has to go to the emergency room after midnight. She uses a private company but it cost over \$100.00. Three Rivers Center for Independent Living (TRCIL) is working on this issue. They will work with the Task Force. Have carriers like PRN rotate once a week providing vans with lifts. Ms. Carter said she wants a sub committee to work on this issue. If someone is in a wheel chair on a bus and gets sick, what happens? Mr. O’Hanlon said his wife arranges transportation with an accessible limousine service.

Mr. Parker suggested they set up a conference call with Holly Dick of Access, PAAR, Ms. Stypula and Ms. Carter. Ms. Barricella asked about people with disabilities being left alone if caregivers go to the hospital. Mr. Parker said they could discuss that with existing programs. Ms. Barricella pointed out that Area Agency on Aging (AAA) answers 24 hours a day and they send people out. Ms. Healy responded the challenge with that situation is there is a 5000 person waiting list. At this point they would be considered for sheltered housing. Mr. Parker said Ms. Stypula works with TRCIL and he works with United Cerebral Palsy. Ms. Healy said through the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) there is an initiative to set up a system for attendant care. Mr. Tague added there are two pilot Advisory Committee on Employment (ACE) projects. The project in Allegheny County is working on priority backup. He will look into this. Ms Stypula said she went to the ACCESS office and they can not help because this is an emergency situation. We need to contact carriers that are not part of ACCESS.

Ms. Healy said we could target this area for CDBG funds. Ms. Cater said she would talk with Don Clark. Mr. Parker said he would speak with Holly at ACCESS and the UCP Attendant Care Program. He asked that Evelyn speak with TRCIL. Mr. Tague added Michael Bake Corporation was awarded a CDBG grant for an emergency evacuation plan. He will ask Carol Baker of the ACE Committee.

Pittsburgh Regional Alliance Grant:

Ms. Barricella reported the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance is promoting activities for the 25th anniversary of the Pittsburgh region. They are providing grants of \$50,000 to organizations to create projects that highlight the region. The County is hosting a brainstorming meeting to have a disability project. The anniversary is next year.

Ms. Healy suggested a video or photojournalism project on how lives have changed. Mr. Tague suggested the presentation developed by Mr. O’Hanlon and Tina Calabro. Ms. Barricella added we could do something at the Warhol museum. Ms. Carter said Walgreen’s and other employers are hiring more people with disabilities.

Special Events Permits:

Elizabeth Brown reported how inadequate the current permit was on accessibility issues. She then presented what the new permit application would include. We had a meeting with Nadine Brnilovich who approves all special events permits. This is a way to educate the public. The representative from the Police Department was also there and she was very supportive of this change.

Ms. Healy asked what if they say not applicable. Ms. Brown responded that Mr. Meritzer will contact them to find out why. Dianne Gallagher asked when the change will go into effect. Mr. Meritzer said they are making other changes in the permit application and will implement all the changes the end of the month. Ms. Healy asked if an application for a non-compliant event is submitted, what happens. Mr. Meritzer pointed out that we do not want to deny permits, but we will work with the applicants to make them as compliant as possible. Mr. Tague pointed out this started five years ago with the Three Rivers Arts Festival. He appreciates the work the interns did. Next they need to get the County to require this level of accessibility. Ms. Lengle said most of the compliance should be physical access. Mr. Meritzer pointed out that we are concerned about identifying accessible parking and porta-johns. Ms. Evans pointed out that everybody uses the accessible porta-johns.

Information Sharing – The County Jail

Mr. Meritzer explained that when we had last discussed the County Jail, Ms. Phillips informed us there was a committee which works with the various parts of the Justice system chaired by Judge McDaniel. She said she would talk to Judge McDaniel about having a meeting with the Task Force Committee working on this issue. Subsequently she inadvertently sent an email to Mr. Meritzer, which was meant for someone else, asking about the meeting. When Mr. Meritzer sent her a response she explained the mistake and asked him not to set up the meeting.

Mr. Puckett said since the Task Force set up the sub-committee they have only met once. There are problems with other aspects of the legal system (Public Defenders, Mayview, etc.). Ms. Phillips asked him to meet with Judge McDaniel but he felt uncomfortable. Mr. Parker added there was also a misunderstanding about the judge coming to a Task Force meeting. Ms. Phillips wants to set up a separate meeting. We will work through Ms. Phillips. Mr. Puckett pointed out that he is not a Task Force member. Mr. Parker responded that we work through subcommittees and although Mr. Puckett is not a member of the Task Force, we are glad to have him work with us as a member of the subcommittee on this issue. Dr. Seelman and Richard McGann are also on this subcommittee. It was decided that the Task Force will keep in contact with Ms. Phillips for action on this issue.

Information Sharing

Mr. Parker reported that he was copied on the response to Ms. Evans' invitation to the Mayor. Although the Mayor responded he is unavailable in June, it appeared that May and July were possibilities. Mr. Parker asked Miss Evans to invite the Mayor to the next meeting he can attend.

Mr. Puckett informed us that Larry Hockenberry is in Johnstown Hospital. He was in a car accident and broke both his legs. He also had internal bleeding. Once that is taken care of he will be going to Harmerville. Mr. Parker added he is in a hospital where the TTY is not working. Mr. Puckett said he is working with the social worker at the hospital to get a new TTY. Ms. Healy pointed out they can get a TTY on loan from the Center for Assistive Technology. Mr. Puckett said he has been trying everywhere.

Mr. Parker announced that Teresa Nellans has been appointed to the state Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Ms. Healy announced the Peal Center held their conference. 400 people attended. It was a very successful event.

Mr. O'Hanlon asked why permits are issued to businesses that have barriers that could be corrected. Mr. Keenen said the City only reviews occupancies when there is a change of use. Mr. Tague pointed out that it is a requirement to remove barriers. Mr. Meritzer said that both Land Use and Development the Bureau of Building Inspection are involved. Mr. O'Hanlon reminded the group that the head of the Bureau of Building Inspection was to speak with us about snow removal. Mr. Parker asked Mr. Meritzer to invite them to the next meeting to discuss both issues.

Ms. Healy announced the Peal Center is bringing in Bobbie Silverstein this Friday. The workshop will be from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Monroeville. He is the author of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act reauthorization. She apologized for the late notice; there was a communications mishap.

Action Items:

Ms. Healy brought up our need to work on the Guidelines for the County Economic Development Office. Mr. Parker appointed Mr. O'Hanlon, Ms. Healy and Mr. Tague to that committee. He pointed out that these members are on other committees. He said he would work with Mr. O'Hanlon and Ms. Healy to write recommendations. Ms. Healy pointed out that she would be busy.

Mr. Parker pointed out there needs to be a Nominating Committee meeting this month. He suggested the Task Force consider having a working meeting and everyone could work on the issues of nominations, guidelines, and block grant funding.

Vox Pop:

Ms. Healy informed the group that our Philadelphia counterpart has lists of questions for the candidates in their Mayoral Election.

Ms. Evans moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Carter seconded the Motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING:

DATE: May 21, 2007
TIME: 1:00 P.M.
LOCATION: Large Conference Room
200 Ross Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219