

FAIRHAVEN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Meeting Minutes January 5, 2022

Meeting held at Fairhaven Town Hall, 40 Center Street, Fairhaven

Contact: cod@fairhaven-ma.gov

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FAIRHAVEN,
MASS.

Present: Marcus D. Ferro (Chairperson), Wendy Graves (Acting ADA Coordinator), Glenn Gabbard (Treasurer), Maria Ruedlinger Walker (Secretary), Janice Alves, Jenna Benoit, Sarah Buck, Pamela Ferro, Donna Maino Lavallee, Pamela Whynot

Absent: Sue Makepeace, Ronald J. Medina, Diane Rocha

Guests and other attendees: Fairhaven Cable Access

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Marcus Ferro called the meeting to order @ 6:36 pm. Roll call, nine members were present which represented a quorum.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. The minutes from the Commission on Disability (CoD) meeting on October 6, 2021 were sent to all CoD members by email the week of January 5, 2022. Glenn Gabbard moved that the minutes from the CoD meeting on October 6, 2021 be approved; Donna Maino Lavallee seconded. Motion passed unanimously; one member abstained.

III. WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The CoD has five new members: Janice Alves, Jenna Benoit, Sarah Buck, Pamela Ferro (to be confirmed by the Selectboard), and Sue Makepeace. THANK YOU for joining!

IV. ORGANIZATION OF OFFICERS

A. Donna Maino Lavallee moved to nominate Pamela Whynot to Vice Chairperson position, Janice Alves seconded. All voted in favor, motion passed.
Maria Ruedlinger Walkers term on the CoD expires in 2022, and she has decided not to seek renewal. ACTION: A discussion was started on what it entails to be the CoD Secretary, and a decision on who will take over will be taken at the next meeting.

V. APPOINTMENTS

6:30 pm Sarah Nechamen, Outreach and Training Specialist at the [Disabled Persons Protection Commission \(DPPC\)](#) of Massachusetts. The DPPC is an independent state agency providing information, training, as well as a [24/7 staffed hotline](#) (1-800-426-9009) where individuals can report suspected abuse involving adults with disabilities. Attached are the slides Sarah Nechamen shared with the CoD (APPENDIX I).

7:00 pm Lieutenant Kevin W. Kobza, Public Information Officer at the Fairhaven Police Department. Lt. Kobza shared information about how individuals with special needs or medical conditions in the community can alert the police and fire department about their situation. The Fairhaven Police Department offer an [Alzheimer's/Resident Safety Alert Program](#), as well as a MA Disability Indicator Form. The Disability Indicator Form can be filled out at the main office, and is then forwarded from the

FPD to the state, to be entered in the MA 911 system. FPD are also able to enter notes with important information on an individual into a local emergency system, to ensure any first responders see the information in case of a 911-call. The FPD will possibly develop its own form for future use.

Maria Ruedlinger Walker mentioned positive experience with the Disability Indicator Form for a family member. Jenna Benoit raised the question on confidentiality if the form can be filled out and submitted online, and not in person. Will the individual be able to verify the information in person before it is entered into the local emergency system? Sarah Buck raised the question about seatbelt sleeves indicating medical conditions; Lt. Kobza replied that the FPD only have used sleeves indicating that a person is on the Autism spectrum.

Sarah Buck also raised the question about [the Vial of Life](#), which she was familiar with from previous work in Florida. Lt. Kobza mentioned that as of now, the Bristol County Sheriff's Department would be the office to contact.

Glenn Gabbard mentioned the app [Smart911](#), which has been promoted through the [Town of Fairhaven](#) for weather alerts, etc.

There is limited knowledge about these support systems in the community, and Pamela Whynot asked how the CoD can best assist the FPD in disseminating this information into the community; Lt. Kobza will stay in touch with the CoD for future collaboration.

VI. TOWN ACCESSIBILITY

- A. Tax Collector's Office:** In collaboration with Wayne Oliveira on the Historical Commission, ADA Coordinator and Interim Town Administrator Wendy Graves will initiate a meeting with a working committee to revive the discussion about accessibility in Town Hall. ACTION: Pamela Whynot and Sarah Buck will represent the CoD in the working committee.
- B. Event parking:** No news regarding event parking.
- C. Town Beach Accessibility:** Marcus Ferro has been in contact with Vinnie Furtado, Superintendent at the Board of Public Works. There is a discussion about adding handicap parking mats, and walkways at the Town Beach on Fairhaven. To solve the funding, a request will be made to include a proposal about accessibility improvements in the upcoming budget. The CoD will continue to present ideas of accessibility improvements, paving of the Town Beach parking lot being a high priority.
- D. Bus Stop Snow Removal/Winter Matters:** Pamela Whynot is compiling a list of all bus stop addresses, including the property owner's name and a photo of the location. The list should be completed mid-January. ACTION: The CoD decided not to reach out to property owners at this point, but instead to create a volunteer group who sign up to clear snow at bus stops – "Adopt a Stop". Marcus Ferro will write a letter introducing this idea to be published in the Neighborhood News, as well as in local Facebook groups. The CoD will keep working on a long-term solution, where property owners are more involved. Janice Alves brought up other safety concerns in regards to the SRTA bus stops, and will compile a list to present to the CoD.
- E. (F.) Special Education/Fairhaven Public Schools:** The CoD wants to make advocacy resources for parents of students with special needs more readily available. The CoD set as a goal to have something to present to the community before the start of the 2022-2023 school year. Glenn Gabbard also pointed out the need to support parents of infant and toddlers (early intervention), as the services through the public school district start at the age of 3. ACTION: Jenna Benoit will initiate a resource list to share with the community.

