

FAIRHAVEN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Meeting Minutes December 8, 2022

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

Contact: cod@Fairhaven-ma.gov

Present: Town Hall: Marcus Ferro (chair), Pamela Whynot (vice-chair), Eleanor Chew (secretary)

ZOOM: Glenn Gabbard (treasurer), Jenna Benoit, Donna Maino Lavallo.

Guests: Cameron Durant (staff liaison), Fairhaven Cable TV

ALL VOTES WERE TAKEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE

I. CALL TO ORDER: Marcus Ferro, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. and read the state guidelines for meetings.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The motion to accept the minutes was made by Pamela Whynot and seconded by Jenna Benoit. The motion passed with 5 yeases and one abstention.

III. MEMBERSHIP: Marcus F. said that one of the issues that we are experiencing is the loss of those members who are impacted by disability. He said he did the letter to the Neighborhood News and we need to recruit people with disabilities. We need to remember that it is hard for people with disabilities to manage life and committees and they may come and go. Pam W. said she has raised this issue before and that the majority of people need to be disabled as we need a representative committee. It is nearly impossible to have input without lived experiences. She said a representative from MA. COD is coming to the January meeting and we should ask him about how other commissions handle this. Glenn G. asked if we could review the numbers and Marcus listed people on the committee and those who had left. Glenn then asked if we have 9 if most need to be disabled. Marcus F. suggested we ask MA. COD if others are having an issue with that requirement also. Jenna B. asked if we could share this with others, offering to reach out to teachers at school. Pamela W. asked if we could share this with other organizations that help people. Jenna B. said that one requirement of a lot of agencies is for them to serve in the community for accreditation purposes. Cameron D. suggested we put this on our Face Book page. He suggested that we like the Face book page as well. Eleanor C. asked if we could do an announcement on Fairhaven TV's Channel 18 and they responded yes.

IV. TOWN ACCESSIBILITY:

A. TOWH HALL: Donna L. asked about providing closed captioning for our meetings as well as for other meetings. She shared she has been talking with a man and his wife who are deaf and can read lips about joining the COD. The issue is the lack of closed captioning or sign language option on the bottom of the computer. Pam W. said we can put an option on tv and maybe have each committee announce this at the start of their meetings. Cameron D. asked if someone wants to join the meeting by ZOOM, can they?

Marcus F. said he would email Derek Frates with these questions. Donna L. said closed captioning is available everywhere and that we should look into this. Pam. W. asked if Donna L. could email Derek F. with questions and when we have answers publicize the availability. Pamela W. thanked the couple who raised this concern for bringing it to our attention, saying this is a good example of not knowing this without lived experiences. Marcus F. asked if there was anything new on town hall. Eleanor C. said no as the town administrator was waiting for the updated study before addressing needs. Cameron D. shared that there was a meeting for this tomorrow.

B. PUBLIC SAFETY: Marcus F. reminded everyone that the forms are on the police Department website and that we need to publicize this so people can register. Lt. Kobza did a lot of work on the form and the process. We need to pass out the seat belt covers. Cameron D. offered to place some in his office.

C. INFRASTRUCTURE: Marcus F. asked if there was anything new to which Pamela W. responded there was nothing new.

D. SPECIAL EDUCATION: Jenna B. said she has an updated guide. Marcus F. said we need to get this published as we have the funds to do so. Jenna B. spoke about the Family Resource Center at Fairhaven Public Schools. Jenna B. said she spoke with Megan Matthews, Director, and that they can help with any need a family has. The family can self-refer for assistance or it can be done by school personnel. There are also computers there for families to use. We can help to publicize this. Marcus F. said he thought this was amazing and wanted to be put into contact with Megan and he said he could publicize this on his radio program.

E. HOUSING/NEWSLETTER: Pamela W. took the lead on this and will work on it for the next meeting.

F. SOCIAL MEDIA: Pamela W. said we need to start posting on the Face Book page and also going on and liking the page. Pamela W. wants to make a list of what could be posted each month so we have it in advance. She hopes to get people to help with information.

G. MISSION STATEMENT/BY-LAWS: We need to look at the one on the town's website and see if it's still valid. Eleanor C. said we need a clear understanding so we can measure what we do and can decide what we should be doing. Marcus F. read the one on the website and said it was too difficult. He will adjust this for the next meeting, asking if we need by-laws. Pamela W. said she was not sure. Marcus F. asked if we could do general by-laws. Pamela W. responded saying that other towns have adapted the state ones and that we need a statement first. Eleanor C. explained that usually a Mission Statement is basic and the By-Laws are the meat and potatoes based off of the Mission Statement. It was decided to ask the MA. COD representative next month what we need.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT/BUDGET: Glenn Gabbard, Treasurer said he spoke with the town accountant and that we can use the town's 501(c) (3) status and that he has that form. We still have \$1,000.00 in our budget. Our budget is divided into three categories: trainings, supplies and consultants.

VI. NEW BUSINESS: Pamela W. asked that for next month we put the following on the agenda: Issues with meetings and process. Pamela W. said she felt it was a good idea to have someone who did not do the agenda look it over before it is submitted to avoid issues. She suggested that the secretary look it over to which Marcus F. responded that the agenda is a boiler plate agenda and that the chair sets the agenda. He told us to send any items for the agenda to him. Cameron D. said he would set it up and send it to the chair and secretary to double check it before posting.

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE: Eleanor C. moved that the next meeting be held on Thursday, January 12, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. with Pamela W. seconding it. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Glenn G. offered a motion to adjourn at 5:45 p.m. with Eleanor C. seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eleanor Chew
Secretary