

## FAIRHAVEN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

### Meeting Minutes November 17, 2022

Held at Fairhaven Town Hall, 40 Center St., Fairhaven, MA. 02719

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

Present: Town Hall: Marcus Ferro (chair), Eleanor Chew (secretary)  
ZOOM: Glenn Gabbard (treasurer), Pamela Whynot (vice-chair), Pamela Ferro, Sarah Buck, Donna Maino Lavalle  
Guests: Fairhaven Cable Tv, Cameron Durant (staff liaison), Fire Chief Todd Correia.  
ALL VOTES WERE TAKEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Marcus Ferro chair called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., reading the guidelines for meetings.

**IV. B: PUBLIC SAFETY:** Marcus Ferro moved this item up on the agenda, taking it out of order as Chief Correia was joining us. Marcus then turned this part of the discussion over to Sarah Buck as she was the one that initiated this. She began by thanking the chief for joining us. She asked how we could best work together for people with disabilities and training also. Marcus asked this also so we could meet the needs of all. He said we have also had the police department join us for a discussion.

The chief said that the police and fire departments have a form to register individual. Sarah said she was curious as to what the fire department's policies were about evacuations. The chief responded saying that some members of EMS have additional training as to how to respond with individuals and they have members with family with various disabilities so they are aware. He said that he is always open to training and they work with the police department in knowing who has additional needs in the town but this only works if they are registered. He said one way we could help is to ensure that people are registering with the police and fire departments so they are aware of needs and concerns of people. He added that people can also sign up through the emergency alert system for updates in case of an emergency. Eversource also has a way to register people for their use, but this is not shared with other agencies. He warned that the Reverse 911 system does not work with all phones and that they don't want to overuse this so when there is a need people ignore it.

Pamela Whynot asked if there was training or a plan to help people out of town buildings and what people needed to do in the meantime. The chief said that Fairhaven Housing is trained and the department sends the SAFE Team to talk to them about what to do in an emergency. In an emergency they visit every unit to get people out of the building.

Chief Correia said that the issue is at town hall there is no safe place to move people to. In addition to local manpower, we have mutual aid agreements with neighboring towns to

come and assist with the response dependent on the situation. The fire department can also override the elevator if it is safe to use.

Marcus spoke about the seatbelt covers for those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, asking what we could do to make this safer for the department. The chief responded that he needs volunteers for the EMA team who respond in emergencies and they have cots specifically for seniors and those with handicaps. The chief said he was willing to come back at any time and was happy to be here today.

Sarah asked if we can access services when needed and Glenn Gabbard asked how to get to the RAVE information which the chief explained. Glenn asked if the chief had access to the current registrations and the chief said they are told about any information the police department has while they are on the way to an emergency. In response to Pam's question as to whether the police see what is registered on the fire page, the chief urged people to sign up on both department's pages.

Marcus thanked the chief for coming saying we would like to talk with him again so that we can more effectively work together.

We returned to the agenda as it was posted.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Pamela Whynot moved that we approve the minutes of the October meeting and Sarah Buck seconded it. The motion passed with 5 in favor and 2 abstentions. (The 2 abstentions were due to people's inability to vote as they were not at the October meeting).

**III. MEMBERSHIP:** Marcus Ferro said he was resending the letter to Neighborhood News and said he and Pamela Whynot will meet with people prior to recommending them to the Select Board. In this he hopes to avoid people saying yes and then not showing up. Sarah Buck asked if he could do an announcement on our Face Book page as well and Marcus said he would take of that. Cameron Durant asked how many vacancies we have and Eleanor Chew responded four.

