

**Office of Equity & Civil Rights
 Mayor's Commission on Disabilities
 Meeting Minutes
 February 28, 2024**

Attendance:

Voting	28-Feb
Bouma, Chair	x
Blevins	E
Davis	
Ewald	
Fields	x
Grade	x
Greenberg	x
Jackson	x
King	
Levine	E
Salmond	
Trentadue	E

Non-Voting	28-Feb	Non-Voting	28-Feb
BCDSS		DHR Butwin	x
BCFD Yancey/Brewer	x	DOT Gardener	x
BCHD Pugh	x	HABC Elam	x
BCPSS Paxton	x	Law Levine	E
BCRP Nyakoe		MOED	
BPD		OEM Bright/Smith	x
Com. on Aging		Planning French	
CRC		Pratt Library Kelly/Stokes	
DHCD Curtis			

OECR Staff:

Robin Drummond
 Viola Woolums
 Lisa Kelly

Guests:

Curtis Black
 Brenda P. Haynes - Mt. Pleasant Christian School
 Chris Mason-Hale - Kennedy Krieger Institute
 Keyonna Mayo - IMAGE Center
 James Orman - People on the GO
 Nikki Stokes - Pathfinders for Autism
 Chip Woods - St. Peter's Adult Learning Center

I. Welcome/Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Aloma Bouma at 1:04 pm.
- Chairperson Bouma requested a rollcall and welcomed everyone.

II. Opening Remarks

- Opening remarks were given by Chairperson Bouma.
- Chairperson Bouma thanked everyone who had been working on the Legislation.

III. OECR Program Report

Program Report was given by Viola Woolums.

- Civil Rights Week
 - OECR has announced a Call for Proposals – it was circulated via email.
 - Recommendations for Impact Award recipients should be sent to Viola via email.
 - OECR is processing 8 applications for MCD membership.
 - Reminder: attendance requirements are being enforced and members will be resigned after 2 unexcused absences in a rolling 6-month period.
 - The next meeting is scheduled for March 27, 2024, at 1:00 pm with additional 2024 meetings as follows:
 - April 24
 - May 22
 - June 26
 - September 25
 - October 23
 - November 27
- Legislative Updates
 - The legislative session is underway in Annapolis, please report all legislation of interest to OECR as soon as it is identified.
 - Special thanks to Adam Levine and Jack Elam for their hard work on the Legislative Committee.
 - MCD submitted written testimony on the Motion Picture House captioning bills: SB0092, HB0426.
 - William Fields noted that a proposed Mobility study that does not include people with disabilities. It was later noted that this legislation has been withdrawn.
- Accessibility Concerns
 - Anyone interested in serving as Chair of the Access Committee, please contact Chairperson Aloma Bouma and Viola Woolums.

- 3 disability inquiries were received since the last MCD meeting, 2 of them are related to Baltimore City Rec & Parks facilities and are currently being investigated.
- OECR and the Mayor's Office have been working with the Baltimore City Association of the Deaf to increase accessibility of City broadcasts.

IV. Approval of the minutes

- David Greenberg moved to approve the January 24, 2024 minutes, seconded by Yojinde Paxton. Motion carried without objection. Minutes approved.

V. MCD Chairperson Update

- Chairperson Bouma thanked everyone working on legislative efforts.
- Civil Rights Week:
 - Please think of ways that disability can be included and not overlooked at the Civil Rights Breakfast. Squeegee kids were an excellent example of a presentation in addition to an award last year.
 - Paxton would like to include more recognition for youth with disabilities.
 - Chairperson Bouma called for suggestions for focus topics for Disability Awareness Day (Tuesday) and gave a recap of last year: City government training on Tuesday morning and then presentations and public forum on Tuesday evening.
 1. Consensus that Tuesday would be a good day.
 2. Instead of ADA In the morning, Chairperson Bouma would like to see a focus on youth/children, special education, and other issues related to children with disabilities.
 3. Chairperson Aloma asked about the target audience for the 9 am to noon proposed timeframe.
 - a. Should this be presentations to/from parents, educators, children?
 - b. Yojinde Paxton will reach out to the Mayor's Office of Children and Family Services (MOCFS) to see if they will submit a request for proposal (RFP) for the morning.
 4. Janice Jackson does not think that having 3 items in the same day is a good idea. She also spoke about priority seating.
 5. Yojinde Paxton agreed and suggested that more young people with disabilities be included to make the issues more relevant to them. Having a program for youth with disabilities in the morning, is a good idea, especially with catching that population in the morning when they are most available. Paxton suggested that OECR and MCD partner with the Mayor's Office of Children and Family Services (MOCFS).

6. Paxton said that during AFRAM there was a sensory area set up for children with disabilities. They may be able to identify students or young people to participate.
7. Chairperson Bouma suggested smaller presentations and Q&A sessions in the morning. She is not a fan of exhibit halls being open during presentations and discussions because people get pulled away or are distracted by noise. William Fields agreed.
8. Crystal Bright predicted good turnout from City employees because they would get credit for working during the day. The evening time would not be safe for the disability community to be out waiting around for mobility in the summer evening time. She gave an example from last year: She waited with a blind attendee whose Mobility ride did not appear.

