

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
May 14, 2025**

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, Collins, Graime, Krolikowski, Olsen, Salmoiraghi

Absent: Bajurny, Ewings

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

Approval of Minutes: April 9, 2025 (Krolikowski/Salmoiraghi, passed)

Presentation: Chief Richard Hart, Bristol Fire Department
Topic: Installation of smoke/CO detectors

Chief Hart gave an update regarding the installation of smoke/CO detectors. It was discovered that for some residences a permit will be required as it involves more electrical work than initially thought. They might get funding from the Lions Club to pay for installation costs.

Chief Hart also described an alternative detector that includes a bed shaker and strobe light, but each costs \$500.

At the last count, seven people had requested a detector. There is a chance that the department could get grant money to cover costs.

Presentation: Thomas Mazzarella, President of Mazzmedia, LLC
Topic: Homelessness in Connecticut

Mr. Mazzarella introduced himself as a Bristol resident for most of his life and has been a video content producer for 42 years. In addition to his business, he also created a non-profit, Productions for Change, to produce videos for free. This included work for St. Vincent DePaul Mission of Bristol and Shepard Meadows.

Homelessness has been an increasing problem recently due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing housing costs. He noted that most homeless people do not want to be, but rather had homelessness happen to them. To explore the issue, he made a film called *No Way to Live* which involved interviewing various people including the homeless and those working with homeless agencies to tell their stories. The film premiered at the Rockwell Theater in Bristol on March 24, 2024. The film took about a year and a half to make and involved multiple towns including Bristol, New Britain, Southington, and Waterbury.

The film and clips from it can be viewed online. It is used by Productions for Change as a fundraising opportunity. It is also used by groups such as churches and others to fundraise for homeless resources.

Mr. Mazzarella showed the Commission two excerpts from the film. The first, "Does giving money help?" shows that money can be used for different things including food and drugs and that opinions differ if giving money to panhandlers is a good option. The second clip, "Do police care about the homeless?" showed that policing and homelessness is a complex issue. Police are generally trained to approach homelessness with compassion.

The main reason for creating this film was to educate people about the issue while minimizing bias. Mr. Mazzarella noted that one of the challenges is that different agencies compete for resources and have historically been reluctant to worked together, though there has been improvement lately. He ended his presentation by stating that his next project will likely focus on veterans.

Throughout the presentation, Mr. Mazzarella answered questions from commissioners and members of the audience.

New/Current Business

*Chairman Micari announced that Brian McLaughlin, Director of Systemwide Service Planning, CT Transit, is scheduled to present at the June 11, 2025, meeting regarding the statewide plan to revamp bus stops. There are no

meetings planned for July and August. There were several suggestions for future speakers, including representatives from Bristol Hospital, the Alzheimer's Association, and Wheeler Health. Another suggestion was Jean Morrison, the current Director of the Bureau of Services for Persons who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing.

Old Business

*Jon Sahlin, ASL interpreter, taught the Commission signs related to summer, navy, and Memorial Day.

Correspondence

*Chairman Micari sent a message to Lt. Jason Warner, Community Relations, Bristol Police Department, thanking him for the presentation that he gave at the April 9, 2025, meeting.

Public Participation

*Carlos Machado expressed his satisfaction with a recent visit to Bristol Hospital and access to ASL services. The hospital had access to video remote interpreting (VRI) services. While some people dislike VRI, Mr. Machado found the hospital's use of it to be acceptable.

* Roger Duquette wanted to know when the political parties would be announcing their candidates for the upcoming municipal elections. Most candidates have not yet announced.

*One audience member asked if there would be a traffic light installed at Sheila Court. There are plans to install one at that intersection on Route 6.

Motion to adjourn: Krolikowski/Graime, passed **Meeting adjourned:** 8:18 PM

Next meeting: June 11, 2025, at 7:00 PM
City Hall, 3rd floor meeting room 3-1

Presenter: Brian McLaughlin, Director of Systemwide Service Planning,
CT Transit
Topic: Statewide plan to revamp bus stops

Submitted by,
Andrew Collins, Secretary