

Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Commission Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Date of meeting: Wednesday, March 15th, 2023

Start Time: 10:00 am

End Time:

Location: A2 Hearing Room and Zoom

Members Participating Remotely	
1	Gyasi Burks-Abbott – LEND Faculty, Boston Children’s Hospital/UMass Boston Institute for Community Inclusion
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 and Working
5	Craig Hall – Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council
6	Representative Kay Khan – House of Representatives
7	Andrew Levrault – Disabled Persons Protection Commission
8	Ann Lynch – Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office
9	Reginal Marshall – Advocates
10	Oswald Mondejar – Spaulding Network (MGB)
11	Representative Mathew Muratore – House of Representatives
12	Bridget Murphy – Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin
13	Angela Ortiz – Massachusetts Pediatric Home Nursing Campaign
14	Kathy Petkauskos – University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School
15	Carl Richardson – State House ADA Coordinator
16	Meghan Todd – Wellesley College/ Framingham Disability Commission
17	Melinda Troy – State Treasurer’s Office
18	Christopher White – Road to Responsibility, Inc (RTR)
Members Not Present	
19	Representative Gerard Cassidy
20	Felix Martinez
21	Senator Patrick O’Connor

Proceedings

I. Welcome, Introduction of Regina Marshall, Meghan Todd and Melinda Troy, Roll Call, and Approval of 11/16/22 Meeting Minutes

- a. Chair Garlick welcomed the Commission members to this hybrid meeting of the Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Chair Garlick explained the accessibility features of the meeting: ASL and CART services are available and linked in the Zoom Chat. All documents have been shared in advance of this meeting with stakeholders and on the Commission's website <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/meetings-and-materials> and live streamed on www.malegislature.gov.
- b. Chair Garlick announced that she and Commissioner Carl Richardson are attending this meeting in person. The Chair also announced the resignation of Commissioner Rumbolt-Trzcinski, who recently left the Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council, and Commissioner Thompson. The Chair thanked them for their service with the commission and wished them well. New commissioners Marshall, Todd appointed by the Senate President, and Troy, State Treasurer's designee were introduced.
- c. Chair Garlick announced the hiring of Imene Bouziane Saidi as the Commission's first ever employee and program director.
- d. The Chair reminded all commissioners of visits that have been and continuously being scheduled with each commissioner and their work colleagues.
- e. Roll call was called with 18 members present (see table on page 1). Louis Rizzo was present on behalf of Senator O'Connor.

II. Honor of the Life of Judy Heumann

- a. Chair Garlick commemorated the life of Judy Heumann, a leader in the disability rights movement. Judy Heumann's press release from her website can be read [here](#) and the tremendous loss of Commissioner Paul Spooner.

III. Approval of 11/16/22 Meeting Minutes

- a. Gyasi Burks-Abbott made a request to the spelling of his last name. Kathy Petkauskos requested to change UMass Medical School to Umass

Chan Medical School. She also made a request to use people first language from “disabled” to “people with disabilities”.

Chair Garlick agreed and approved this language as a model going forward.

- b. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. The Commission approved minutes among those present.

IV. Website update

- a. Chair Garlick provided an update regarding the Commission website that was launched on 2/17/23. All previous meeting materials and recordings have been added as well as information and scheduling on full Commission and Subcommittee meetings.
- b. Chair Garlick reminding all essential to keep that information current to adhere to the Open Meeting law. Chair Garlick requested all Subcommittees Chairs to submit their meeting scheduling to Imene to upload on the website. Yearly schedules and advanced notices are important.
- c. Imene is working on creating an “organizations and partners” page. Commissioners were invited to include their workplace information, pending authorization from respective workplaces.

V. Governor’s Budget

- a. Chair Garlick announced that Governor Healey released her FY24 budget proposal, the first of her administration. It is a work in progress. The Governor’s budget usually comes out at the end of January.
- b. Of interest, it proposed level-funding our commission at \$150K. Imene will be providing testimony to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means in Springfield on April 4. We also share 200K with two other Commissions who haven’t started their work but are starting soon, under the current legislative session.
- c. \$2.79B is invested in developmental services, which is a 14% increase over the FY23, including:
 - i. The turning 22 account received full funding to cover all students in the largest class ever (1,431) with an increase of over \$20 million.
 - ii. Family Support/Respite grew over \$7 million (\$98 million)
 - iii. Autism Omnibus grew by \$10 million (\$52.5 million).
 - iv. Working hard in understand how the Community and Day Programs budget item was arrived at. Whenever there is an

increase or decrease, line items must be inspected carefully as things may have been categorized differently.

- v. Also includes \$18M for the workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, which will be administered by CommCorp.

There are many other significant line-items, and we look forward to discussing these in greater detail as the House considers the budget.

VI. Communication Strategy Report

- a. Chair Garlick thanked Oz and his colleague Mary Bures, Marketing and Communication Strategist at MGB and Spaulding.
- b. Imene presented the communication and strategies report. A copy can be viewed [here](#).
- c. Commissioners provided input based on their personal experience, including using the commission's website as a resource and to share events and partner with state agencies.
- d. Commissioners discussed the Fall signature event to promote awareness of the commission and to recognize model employers, as part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Several commissioners volunteered to join the planning committee, organized by Imene. Members agreed members of local commissions on disability should be invited and will be strong partners moving forward.

