

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Thursday, December 19, 2019 - TOWN HALL 201**

**Attendance:** Jim Ross, Tom Holleman, Stacie Curran, Doug Rifkin, & Diane Johnson,  
Excused: Marina Derman,

DHS Staff Members: Elaine Daignault & Michelle Bottone.

Guests: Mark, Freda Hecht, and Pippa Bell Adler  
8:40am - Call to order.

Review of October Minutes: Jim Ross reviews - Makes motion, Tom 1st- Diane - 2nd,  
All in favor, Approved.

Jim R: Summary of accomplishments

Additionally: issues on transportation, employment, the Myrtle Ave. advocacy, guest speakers, taking awareness into action, Diane added - the dinner meetings with adults, to discuss issues, create social event, handout riders for “best practices” on employment, & self-advocacy. Elaine: added, thinking about partnerships with other agencies in search for more regular socialization, - Jim: and partner with businesses.

UPDATE: Human Services - Michelle B. (with Elaine D.) - all in go mode - Emergency assistance, Westport Warm up, Holiday help, Choices, (Medicare enrollment) Now, Teen Talk Counselors - 2 Mental Health professionals added:

1, Melissa Rotante, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) from Kids in Crisis, (which offers 24-hour available care, things like respite, etc.) will join as a (replacing Ed Milton) full-time Student Outreach Counselor, providing immediate support. and,

2. Abigail Sclafani, a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) from Liberation Programs, will provide substance abuse prevention/intervention service at the high school, two days a week. The High school kids were all introduced to her at a vaping lecture last week. Suggestion: that these two be reintroduced in January.

On Jan 15th, 7pm-8:30pm, Launching Our Sons - dialogue for parents to promote raising healthier young men, by Vince Benevento,LPC

Followed by an upcoming author talk “Unchartered”for Empty Nesters, what to know before they go.

Mark: (public guest) - would like to commend what is being done in the schools.

Elaine: Our focus is moving to Womb to Tomb - prevention coalition.

A readiness survey for the Town getting worked on. Are we ready for these hard topics?

Pippa Bell Adler (public guest) - She is resigning from Sustainable Westport, and starting programs for Decreased Food Waste in Westport: Education to shop better, use food better, composting, maybe drop sites.

Freda Hecht (public guest) - Circle of friends is going strong for all ages, Crumbs bakery is going well - they are getting employment for the bakers now, have fourteen bakers.

Sacred Heart is partnering with the Bakery, socialization is coming out as an area of need. The club at the high school, Circle of Friends, is going strong - no one sits alone at lunch.

They do a lot of adult programming, things to do at night - there is a need, and they have folks up to age 70 looking for things to do, entertainment and socialization.

#### Employment:

Businesses in Westport - everyone can include, be inclusive and should, for it is in their best interest to do so.

(Jim's story - away at conference - speak up on behalf of the disability world)

Turn awareness into action.

We want a meeting/sub meeting - Chamber of Commerce & DMA - Highlight those doing the work, attracting others to do more - discussion - video - Diane & Elaine.

Freda - And maybe share the government support - funding four weeks of salary, sending job coaches, the retention piece, employment satisfaction, prompt employees, great attendance.

Doug: Suggests we get Chapel Haven in to speak with us - Doug will work on this effort.

2nd Regional meeting: Michelle got to Karen Green (discussion about last meeting)

Thinking a Webinar - given by Katherine Gipps, Exec. Director of N.E. ADA, to educate us on the State of Disability in our State and the legal issues. THIS MAY BE OUR JANUARY meeting - from there, we can form our agenda for the regional meeting to follow.

Jim: still working with Fairfield to form a commission, and now Rocky Hill has reached out for support to begin a charter.

Transportation: Two parts, safety - as discussed last commission meeting, and the getting around piece (Discussion around the Commuter bus, user-ship not there, may be better/cost effective to do a shopping loop, Uber, Handicap Uber, maybe give gift cards, Door-to-Door.)

#### Housing:

Elaine - if we could get to some P & Z Affordable Housing meetings, to see how this all works with developers, she suggests we attend. They are during lunchtime. We are in a moratorium for 4 years, does that really mean we will do nothing?? or be pro-active as a Town?

Other business: We are all required to sign a Conflict of Interest form each year - can do now or take and return.

Motion to adjourn: Tom/Diane - all - 10:10am