

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
December 11, 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, Olsen, Salmoiraghi

Absent: Krolikowski

Call to order: 7:26 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: November 13, 2024 (Salmoiraghi/Graime, passed)

Presentation: Damien Saunders, Connecticut Outreach & Equipment Coordinator of the Connecticut Equipment Distribution Program
Topic: Equipment for the Hard of Hearing, Deaf, and Blind

Damien Saunders began his presentation by introducing himself and his company, Relay Connecticut. The company provides telephones specifically for deaf, blind, deafblind people, and those who have difficulty speaking. These devices are provided by Hamilton Relay on contract with the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority. Hamilton Relay is based in Aurora, Nebraska.

Mr. Saunders explained the various types of devices that his company provides and how the service operates. He explained that a Communication Assistant (CA) acts as an in-between for the users. These individuals follow user preferences, do not engage in personal conversations, and keep information confidential.

Various types of devices exist depending on the needs and desires of the user. These include phones that can transcribe a speaker's speech into text for those who have difficulty hearing or devices for those who can hear but cannot speak. In addition, devices are available for deafblind users in which a CA can type speech into Braille. Services are offered in Spanish and English.

Customers have customizable options depending on their needs such as the ability to change font sizes and colors.

In addition to traditional phone devices, Hamilton Relay also offers various apps for smartphones that offer many of the same types of services such as captioning for calls.

Mr. Saunders explained that these devices and services are available for free to those who are eligible with requirements including a qualified disability, being a full-time resident of Connecticut, and being at least five years old. Applications can be accepted online.

His company also offers training and installation services for users and for businesses that use the devices.

Following the presentation, Mr. Saunders answered questions from the Commission and the audience including if City Hall can have a phone installed. He also demonstrated a model of one of the phones.

New/Current Business

* No speakers have yet been confirmed for the January 8, 2025, meeting, but City Councilor Olsen stated that she would try to get a representative from Wheeler Clinic to speak. We will also contact a representative from the Bristol Adult Resource Center for the February 12, 2025, meeting. (Following the meeting, Dr. Sabrina Trocchi of Wheeler Clinic was confirmed as a speaker for the January 8 meeting.)

*Commissioner Bajurny stated that there are no new updates regarding the installation of the smoke/CO detectors due to disruptions caused by the holiday season.

Old Business

*Commissioner Bajurny led the Commission in teaching ASL signs related to the holiday season including Christmas and Hanukkah.

Correspondence

*Chairman Micari sent a message to Jason Krueger, Executive Director of the Bristol Senior Center, thanking him for the presentation that he gave at the November 13, 2024, meeting.

Public Participation

*None.

Motion to adjourn: Graime/Bajurny, passed **Meeting adjourned:** 8:22 PM

Next meeting: January, 2025, at 7:00 PM
City Hall, 3rd floor meeting room 3-1

Presenter: Dr. Sabrina Trocchi, President and Chief Executive Officer,
Wheeler Clinic
Topic: Overview of Wheeler Programs and Services

Submitted by,
Andrew Collins, Secretary