

Commission on Disability

Meeting Minutes March 14, 2024

Fairhaven Town Hall, 40 Center St, Fairhaven, MA 02719

Zoom Meeting code: 841-0127-4695 Passcode: 828067

Contact: [cod@fairhaven-ma.gov](mailto:cod@fairhaven-ma.gov)

Present: Eleanor Chew, Chair; Pamela Whynot, Vice-Chair; Glenn Gabbard, Treasurer; Donna Maino Lavalley, Secretary; Annmarie Chagnon; Krystal Lunn, new member; Martha Reed, Staff Liaison; Keith Silvia, Selectboard Liaison.

Absent: Ronnie Medina, Cara Viveiros.

Guests: Fairhaven Cable TV; Alissa DeSousa, Rare Riders.

I. Call Meeting to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Eleanor Chew. She read the state open meeting guidelines governing remote participation. All government meetings are available via web video conference and recorded by the government access channel. They are replayed on Channel 18 and posted online. Closed captioning is available for participants attending via Zoom.

II. Approval of Minutes: A motion to table the minutes until the next meeting was made by Eleanor Chew. Seconded by Annmarie Chagnon. Unanimously approved.

III. Treasurer's Report: Submission of FY2024 budget report listing balance of \$642.69. Motion to approve report by Pamela Whynot. Seconded by Annmarie Chagnon. Unanimously approved.

IV. Introduction of New Member: The new member sworn in by the town, Krystal Lunn, was introduced and welcomed to the Commission.

V. Old Business:

- a. Neighborhood News Articles: The COD discusses submitting monthly articles to the Neighborhood News in order to inform the community of the various events sponsored by the COD, as well as the work by the COD to promote full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community. Glenn Gabbard will submit one article per quarter starting during the April quarter. Items for possible submission were discussed, such as the recently received grant, and the July event, Diverse Abilities Celebration (DAC). A motion was made by Pamela Whynot to submit the articles by Glenn Gabbard (or others in the future) to the COD membership in advance. To then be submitted to the Neighborhood News, after review. Motion was seconded by Annmarie Chagnon. Unanimously approved.

- b. Update on the Grant Application to MA COD: Martha Reed reported that the closing on the grant is set for 4/1/24 at noon. The hiring process is to be completed by the first week of April.
- c. ASL Classes: Martha Reed provided information on the ASL CLasses for adults (age 16 and over) to be held at the Fairhaven Council on Aging starting on May 7, 2024. Classes will be held for ten weeks at 5:45-7:00 PM. Classes limited to 15 participants for \$5/class or a discount amount to be paid prior to the start of classes for \$40.00. Scholarships will be available.

Keith Silvia mentioned that an ASL class offered through the COD in the past was met with an overwhelming response. To account for that possibility, Martha Reed stated there will be a waitlist for those who are interested in attending after the class is full. The instructor, Shannon, is a member of the deaf community; and she will be invited to the April COD meeting. Motion was made by Annmarie to approve the monies, report, and information regarding the ASL class supplied by Martha Reed. Seconded by Pamela Whynot. Unanimously approved. It was noted by Annmarie that the Children's ASL class was not able to start at the Wood School because an instructor was not identified in time. Krystal Lunn mentioned that perhaps the COD could investigate the implementation of 'an ASL sign for the day' in a Morning Meeting at the elementary school(s). Annmarie and Pamela Whynot discussed possibly using a video approach to teaching ASL in the elementary schools. Martha Reed will ask Shannon for ideas and resources for the possible Morning Meeting at the schools.

- d. CTC Technology and Energy- Digital Access Strategic Plan: Report was provided by Eleanor Chew. The plan will be online to review. The Massachusetts Broadband Institute and CTC put together the questions and process for the survey/study. There were 400 responses from Fairhaven; and that is an impressive number for any town or our size.
- e. Huttleston Marketplace Klds' Days: Eleanor Chew will be the COD contact for Chris Richard, Head of Tourism and organizer of the Huttleston Marketplace activities during the summer. General discussion led to a motion to form a work group whose members (presently: Pamela, Annmarie, and Eleanor) will coordinate and assist with Marketplace events, and will be on-site representatives of the COD. The work group will recruit others to assist during the events. The motion was made by Annmarie Chagnon, and seconded by Krysta DeSousa. Unanimously approved.
- f. Funds for Accessibility: The budget line item will be discussed next meeting.

- g. Social Media: Glenn Gabbard reported on our presence on social media. COD has 251 followers which is about double of that in 2023. Presently COD is only on FaceBook. Annmarie questioned adding instagram or others. Martha Reed will check with the appropriate town offices of Fairhaven regarding allowed sites for posting.
- h. Department Head Meetings: A report was given by Glenn Gabbard regarding the meeting with the Fairhaven Police Department Chief, Captain Dorgan. Discussion involved the disabled-reserved parking violations. Presently, most people are politely asking car drivers to move their cars when parked in a disabled parking spot illegally. The police cannot ticket unless the property owner/vendor is in compliance, which includes proper signage and ground markings on the pavement.
- i. Diverse Abilities Celebration: July 28, 2024 from 11:00 to 3:00 at the Council on Aging. Sponsored by MO Life, the Council on Aging, and the Belonging Committee. "Blue" the police dog and other local groups will be at the event. The COD will be supporting the event. Motion made by Annmarie Chagnon, and seconded by Krystal Lunn. Passed with two abstentions.
- j. By-Laws Review: Discussion was tabled until next month's meeting

**VI. New Business: None**

**VII. Public Comment:** Public comment made by Alissa DeSousa of "Rare Riders," a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide adaptive bikes. Through personal experience, Alissa found out the great expense of bikes for children with special physical needs. She is hoping to donate a bike to Fairhaven to be used in town, and especially on the bike path. Further discussion is needed as to how to appropriate the bike to the town, and how to make it available to the children in town.

**VIII. Questions and Comments from COD:**

- 1. Glenn Gabbard brought up the need for new members, and requested that the commission members continue to enlist new members. He continues to work on enlisting new members, particularly at this time since some COD members' terms and their offices will be ending and will be coming up for reappointment in June 2024.
- 2. Krystal Lunn suggested that items be submitted to Eleanor Chew in time to be added to the agenda. Krystal is interested in discussing the playground equipment in town.
- 3. Eleanor Chew informed the COD that the Mass COD quarterly meeting will be on April 10, 2024, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Sign up online.

IX. Next Meeting Date: Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 6:00PM at the Town Hall

X. Adjournment: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Glenn Gabbard, seconded by Annmarie Chagnon, and passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 7:20PM

Submitted by Donna Maino Lavallee, Secretary