

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities  
Minutes of Meeting  
Thursday October 17th, 2019 - TOWN HALL 201**

**Attendance:** Jim Ross, Tom Holleman, Stacie Curran, Marina Derman, Doug Rifkin, Absent - Diane Johnson, Present from Human Services: Elaine Daignault & Michelle Bottone.

8:40am - Call to order.

**Announcement:** Welcome Doug Rifkin. A new member, joining our Board.  
Jim Ross - review minutes from last month. Vote: Tom H. 1st, Doug 2nd. All in favor

**Human Services Update:** Elaine D.

Center for Senior activities - Record number of registrations, (\$4/per class, and they brought in over \$22,000 last month); the Medicare open enrollment plan is open, with help available at Town Hall & Senior Center - meeting with Choices counselors, for Westport residents.

Youth Services:

PYD - renaming, rebranding to "Westport Together"

This program used to be funded by the United Way but the Town (DHS) has funded the coordinating position for many years. 2nd Selectwoman Jen Tooker initiated the change and worked with a committee of school, pta and town personnel to rebrand and renew the initiative.

Mental Health Breakfast - October 29th ( See flyer)

Pro-Act - Discount Drug Program (for under or uninsured individuals) Press release to come out on November 1st, residents will be mailed cards for use (works for things Lasik eye, hearing aids, pet medications, etc)

Michelle: Energy Assistance Program – season is now, for eligible residents by State and Fed standards, and Westport Warm up fund, if you fall a little short of federal requirements, Town can help out (through town/ private funding)

**Holiday Program** - helping approx 150+ families, Patty Haberstroh & Annette D'Augelli coordinate the Family Programs collectively. (through town/private funds)

**Prevention efforts** - A Community Readiness Survey going out - see where we are in the comfort level/discussions education around suicide - Womb-to-Tomb

Jim R. to Michelle - **Voter Registry:** A check in, how it's going, where we could spread the word better - doctors offices, social media, using Town Hall, or League of Woman voters. Elaine to post through the Facebook page to remind residents of ADA accommodations available.

Michelle – **Council of Advocates Discussion** - approx 11 adults, over age 21, to discuss employment, socialization - a check-in, what they would like to see, how work is going, they would like to see more activity based activities next time ( a 1st step to bringing back Casey's Place model)

Elaine D - Announces new Full Time employee, program manager for Toquet Hall - Jamie Boone, grew up in westport. (help Kevin G)

Public comment:

Sharuna Mahesh - Maybe invite the Y, Library, etc., to speak - and bring more together on the Westport Together Initiative.

Discussion around Connecticut Connections: bringing towns together for recreational & social activities, can we join forces - transportation always an issue

Back to idea of a Regional Forum

Sharuna - Autism - group wanting to bring presence to Fairfield County

Mark Muller - Suggestion: Social workers would be wise to start going to our library.

This seems to be a trend (Meet people where they are) since many are in library all day.

Employment:

Remarkable theater, Library, DMA, Chamber of Commerce, Rotaries

Need some moral awareness - have the Town step it up

Two buckets: A. All employees have a disability OR

B. the "one off" - company hires one or two employees with a disability.

Sharuna - will be a leading force in getting this started. Jim Marpe, Jim Ross, Elaine D. - let's start going to Chamber & Rotaries. Sharuna will start preparing a Power point, etc.

Diane J( absent) - has been in on some initial discussions with Elaine D.

(DISCUSSION)

For employment - we as Commission, need to figure who will join, figure dates, etc.

Mark M., -PI - Public Information

or, start a community conversation

Next Regional meeting - to be set up again

Next guest speakers - Tom will reach out to the Y

Elaine - is in discussions with Sharon Halstead

Next month: Affordable housing & Transportation

Marina - next ARC presentation set for Thursday night, Toquet Hall 6:3-8:00pm

10:10am - meeting Adjourned