

Town of West Hartford
Advisory Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Monday, January 13, 2025, 7:00 PM
Elmwood Community Center Auditorium
MINUTES

Commission Members Present: Tara McNeil (Co-Chair), Erin Conneely, Christine Hayden, Christopher Holley, Joseph Kolczynski, Amy Messinger, Jason Mirsky, Jennifer Searls

Commission Members Not in Attendance: Kimberly Jacobsen, Brittany Koziara, Elisa Neira

Guest(s) Present:

- Robert McCue, Town of West Hartford, Deputy Emergency Management Director
- Melissa Marquis, West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District, Emergency Response Specialist and West Hartford Office of Emergency Management, Medical Resiliency Coordinator

Opening:

Co-Chair Tara McNeil called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed new and returning commission members to the meeting. Commission members took a few minutes to introduce themselves to each other. Tara McNeil introduced Robert McCue and Melissa Marquis as guest speakers for the meeting.

Presentation:

Robert McCue and Melissa Marquis presented their work in developing a medical resiliency program for the town. The medical resiliency program in development is an emergency management program designed to ensure that residents who have access and/or functional needs are as self-sufficient as possible in the event of an emergency. Access and functional needs (“AFN”) encompasses a broad spectrum of considerations including financial, ethnic/cultural, language, physical, mental, seniors, children, and overall health considerations.

To develop the program, the speakers are working to identify gaps in current emergency programs relative to individuals with access and functional needs and creating proactive solutions prior to an emergency situation; engaging with the community to determine specific needs and creating advisory groups that include community-based and faith-based organizations as well as individuals with self-identified access and/or functional needs; providing personal preparedness presentations specific to different AFN categories, and potentially engaging members of the AFN community in drills or exercises.

The speakers requested the members’ assistance in identifying other organizations, agencies, or groups where their presentation and message could be shared so that AFN individuals were aware of the medical resiliency program. Commission members provided suggestions.

Members are encouraged to contact Melissa Marquis with any additional recommendations.

Melissa Marquis, MS, RN
Public Health Emergency Response Specialist

Melissa Marquis, MS, RN
Medical Resiliency Coordinator

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Meeting Minutes: Minutes from the November meeting were not available to commission members and will be shared prior to the March commission meeting.

Town Staff Report: Tara McNeil reported that the Town of West Hartford had chosen a consulting company to conduct an ADA accessibility assessment. More information will be provided by Suzanne at the March meeting. Copies of the town's Social Services Department newsletter were distributed to Commission members.

Old Business: No old business

New Business:

Discussion of Commission Administration: Tara McNeil discussed the importance of attendance at the meetings to ensure quorum to conduct business. Going forward Tara will be sending out emails in advance of the meeting as well as using Google Meet to send meeting invitations.

Tara also reminded the committee that she was interested in recruiting for a co-chair for the commission. Interested members are asked to let Tara know if they are interested in co-chairing the commission.

Discussion of March Meeting Agenda: Tara informed the commission members that March's commission meeting would be focused on how this commission should work to meet its objectives.

Public Comment: Mary Silverberg shared materials from HARC.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm