

Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Commission Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Date of meeting: Wednesday, September 22, 2021

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

Proceedings

I. Welcome and Roll Call - 10:00am

- a. Representative Garlick welcomed Commission members to the second meeting of the Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Rep. Garlick explained the accessibility: ASL interpreters were on the Zoom call, CART services were available, and the meeting was being livestreamed on malegislature.gov for public viewing.
- b. Roll call was called with 18 members present (see table on page 1).
- c. The Commission approved the minutes unanimously among those present.

II. Vote of Clerk and Treasurer – 10:06am

- a. Representative Garlick opened the floor to nominations for clerk. Paul Spooner nominated Oz Mondejar; the motion was seconded. No other commissioners were nominated. Oz Mondejar was elected clerk by affirmation.
- b. Representative Garlick opened the floor to nominations for treasurer. Oz Mondejar nominated Paul Spooner; the motion was seconded. No other commissioners were nominated. Paul Spooner was elected treasurer by affirmation.

III. Presentation by Toni Wolf (Commissioner, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission) - 10:09am

- a. Representative Garlick introduced Toni Wolf, the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), to provide a presentation on employment and the workforce.
- b. The MRC receives its mandate from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and its purpose is to advance employment and ensure sustainable wages.
- c. Commissioner Wolf presented a PowerPoint (available [here](#)) that included demographic data of clients served, research and best practices, and MRC's goals to use data to help clients achieve employment. The Commissioner also described MRC's application for Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Innovation Grant for \$17M over a 5-year period to provide 2 simultaneous Vocational Rehab service programs.
- d. Commissioners asked questions of Commissioner Wolf. When asked if MRC was thinking of following the Maryland pilot project that raised the asset limit, Commissioner Wolf said they were in touch with Maryland. In response to a question about involving individuals with disabilities, Commissioner Wolf said that MRC believes in co-creation and would be send a plan to incorporate people with disabilities and pay them for their expertise and time. That plan is available here: [\[link\]](#).
- e. Employment and the workforce was a topic during questions. Commissioner Wolf said that as part of the ARPA funding debate, there are conversations around short-term and long-term investments in the industry. They are engaging with local chambers of commerce to secure employment opportunities.

IV. Values Statements – 11:00am

- a. Commissioners agreed to discuss the values statements agenda item before lessons learned during COVID.

- b. Rep. Garlick introduced the draft values statements. The draft statements were adopted from “[*Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities*](#), published in 2017 by the Council of State Governments (CGS) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).
- c. ” and she hopes that the Commission will adapt them. She suggested going through each statement one bullet point at a time. She opened the floor for input, including agreeing, amending, adding, substituting, or deleting statements.
- d. **Values Statement #1:** Disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way diminishes one’s right to fully participate in all aspects of community life.
 - i. No commissioner disagreed with first value statement, but several provided additional comments.
 - ii. There was support for including language for state agencies to encourage individuals to take risks, although not every risk is successful. There was significant debate and not all commissioners were in agreement over the suggestion of adding phrases like “person-centered planning,” “consumer choice,” or “supported decision-making.” Those in support thought they were affirming words while others pointed out that some, especially in the intellectual and developmental disability movement, were not empowered by these concepts. This led to a discussion about the vast differences among subpopulations of individuals with disabilities, who face significantly different opportunities and challenges depending on their disability. This may be a topic for future meetings.
 - iii. Commissioners expressed support for prioritizing the voices of people living with experience.
 - iv. There was support for ensuring the phrase “full participation in society” include recreation, education, and others, in addition to employment.
 - v. There was support for adding a value statement that disability is one of several identities; you may need to look at other ways that people with disabilities are discriminated against and cases of double discrimination that include disability and race.
 - vi. Rep. Garlick suggested the executive board be empowered to draft language to add to the values statements that take into account the commissioners’ input and discussion, which would be sent to members for discussion at the next meeting. She asked if there was opposition to this; there was none.

V. Lessons Learned during COVID

- a. Time did not allow for discussion of this item.

VI. Outline of Annual Report - 11:30am

- a. Representative Garlick explained that the Commission must submit its first annual report by October 31, 2021, which will cover topics discussed in the Commission’s first three meetings, including the values statement.
- b. Meetings have been scheduled for October 20th at 10am and October 29th at 10am (if necessary).

- c. Rep. Garlick asked if any members had feedback on the draft annual report outline, which was distributed before the meeting. Members did not have feedback.
- d. The executive board will draft and circulate an annual report in advance of the October 20 meeting.

VII. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 11:34am.