

**Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities**  
**Commission Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Date of meeting: Wednesday, April 20, 2022

Start time: 10:00am

End time: 11:30am

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

| Members Participating Remotely |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1                              | Gyasi Burks-Abbott - Developmental Disabilities Council   |
| 2                              | Charles Carr - Disability Policy Consortium   |
| 3                              | Representative Denise Garlick - House of Representatives  |
| 4                              | Nancy Garr-Colzie - Member, Worcester Disability Commission; Board Chair, Center for Living & Working |
| 5                              | Carla Kath – State Treasurer  |
| 6                              | Representative Kay Khan - House of Representatives  |
| 7                              | Andrew Levrault - Disabled Persons Protection Commission  |
| 8                              | Ann Lynch - Massachusetts Attorney General's Office – Abby Taylor                                     |
| 9                              | Oswald Mondejar - Spaulding Rehabilitation Network (MGB)  |
| 10                             | Representative Mathew Muratore - House of Representatives   |
| 11                             | Kathy Petkauskus - University of Massachusetts Medical School   |
| 12                             | Carl Richardson – State House ADA Coordinator   |
| 13                             | Nancy Rumbolt-Trzcinski - Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council                          |
| 14                             | Paul Spooner - Metrowest Center for Independent Living  |
| 15                             | Christopher White - Road To Responsibility, Inc. (RTR)  |
| Members Not Present            |   |
|                                | Representative Gerard Cassidy - House of Representatives  |
|                                | Felix Martinez  |
|                                | Bridget Murphy - Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin                   |
|                                | Senator Patrick O'Connor - Massachusetts Senate   |
|                                | Angela Ortiz - Massachusetts Pediatric Home Nursing Campaign  |
|                                | Dan Shannon - MA Developmental Disabilities Council   |
|                                | Kerry Thompson - Silent Rhythms Inc. / Disability Rights Fund   |

**Proceedings**

- I. Welcome, Roll Call, and Approval of 10/29/22 Meeting Minutes – 10:00**
  - a. Chair Garlick welcomed Commission members to this meeting of the Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Rep Garlick explained accessibility features of meeting: ASL interpreters are on the Zoom call, CART services are available and are linked in the Zoom Chat. All documents have been shared in advance of the meeting and it is being streamed live on [malegislature.gov](http://malegislature.gov).

- b. Before roll call, Chair Garlick shared changes to the Commission membership: Carla Kath will now be attending meetings for the Treasurer's office. The Senate President has appointed the State House ADA coordinator, Carl Richardson.
- c. Roll call was called with 15 members present (See table on page 1).
- d. A motion was made and seconded to accept the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. The Commission unanimously approved the minutes among those present.

## **II. Presentation by the Commonwealth Corporation President and CEO, Christine Abrams, on Workforce Development – 10:08**

- a. Chair Garlick introduced Christine Abrams, President and CEO, Commonwealth Corporation, to provide a presentation on workforce statistics in Massachusetts.
- b. Christine explained that she started with the Commonwealth Corporation two weeks into the pandemic and her first action was to develop a strategic plan to achieve the organization's vision of "meaningful employment for all." Development of the plan engaged over 100 different organizations with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The organization is rebranding and relaunching its website to allow people to more easily connect with services.
- c. Commissioners asked questions of Christine Abrams around data collection, specifically asking about employment statistics for individuals with disabilities, which was not presented on the slides. Christine said they are looking into developing benchmark employment metrics and will suggest to Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) Secretary Acosta that such data is reported in the future.
- d. Commissioners described the difficulties in hiring for human services jobs. Christine acknowledged that hiring has been difficult and that unfilled job postings are up 20% compared to pre-pandemic. Commonwealth Corporation's mission is to train individuals so they have the skills to fill those open jobs. With ARPA and FY22 budget, they have the funding to create significant opportunities. Commissioners emphasized that programs should also focus on helping individuals with disabilities find employment.

## **III. Debrief of House Ways and Means Budget Recommendations 10:55**

- a. Chair Garlick gave a brief summary of the budget process and highlights from the recently released House Ways and Means budget. Of note, the Commission was funded at \$150,000 (note the FY23 budget has now been signed into law).

## **IV. Next Steps: Hiring Commission Staff 10:59**

- a. The Commission discussed the draft job posting for a full-time Program Manager for the Commission.
- b. Commissioners were content with qualifications and job requirements.
- c. Commissioners agreed to add communications experience as a job requirement and that individuals with disabilities should be encouraged to apply.

## **V. Commissioner Announcements 11:16**

- a. Commissioners further discussed the state budget and the need for it to further invest in human services and disabilities.
- b. Commissioners described a desire to look into obstacles for employment for individuals with disabilities, including benefit cliffs and estate recovery.
- c. Chair Garlick shared that she had met with individuals from the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) and the School for Global Inclusion and Social Development at UMass Boston to build a partnership and connection with an academic partner, especially around data collection. She would keep the Commission updated.

**VI. Adjournment 11:30**