

City of Pittsburgh/Allegheny County
Task Force On Disabilities
January 28, 2008
MINUTES

Location: First Floor Conference Room
Civic Building, 2000 Ross Street
Pittsburgh, PA

Members Present: *Jeff Parker, Chairperson, Katherine D. Seelman, Co-chair, John Tague, Rich McGann, Sarah Goldstein, Janet Evans*

Members Absent: *Aurelia Carter, Linda Dickerson, Liz Healey, Milton Henderson, Paul O'Hanlon*

Others Present: *Victoria Campbell, Mary Figlar, Dianne Gallagher, Chuck Keenan, Denise McArthur-Turner, Richard Meritzer, Charles Morrison, Bill Newland, Teresa Nellans, James C. Noschese, Dana Phillips, Terry Reynolds, Robin Smith, Sally Jo Snyder, David Stragar*

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Parker at 1:02 PM.

Introductions:

Everyone introduced themselves. Mr. McGann asked if the nominees for Task Force Membership to introduce themselves.

Approval of the December Minutes:

Motion to accept the minutes were passed unanimously.

It was moved by Janet Evans and seconded by John Tague TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED. The motion was passed unanimously.

Financial Report: Mr. Parker passed out copies of the financial report. There is \$9,345.29 remaining in the budget. Most of the money is being spent on captioning and interpreters for our meetings and the fiscal agent. Initial budget was \$23,409 (?) of which \$10,200 have been used for disability connections with a total of \$3,900 spent.

Mr. Parker asked Richard Meritzer to pass out copies of the report. There is \$9,345.29 remaining in the budget. There was \$625 spent on fiscal agents and cart services.

To review, there was \$23,409 to start. There was \$10,200 spent on disability connections and \$3,900 spent on.*

The annual meeting expenses came out of last years budget. There was motion TO ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL REPORT. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tague. The motion passed unanimously.

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank Partnership Plan (Georgette Powell & Cindy Moore)

Executive director Cindy Moore and Community Outreach Coordinator Georgette Powel was present to explain the significance of forming a network with us in hope of increasing its food bank disability outreach and education initiative program. Ms. Moore talked about Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank mission to end hunger by the year 2015. They also presented a 2007 gap study of Allegheny County to address the disparity between the numbers of people in need and the number of people whom food emergency services are presently reaching with the intention of bridging the gap. The gap was evident, especially with people with disability. In Evidence of the study, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank is planning to work with network organization to help demolish this problem. They want to work with the Task Force on Disability to help increase their network. Georgette Powel emphasize the significance of being proactive in reaching out to people, especially reaching out to people of disabilities. There were two questions about the qualification and the way the food program works. In order for one to be qualify, they'll have to be 150% over the poverty level.(?) Mr. Parker elaborated more about the way the program works. He also mentioned that transportation plays a significance role in terms of increasing distribution. He mentioned to Ms. Powell and Ms. Moore that the Task Force on Disability will help distribute the information to their members. The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank mentioned that they're doing more outreach for volunteers. John asked about the accessibility of food banks location. The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank responded that there are food pantries in every neighborhood. Mr. Parker asked about the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank event. Mr. Moore responded that the event is going to be on February 1st, 2008 from 9-11. It's an open house event. Mr. Parker mentioned that Task Force on Disabilities will inform its members about the events and assigned a task force member to attend. Rich asked about the time involvement in ones receiving food from one of the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Ms. Moore mentioned that there's a 2 hours period from start to finish. Rich responded that the time frame could be a barrier due to the hour's conflict with Access. Chris asked about the Greater Pittsburgh Community location. Ms. Moore responded that its www.pittsburghfoodbank.org. Chris asked about food delivery and Mrs. Moore replied NO. Chris mentioned that the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank should conduct a survey on their website about its service to see who benefit from the service. Rich asked about the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank office. Ms. Moore replied that it's located in Duquesne. Rich asked if they provide deaf interpreters. Ms. Moore replied No. Sara asked if one will have to go to the food bank in their area. Ms. Moore replied yes. Rich asked does the staff go to people house to

deliver food. Ms. Moore replied No; instead they relied on network affiliates to deliver service. Rich then replied that the Greater Pittsburgh Community Bank should consider delivering food to people house to at least make them feel good due to fact that the deaf and blind at most times don't have access to drive. Ms. Moore replied that they plan on looking into to that.

Allegheny County Jail Initiative (Ken Puckett)

Mr. Parker introduced Mr. Puckett. Mr. Puckett reported his report and findings about the Allegheny County Jail in dealing with inmates who were deaf. He discussed the steps in which a deaf, deaf blind or hard of hearing go through after they were arrested. Upon arrival at the jail, a person is place in a holding area where the person is thoroughly searched. After the search, the person is then taken to an intake room where they are given a temporary identification wristband and is asked questions from the medical staff about their specific needs and accommodations due to disability, health issues and so on. If the person is in need of any accommodations due to disability, or health issues, the medical staff accommodates by bringing in a sign language interpreters to identified that individual needs. After that initial process, the person is taken to a Pre-Arrestment Holding where they wait to meet with the judge. During the arraignment, the person is provided a sign language interpreter. Also the person is moved to a television room where the judge appears on the screen. The interpreter is provided for individuals who deaf or deaf blind at this time too. After the arraignment, a full medical screening is conducted. During the process, the medical staff informs management of the person's needs; such as the need for sign language interpreters. If the deaf individual mentions the he or she didn't have an interpreter at the court, the medical staff notifies the court so that a appropriate process is done with a language interpreter at site. In terms of cell placement; inmates with special needs are placed in special 24 units pods. Mr. Puckett explained that during the tour he ran into a deaf inmate who had problem using the public phone. Mr. Puckett mentioned that the jail staff should explained to the inmates about the times they were allowed to use the phone and he also recommended that the court and correction system needs to improved to better accommodates the inmates that are deaf, deaf blind and hard of hearing. There were several questions after Mr. Puckett reports. One was from Chris; he asked about the individuals getting a hearing aid. Mr. Puckett replied that the individuals have to go through a medical process to determine that. Mr. Puckett added that hearing aid aren't allow because it's said to be dangerous. Rich thanks Mr. Puckett for his report about the Allegheny County Jail.

OVR Building (DJ Stemmler)

Ms. Stemmler presented the latest details of the OVR building. She mentioned that location and accessibility is in question. She's been working with the director of the OVR board on addressing the issues but no one has gotten back to her. Chris stated that he'll do additional pressing on executive director. Mr. Meritzer talked about the process of

implementing a 15min handicap parking space.(?) Mr. Meritzer said that he'll volunteer in doing the paper work if need be.

Task Force Updates

Rich highlighted on Tricle. He mentioned that the staff needs to learn patience and some of the staff need to be taught on operating the van, particularly on how to operate the seats. He went on to say that some of the bus drivers are great but some are awful on how they deal with the deaf and deaf blind people. Overall, he mentioned that the problem lies with communication. Mr. Parker commented on about a new program from Access called "Infinity", which is going to help alleviate the scheduling conflicts. Mr. Parker mentioned that PRN is currently using "Infinity" and others are slowly starting to use it. Mr. Parker then introduced Holly. Holly elaborated more on her work with Access in advocating for the deaf and blind. She highlighted on the fact that Access does take people to food pantries and the many people uses it. Sara mentioned that she's been hearing a lot of negatives things about Access from friends about the cost and trouble they're having with Access. Holly responded that due to sticker eligibility requirement some are having difficulty with Access. Mr. Parker mentioned to Holly, that there needs to be an evaluation of the Access Flyer so that's it's not misleading to riders. Holly continue and emphasize about the difference between conditional and unconditional.-----

Staff Update:

Mr. Meritzer reported that he have stating working with Interns, Kendra Jenkins who is the ADA Compliance Intern and Ida Bormentar who is the grants intern. Kendra has started working on other things and is going to be working on a hospital survey with Sally and will have a report by next meeting. Ida is currently working on two grants. One is requesting grants to fix the ramp at the Greenfield Community Center so that it's ADA compliance. In addition, last summer, an evaluation was done evaluating all the rec-center and a couple of them had non-compliance restrooms. Ida will be working on securing a grant that will fund in making the restrooms more accessible to disable youth at the Magee and Brookline Community Centers. Mr. Meritzer stated that he's been working on promoting visibility.

Chris stated that he'll be attending a housing meeting on Thursday 1/31/08. On Friday 2/1/ 08 he'll be going to Harrisburg and will meet with the Pennsylvania State Council for deaf and blind.

Janet used the opportunity to talk about her work with the Pittsburgh Housing Authority. There're going to be three meeting and her role is to help with the YAD V12. She also is going to invite the executive director Mr. Meechevio to attend Feb. or March Meeting.

Chris wants everyone to watch the Super-Bowl to see the Pepsi commercial.

Mr. Parker moved the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Tague seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 PM

The Next Task Force Meeting :

Date: February 18, 2008
Time: 1:00 P.M.
Location: Large Conference Room
200 Ross Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219