

Commission on Disability

Meeting Minutes, April 11, 2024

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

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

Contact: cod@fairhaven-ma.gov

Present: Eleanor Chew, Chair; Glenn Gabbard, Treasurer via Zoom; Cara Viveiros; Ronnie Medina, via Zoom; Donna Maino Lavalley, Secretary; Annmarie Chagnon; Krystal Lunn; Martha Reed, Staff Liaison.

Absent: Pamela Whynot, Vice-Chair; Keith Silvia, Selectboard Liaison.

Guests: Fairhaven Cable TV; Alissa DeSousa, Rare Riders; Shannon Alves, ASL Instructor; Meghan Silvia, ASL Interpreter; Kelly Ferreira; Vinnie Furtado, DPW via Zoom.

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Eleanor Chew at 6:06 PM. 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:** There was one correction to the March 14, 2024 minutes: Instagram was to replace the word, TikTok. A motion to accept the minutes as corrected was made by Annmarie and seconded by Krystal. The minutes were approved with two abstentions by Ronnie and Cara.

A motion to accept the February 8, 2024 minutes, as corrected and emailed to members by Eleanor, was made by Glenn, and seconded by Annmarie. The minutes were approved with one abstention by Krystal.

III. Treasurer's Report:

Glenn reported the account balance is the same as the last meeting, except for a deduction to pay for a recent bill related to the RFP, which was presented by Martha to Eleanor at the meeting for the amount of \$55.00. A motion to accept was made by Annmarie and seconded by Krystal.

IV. New Business:

A motion was made by Annmarie and seconded by Krystal to change the order of the agenda in order to hear from two guests regarding two items listed under New Business. The motion passed unanimously. Items a, b, and c were discussed prior to Old Business.

- a. Meeting with the ASL Instructor, Shannon: Shannon Alves introduced herself along with her ASL interpreter, Meghan Silvia. Shannon has been a teacher for 20 years to both children and adults. She responded to several questions regarding her past experience and teaching adults and children. When asked about her manner in teaching, as a deaf instructor, she stated that she does use her voice for the first class and then only as needed with adults. She is willing to teach children in an after-school enrichment program in Fairhaven. She would use her voice for a children's class whenever necessary. She has developed a selection of materials to use with adults and another selection for children. Therefore, she would not need any textbooks for the classes. Shannon will include deaf culture in the classes.

There were thirty spots for the adult ASL one-hour class to be held on Tuesdays at 6PM. This class was filled immediately, and there were more people interested in taking the class. Martha and Shannon agreed to run another class on Tuesdays starting at 7PM. The Adult ASL classes will be held at the Council on Aging starting in May, running for 10 weeks, ending in June. Perhaps ASL II and ASL III could be offered if there is sufficient interest. Shannon will be distributing hand-outs in class, and Martha noted that she and the COA will assist with a white board and any technology as needed.

- b. Adaptive Kid's Bike: Alissa DeSousa from Rare Riders will donate the bike to the town of Fairhaven. Rare Riders was founded as a nonprofit by parents of children with a rare genetic disorder who wanted their children to ride bikes with the other children. The parents found a suitable adaptive bike which was quite expensive, costing about \$5000.00 each. Rare Riders wants to 'pay it forward' in honor of their children by gifting bikes to others. The members of the COD expressed thanks to Alissa and the Rare Riders for their generosity, and assured Alissa that the COD will be diligent in the locating a secure and accessible storage location and work out the logistics for safely loaning-out the bike. Among the locations suggested were the COD, BPW, and the library. Martha stated the COD does not have the room to store it. Eleanor had invited Vinnie Furtado from the BPW. He was present via Zoom. Vinnie agreed to help however he could and stated that the BPW would be willing to store the bike; yet COD members questioned its accessibility due to BPW's limited hours. The COD members questioned if there could be a way for volunteers to allow access to the bike when the BPW was closed. Glenn suggested developing a work group to discuss these details and to work out the logistics; then to report back to the COD. The workgroup includes Annmarie, Donna, and Ronnie. Alissa agreed to help the group however she could, as an unofficial member of the group. Glenn made a motion to develop this subcommittee, seconded by

Krystal and passed unanimously.

- c. Communication Boards for Parks: Communication Boards for Parks; Eleanor reported that Vinnie and Josh, BPW and she had discussed communication boards at the parks, such as Livesey and Cushman Parks if we are able to receive funding from the Flutie Foundation. The BPW will assist with the project. These boards assist nonverbal people to communicate with one another and others by referring to pictures on the boards. They will not be electronic. It was mentioned perhaps to start at Livesey Park. Krystal made a motion to investigate the possibility, seconded by Krystal, passed unanimously. Eleanor proposed a motion stating that she would approach the Selectboard and file application. The motion was made by Krystal, seconded by Annmarie and passed unanimously.
- d. Letter re: Appointments/Schedule: Terms that are up in June are Donna, Cara, Glenn, and Pam. There will be 2 two-year term positions, and 2 three-year term positions up for appointment. Elections will be in June. A motion was made to return the terms to the original order of 3-3-3, meaning each of the three members will have a three-year term staggered over the three years. Motion was seconded by Krystal and passed.
- e. MA COD Grant Application Process for 2024: Phase I is complete. Phase II: Grant application is due June 15, 2024. The transition plan will wait until 2025 to be completed for the \$250,000.00 grant. Martha suggested the wait time will allow more time to assess what Fairhaven needs, and be more planful. The COD can apply for other grants to cover items outlined in the transition plan.

IV. Old Business:

- a. Neighborhood News Article: Glenn will send a draft of an article for May to the COD for review and then to be voted on at the May meeting. Articles will hopefully appear in the May, August, and November issues of the Neighborhood News.
- b. Update on Grant Application to MA COD: Martha reported on the status of the Grant. April 1 was the deadline for submission. One proposal came in from Institute for Human Center Design. It came in below our grant amount and it was approved and signed today. It must be completed by the end of this June. Commission members on the subcommittee were Annmarie, Pam, and Martha. Presently it is composed of Eleanor and Martha.
- c. ASL Classes: Discussion under New Business.
- d. Huttleston Marketplace Kids' Days: Discussion tabled.
- e. Department Head Meetings: Discussion tabled.

f. Diverse Abilities Celebration: Will be sponsored by MO Life, the COD, and the Belonging Committee. To be held on July 28, 2024, 11:00-3:00 at the Council on Aging. Activities will include a talent show. Refreshments supplies by food trucks.

g. Events Team: Discussion tabled.

V. Public Comment:

Nemasket Group's 5K Run/Walk held May 4, 2024 at Fort Phoenix was discussed by Donna. She gave a short description of the agency's programs to assist people with disabilities in Fairhaven and the surrounded towns.

VI. Questions and Comments from COD: Eleanor requests a meeting to review the COD bylaws on April 18 at 6pm at Town Hall.

VII. Next Meeting Date: May 9, 2024 at 6pm at Town Hall

VIII. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 7:22pm. Motion passes unanimously.

Submitted by Donna Maino Lavallee, Secretary