VII. TREASURER’S REPORT/LEDGER/BUDGET

The CoD has a yearly budget of \$ 1,000. The last budget was presented by Treasure Glenn Gabbard:

- \$ 525 Training
- \$ 75 Office supplies
- \$ 400 Seminars

Glenn Gabbard found out from the town of Fairhaven funds may be reallocated between the budget line items; the town requires a form to be filled out. Donna Maino Lavallee suggested that the CoD is more assertive, and request more funding from the town budget, possibly doubling the amount. Wendy Graves informed that it is possible to request more funds, although the request has to be presented in conjunction with clear projects/expenses. No specific decisions were taken at this time.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Handicap Parking Signs:** Nothing to report.
- B. Membership:** The letter published in the Neighborhood News in the fall resulted in new members on the CoD, which is allowing the CoD to continue to engage in the town of Fairhaven. Within the membership, the following groups are represented: parents and family members to persons with disabilities, as well as community members with disabilities and medical needs.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD):** Marcus Ferro suggest that the CoD ask permission form the town of Fairhaven to open a Facebook group and possible other social media accounts. This channel could then be used to share information from the MOD to the community, as well as other information important to community. ACTION: Marcus Ferro will contact Erin Costa in Town Hall to initiate social media accounts for the CoD.
- B. CoD members:** Sarah Buck suggested that the FPD is added as an agenda item to the CoD; she is interested in acting as a liaison to the FPD. Pamela Ferro is interested in joining the collaboration with the FPD. Donna Maino Lavallee proposed work groups within the CoD, to enable continued work in between the quarterly meetings. Maria Ruedlinger Walker suggested adding a volunteer list to the CoD member list, as an extra resource for future events and projects. ACTION: Add FPD as an agenda item for the March 2 meeting. Discuss formation of work groups within the CoD at the March 2 meeting.

XII. NEXT MEETING will be held on March 2, 2022 @ 6:30 pm, at the Fairhaven Town Hall, 40 Center Street. The meeting can also be attended virtually. Janice Alves moved to confirm the next meeting time, Pamela Whynot seconded. All voted in favor.

XIII. CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNEMNT

No other business to discuss. Donna Maino Lavallee moved to adjourn the meeting; Sarah Buck seconded. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned @ 8:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

APPENDIX I

Information shared by Sarah Nechamen, Outreach and Training Specialist, DPPC.

REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Deaf and Hard of Hearing callers, please use Video Relay Services (VRS) or MARElay (711) to contact DPPC hotline.

24 hours - 7 days a week, including holidays

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)
 300 Granite Street, Suite 404, Braintree, MA 02184
 Office Hours: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Monday - Friday

HOTLINE: (800) 426-9009
WEBSITE: <http://www.mass.gov/dppc/>

DPPC Mandated Reporters

- Public or private school teachers
- Educational administrators
- Social workers
- Family or guidance counselors
- Foster parents
- Medical personnel: physicians, nurses, chiropractors, etc.
- Medical examiners
- Dentists
- Police and probation officers
- Psychologists
- Animal Control Officers
- Day care workers
- **Private agencies** providing services to people with disabilities
- **State agencies** within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services

**Includes Interns and volunteers*

Reporting Agencies for Abuse Against Persons with Disabilities

<p>Department of Children and Families</p> <p>DCF</p> <p>Birth-17</p> <p>1-800-792-5200</p>	<p>Disabled Persons Protection Commission</p> <p>DPPC</p> <p>18-59</p> <p>1-800-426-9009</p>	<p>Executive Office of Elder Affairs</p> <p>EOEA</p> <p>60+</p> <p>1-800-922-2275</p>
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FREE DPPC MANDATED REPORTER TRAINING

Virtual and in-person trainings on reporting abuse of persons with disabilities, offered by the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)



LEARN

how to recognize signs of abuse, what you're required to report and how to report.



CONTACT

DPPCInfo@massmail.state.ma.us to schedule a virtual or in-person training for your organization.



SIGN UP

for one of our bi-monthly virtual trainings at dppcmandatedreportertraining.eventbrite.com

Sarah Nechamen to Everyone

DPPC reporting hotline:
1-800-426-9009

Department of Children
and Families reporting
hotline: 1-800-792-5200

Executive Office of Elder
Affairs reporting hotline:
1-800-922-2275

My contact information:
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