VI. Committees Discussion

- Commission Development – Committee Chair, David Greenberg
 - David Greenberg has not received any feedback from the flyers, so they are deemed ready to go. Contact David or Viola with concerns.
 - They contain a brief description of what the MCD does. He was able to reach out to the public with the flyers to recruit applicants for membership.
- Legislative Committee – Committee Chair, Jack Elam
 - Adam Levine is unavailable today. He noted bills being watched.
 1. SB0092/HB0426 – *Places of Public Accommodation - Motion Picture Houses – Captioning* - requiring a place of public accommodation that controls, operates, owns, or leases at least two motion picture houses in the State to provide open captioning for at least two screenings each week. Written testimony submitted.
 - SB256 - *Public Safety – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission* – Altering the membership and duties of the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission. MCD would like an amendment to require a person with expertise in disability issues. Chairperson Bouma reviewed the bill.
 - HB0822/SB0790 and the Bus Lanes are coming up soon if anyone would like to submit testimony SB0943.
 - SB0943 (Bus Obstruction Monitoring) If you believe that MCD should support, please let the Legislative Committee know. Chairperson Bouma will follow-up.
 - Yojinde Paxton would like the Committee to be aware of HB0903¹. Education - Access to Attorneys, Advocates, and Consultants for Special Education Program and Fund – Established. Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) and Project HEAL representatives, a parent, and others testified.

¹ <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/legislation/details/hb0903>

- Janice Jackson spoke about SB0790/HB0822 the Medicaid Bill – EID (Employed Individuals with Disabilities). The bill would remove certain penalties from a Medicaid buy-in program that allows people with disabilities to pay a premium to remain Medicaid eligible while continuing to work.
 - Would allow eligibility past age 65. Janice and many others will age out this year. This comes with a fiscal note.
 - Would exclude spousal income from eligibility calculation. Josh Basile and many others cannot get married because they would lose their insurance coverage
 - Janice noted that according to the Governor if there is money tied to the bill for this year, it will be vetoed due to the State budget. Janice and Josh will be giving testimony. Janice and Viola will send out the information for those who would like to submit testimony. Janice and Josh have been speaking with legislators and are getting pushback from the Deputy Secretary of Medicaid.
 1. The hearings are coming up March 6 and March 12, 2024.
 2. Failure to qualify under EID would cause Janice and others to lose Medicaid's attendant care. To be able to work and have daily living needs attended to is very important.
 3. Medicaid (Maryland Medical Assistance) is important because it covers the 20% and supplies/equipment that Medicare does not cover.
 4. Chairperson Bouma noted that the program used the SSI income guidelines that are not possible to change without congressional regulatory change at the federal level.
 5. MCD Members discussed flooding the office with calls. Viola can send out a list of committee members. Janice will send to Viola the information she has available for distribution. Janice has been asked to be one of the first bills to be heard that day.
 - William Fields mentioned that he had already aged out and acknowledged that there are changes needed at the federal level. He also asked if there is something that can be done at the State level.
 - Viola Woolums noted she would provide support for Federal legislative efforts of the MCD.
 - Chairperson Bouma asked if everyone would like to support legislation at the state level. There were no objections.
- Emergency Preparedness Committee – Committee Chair, Vacant
 - Jack Elam reached out to William Brewer and will follow up on Police training and OEM regarding individuals with disabilities. He mentioned that the Office of Emergency Management and the Police previously did a training on interactions with people with disabilities.
 1. Crystal Bright and Khalilah Yancey commented on the training. They stated that every time a person has to recertify for EMT, they have to take a class and training on specifically people with

disabilities. Most of the larger scale trainings are handled by OEM. The regularly scheduled ongoing trainings are handled through the Fire Department. They also include human trafficking training.

2. Continuing education training is still incorporated with members with disabilities.
 3. Nikki Stokes commented that Pathfinders for Autism also does training related to individuals with Autism and IDD.
 4. Chris Mason-Hale will reach out to the Institute. Curtis Black put a link in the chat for the Maryland Coalition of Families. (<https://www.mdcoalition.org/>)
 5. Committee members weighed in on the possibility of doing more than one day as a possible retreat. Viola Woolums stated that there might be a limit on the days.
- Transportation Committee – Committee Chair, Janice Jackson
 - Janice Jackson asked if the new director of mobility could come to the meeting and the Maryland Department of Disabilities.
 - Janice would like to send a letter regarding safety issues with mobility. Viola Woolums will get the letter approved before sending it out. Viola invited the Director of MTA Administration and the Director of Maryland Mobility.
 - Janice stated that the Transportation Committee needs members.

VII. Open forum

- Chairperson Bouma asked if there was anything to bring to MCD's attention.
- Crystal Bright asked, "What is the role of the Emergency Preparedness Committee? Chairperson Aloma responded that the MCD needs help to execute its mission and address the issues that MCD takes on. They need a broader group of individuals for support and to do the work that MCD would like to see done.
- Crystal would like goals. Chairperson Bouma suggested that she create an outline for the Committee. Committee members weighed in on suggesting the goals for Emergency Preparedness Committee. Committee members also discussed identifying committee members. Viola will re-send the email list form because it is also the committee interest form. Khalilah Yancey spoke about the Committee's past activities. i.e. legislation, complaints from the community, and identifying problems.
- Crystal asked if there were experts that can help her Committee establish objectives and goals. Chairperson Bouma suggested that part of the April meeting be used to get feedback from non-voting MCD members. Members agreed with the feedback in April and now can focus on March and Board of Elections/voting.
- David Greenberg stated that the League is still an early voting site for May 2 – May 9, 2024.

IX. Closing

- Next meeting is scheduled for March 27, 2024, via Zoom.
- There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Aloma asked for a motion to adjourn. David Greenberg moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by William Fields at 2:57 pm. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond
Special Assistant
Office of Equity and Civil Right