VII. Subcommittees Reports

- a. Chair Garlick thanked all subcommittee members for the significant work they've been doing.
- b. Disability Employment Workforce Subcommittee – Chair Kathy Petkauskos
 - i. There is a Two-prong approach to the subcommittee's work:
 - Review and update status on the recommendations of the WorkAbility Subcommittee Report.
 - Leverage previous work done and build priorities from them.
 - ii. Discussions have revolved around various topics, including how public benefits are affected by work income, web accessibility, Estate Recovery Program, Protection of Homes for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Act, federal the [S.4998 Websites and Software Applications Accessibility Act](#) and the [SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act](#).

- iii. The subcommittee is also interested in raising awareness among employers, about the new tax credit but also the value proposition for including people with disabilities in their workplaces.
- iv. Lesson learned: the importance of cross-collaboration and communication with other subcommittee members and leaders. In our case, especially the Policy & Legislative subcommittee.
- v. Next steps: continue our discussion and discovery phase as we work to identify our priorities. In doing so, how will our work intersect with the other subcommittees and support the overall goal and mission of the Commission. Discovery phase.
- c. Legislative and Budget Subcommittee – Chair Charlie Carr
 - i. Chair Garlick prefaced that the Executive Committee will meet to discuss the status of the Legislative and Budget Subcommittee.
 - ii. Chair Garlick shared that Rep. Jay Livingston and Senator Robert Kennedy are the new chairs of the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities and they will be invited to the next commission meeting.
- d. Workforce Supports for Persons with Disabilities Subcommittee – Chair TBD
 - i. The Chair reminded all that Kerry Thompson used to chair this committee but has since resigned. A new chair would need to be elected.
 - ii. If members are interested in joining, they're asked to email the Chair and Imene.

VIII. Discussion on data requests

- a. Chair Garlick shared that as mentioned in previous meetings, data collection will be a key element of subcommittees, which will contribute to our annual reporting on the status of persons with disabilities.
- b. One area of research and data analysis to focus on would be looking at what industries individuals with disabilities are working in and which industries they aren't as prevalent in Massachusetts in comparison to the country and/or other states. This would include research for profit businesses, non-profits, and state agencies. Another area of research would be researching MA as a State Employer.
- c. These items will be included in the proposal and scope of work. The Chair opened the floor for discussion.
- d. Kathy shared that UMass Chan and Work Without Limits recently contracted with MA Commission for the Blind (MCB) and conducted

some research that included jobs people with disabilities in MA are currently working in, as well as identifying growth and occupations that are projected to grow and pay a living wage and that could be conducted remotely as well. Kathy will reach out to MCB to see if this research can be shared with the commission. (Report was shared on 6/7/23)

- e. Charlie shared that the Governor has made work a high priority. He would like to see data from state agencies that have work for people with disabilities as part of their mission, which would include Mass Rehab, Commission for the Blind, Department of Developmental Services, and others. What each of these state agencies are doing in term of job development, job placement and successful employment outcomes. This information would be important for the commission to see, specifically what does the landscape look like in terms of employment from these agencies whose mission includes getting people with disabilities employment.
- f. Oz reminded the work Commonwealth Corp has done. It is a quasi-private organization that focuses on workforce throughout MA. Their efforts include the disability community. The commission approached them to share data as to what their investments are. With the change of leadership, it may be worthwhile to connect with the committee on data collection. There isn't enough data on employment for people with disabilities and that needs to be explored further.

IX. Commissioners Announcements

- a. Chair Garlick opened the floor for announcements.
- b. Commissioners shared events, which were all posted on the [website](#).
- c. Chair Garlick invited new commissioners Marshall, Todd and Troy to introduce themselves.
 - i. Meghan Todd is the vice chair of the Framingham disability commission. She works at Wellesley College where she's the associate director of student life and housing in which she oversees housing accommodations processes. She is legally blind and has started to be involved in the disability rights movement. She had the pleasure of participation in a march and protest with Judy Heumann. She's happy to contribute and make connections through the disability community.
 - ii. Melinda Troy is Treasurer's Goldberg designee. She has been with the Treasurer's Office for seventeen years. Before that she was a

advocate and attorney with the Disability Law Center. She worked with Commissioner Marshall and is happy to reconnect.

iii. Regina Marshall is a resident of Framingham and works for Advocates, which is a health and human service provider. Her previous work includes the Disability Law Center and the Center for Public Representation. She also worked at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. She's worked for the MA Commission for the Blind, the MA Commission against Discrimination, the MA Rehab Commission and the Department of Developmental Services. She also worked as chief of staff for the Department of Mental Health.

d. The Chair welcomed them again and reminded them that their comments, questions, advice are always welcome. The ability to do the commission's work is strengthened when everyone works together.

e. The Chair thanked again everyone who participated and those who were able to coordinate this meeting to be in a hybrid format, the CART services, the ASL interpreters, LIS, and her staff.

X. Adjournment 11:20

a. A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.