

Daniel A. Micari, Commissioner, Chairperson
Barbara Bajurny, Commissioner
Andrew Collins, Commissioner, Secretary
Gloria Ewings, Commissioner
Ruth Ann Graime, Commissioner
Joseph Krolikowski, Commissioner
Jacqueline Olsen, City Council Liaison
Diane Salmoiraghi, Commissioner



**Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Bristol, CT 06010**

**Meeting Minutes
June 12, 2024**

7:00 PM – City Hall, 3rd Floor Meeting Room 3-1 and Virtual Format

Our Mission

To promote inclusion and improve the quality of life for people in Bristol with a disability, by providing a network of partnerships with local resources that foster self-sufficiency, dignity, and respect.

Reasonable Accommodation Statement

The Bristol Commission for Persons with Disabilities is committed to equal access to, and participation in, all meetings and Commission-sponsored programs and events. Individuals who require an accommodation in order to fully participate, including physical access, communication assistance, or other special need, should contact Daniel A. Micari at damicari@yahoo.com, at least seven business days prior to the scheduled meeting, program, or event.

Present: Micari, Bajurny, Collins, Ewings, Graime, Krolikowski, Salmoiraghi

Absent: Olsen

Call to order: 7:01 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: May 8, 2024 (Krolikowski/Ewings, passed)

Presentation: Sen. Henri Martin
Topic: Legislative update

Sen. Martin began his discussion by thanking the Commission for the invitation to speak. He outlined the importance of advocacy, so legislators are aware of important issues. Chairman Micari described the history and purpose of the Commission to Sen. Martin.

Sen. Martin related real-life examples of how changes in the law came from problems that people had and were brought to the attention of legislators.

Sen. Martin described recently passed legislation affecting disabilities issues. This included HB 5001 which affected Medicaid, SB 308 which tightened rules regarding wheelchair repairs, HB 5491 which enacted a property tax exemption for veterans who incurred a disability during military service, and HB 5523 which, in part, establishes a Bureau of Services for Persons Who Are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services. A member of the audience, Luisa Gasco-Soboleski, President of the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, expressed concern that, because the Bureau is being funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, it will only be temporary. She stated that more permanent funding should be secured and has discussed such issues with Amy Porter, Commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disability Services.

Sen. Martin stated that it is important to bring issues to legislators whether it is proposed changes to the law or problems in dealing with state agencies. He stated that despite political differences, legislators agree on a lot of things and their offices are willing to help constituents with problems.

An audience member, Deb Reed, of the National Federation of the Blind, brought up issues with blind people using electronic ballots in a way that compromises privacy.

Presentation: Mark Voight
Topic: Custom accessories for scooters, wheelchairs, etc.

Mark Voight introduced himself as a retired toolmaker. He gave a short presentation on his work creating various customized accessories for mobility devices including cup holders, walker storage, umbrella holders, etc.

New/Current Business

*Currently, no speaker is confirmed for the September 11, 2024, meeting.

Chairman Micari stated that for the October 9, 2024, meeting, he has invited the current Registrars of Voters, Kevin McCauley (D) and Jolene Lusitani (R), to present.

*Chairman Micari stated that the Commission is confirmed to have a booth at the farmers' market on August 31, 2024. In addition, the Commission will have a booth at the Rockwell Park Festival on August 17, 2024. No date for the senior center has been set.

*Commissioner Krolikowski stated that it is difficult to find the Commission's webpage on the city's website and that this should be improved.

*Chairman Micari stated that new crosswalks outside of City Hall include audible signals and can be adjusted for time and volume.

*Chairman Micari stated that Commissioner Salmoiraghi has been designing a flyer for those interested in a career in American Sign Language interpreting. Ms. Gasco-Soboleski stated that there is such a program available at Northwestern Connecticut Community College, but it is not well attended.

*Commissioner Bajurny provided the Commission with an additional update regarding the installation of the smoke/CO detectors for deaf and hard of hearing residents. She stated that the electrician should be able to complete all requested installations in a single day.

Old Business

*Chairman Bajurny led the Commission in demonstrating how to sign various words related to summer, such as “beach” and “sunshine,” in ASL.

Correspondence

*Chairman Micari stated that he sent a message to Scott Heth, Executive Director of the Environmental Learning Centers of Connecticut, thanking him for the presentation he gave at the May 8, 2024, meeting.

Public Participation

*Roger Duquette mentioned that Orphan Grain Train, a non-profit in Terryville, accepts donations of equipment including those that would be useful to those with a disability.

Motion to adjourn: Krolikowski/Ewings, passed **Meeting adjourned:** 8:39 PM

Next meeting: September 11, 2024, at 7:00 PM
City Hall, 3rd floor meeting room 3-1

Presenter: Thomas DeNoto, City of Bristol Assessor
Topic: Tax and Relief Programs for the Disabled

Submitted by,
Andrew Collins, Secretary