**IV. TOWN ACCESSIBILITY:**

**A. TOWN HALL:** Marcus Ferro said this was an ongoing item and Cameron Durant said the Joe Booth study is moving forward but he did not have a date for the completion. Sarah Buck asked if we could look at upgrades to the elevator as part of this. Cameron responded that there was money voted at town meeting for this. Sarah shared that on the walk through we did that one member said the buttons needed to be on both sides of the elevator. Cameron said he would see what the plan is. Sarah asked if there was money through Americans with Disabilities Act and Cameron said he would add it to the Joe Booth study. Sarah said the elevator is hard to access. Cameron said Eleanor Chew had sent him an agenda item about the sign language asking the cable tv representative if

closed captioning had been discussed and asked him to look into this. Cameron spoke about the Virtual Sign Language Program but that closed captioning would address this need. Sarah stated that town meeting was not on ZOOM and Eleanor Chew said that it was shown on Channel 18 as the meeting was being held and that when it was on ZOOM, only town meeting members had access to the ZOOM program for security reasons.

**B. PUBLIC SAFETY:** This item discussed at the start of the meeting.

**C. INFRASTRUCTURE/ADOPT A STOP/ LIABILITY CONCERNS:** Cameron Durant said he had looked into this and that the town cannot give resources to people. Glenn Gabbard asked what happened with the Board of Public Works. Cameron responded that this would be last in their list of tasks and they may only do a couple. If we want to do this, we need to enter into a formal agreement with them. Glenn Gabbard looked into funding sources for this and asked if with the BPW this was a personnel issue. Cameron said it was, asking Glenn to send him the funding information.

**D. SPECIAL EDUCATION:** Marcus Ferro shared that Jenna Benoit is working on this and that we need a subcommittee to work with her.

**E. HOUSING/NEWSLETTER:** Marcus Ferro said that Pamela Whynot is working on this and Eleanor Chew said that she and Marcus were supposed to be putting together the information for the newsletter. Cameron Durant said we could also add this information to the Meals On Wheels lunches as well. Eleanor responded that the purpose of the this was to let specific groups of people in housing know about their rights. Sarah Buck said she is working with a meals program outside of town and Cameron asked her to send him that information.

**F. SOCIAL MEDIA:** Marcus Ferro said we need to be more active in posting on the Face Book page.

**G. HOMECOMING:** Marcus Ferro said he knew Sarah Buck wanted to do this and that we needed to start planning soon. Sarah asked who wanted to help. Marcus suggested that she come up with some ideas for the next meeting. Sarah said she would like to do an obstacle course and Marcus expressed concern about the expense, liability and needed space to accomplish this. Marcus suggested that instead of an obstacle course we do a walk-through town hall if town hall is open for that day. Sarah said she would talk to Pamela Whynot. Eleanor Chew offered to help. Cameron Durant suggested that we do an experience for people placing them in other people's lives. Marcus said to plan information for the booth. Eleanor said she had spoken with Barbara Acksen from the Fairhaven Improvement Association that plans this and Barbara said we need to do an activity as the purpose is not just to be there to give out information.

**V. TREASURER'S REPORT/LEDGER/BUDGET:** Glenn Gabbard said we have \$1,000.00 in the budget. Eleanor Chew asked what the process was for accessing the funds when needed and Glenn said he wanted to check with the new TA before responding. Sarah Buck asked if we have a tax exempt number. We do not have one but the town does. Cameron Durant said he would verify the ability of the commission to use the town tax exempt number.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. BY-LAWS/ TRAININGS:** Cameron Durant said this didn't make the agenda and we need to put it on the next one. Eleanor Chew said by-laws do not exist. Glenn Gabbard suggested we look at MA. COD's website and see what they have. Eleanor said they are very basic, boiler plate ones. Glenn asked if anyone attended any of the MA. COD trainings. Marcus said we need to look at trainings in the future. Sarah Buck asked if anyone was familiar with Fairhaven Pharmacy and she said they will deliver. Cameron suggested that we highlight a business of the month which Marcus thought was a great idea.

**VII. NEXT MEETING DATE:** Glenn Gabbard made the motion that we meet on Thursday, December 8 at 5:00 p.m. with Eleanor Chew offering the second. This motion passed unanimously.

**VIII. CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT:** Eleanor Chew made a motion that we adjourn at 6:09 p.m. with Glenn Gabbard seconding it. It passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Chew  
Secretary