



Department of Human Services

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Commission on People with Disabilities Regular Meeting Minutes June 16, 2022

Attendance: Chairman - Jim Ross, Stacie Curran; Marina Derman and Tom Holleman
Remote Attendees: Diane Johnson, Doug Rivkin
Excused: Joe Anastasi
Human Services Staff: Elaine Daignault, Kaila Morgan, and Margaret Pinheiro
WCSA - Sue Pfister
Members of the public: Dr. Allison Martin, Fairfield University; Harris Falk, RTM; Ralph Checuti, Westport HR; Michelle Perelli, Westport P & Z
Guest Speakers - Mike Rizzo - Assistant Superintendent/Director Pupil Services
Kelsey LaPrad - Westport Connections - Transition Program Coordinator

Minutes approval from May: Jim Ross - Motion -1st Marina, - 2nd - Stacie, All in favor

Westport Public Schools New Transition Program called “Westport Connections”:

Mike Rizzo: Credited many involved who made Westport Connections a reality. (Dr. Babich, Partnership with Karen McMann & Ms. Luddy, Dr. Allison Martin - Fairfield Univ.)

SLIDESHOW/Presentation - (SEE SLIDES)

- (Mike & Kelsey) Goal is to root students in their home community. Integration=key importance. New vocational experiences, transportation, volunteerism, cooking, arts, etc.
- There may be an opportunity to audit classes in the Fall - talking with the Norwalk district as well.
- Presently, saying no to other Towns, who wish to join our program - this may change as Westport grows & perfects the program.
- Job Coach goes with students - See opportunity - work on a collaboration with E4E - while in Transition, they have the expertise to train those to become employees.

Discussion - Mike R - sees maybe be an opportunity for Transition experts to help Employers work with their employees

Diane J. - Suggests maybe a field trip to Special Olympics for Westport Program to join - ex., track practice a couple of times a week. (DJ will send info.)

Dr. Allison Martin - From Fairfield University (Director of Education & Outreach) - has witness firsthand/the first year of the program to opportunity and reward to both the students of Westport Connections as well as the Students at Fairfield Univ., taking Special Ed classes, and graduate programs - to have the “hands-on experience” is teaching well beyond what one can learn in a lecture - and now, Fairfield Univ. has added an opportunity - a 5th year program for its Undergraduate Students to take/receive certification in area of Special Education.

(Discussion) - Potential Job sites

Elaine D - HS Update:

Transportation

- Looking into Door-to-Door being expanded
- RTM looking to appoint 2nd Transportation person - to join Peter Gold
- May invite Peter Gold to next meeting - RTM want someone appointed soon.

E4E – Update on employment gateway and next steps

- Jim Ross - need to get Businesses to Commit to E4E - needs to circle back to those we hit upon prior.

(Discussion)

Club 203 –

- Town of Westport can serve as our Escrow agent to enhance ability for the start up to apply for grants. This will be part of the pilot program to test viability. To be put on the agenda in July for a formal vote.
- CPD can serve in advisoree capacity - we will work through liability & actionable items with Town council
- Sue P - Talked about a similar program in Town many years ago called CT Connections. A collaboration with Parks & Rec. Dept., Ice skating event, Levitt event, etc.,
- Casey's Place - Diane J. will connect Stacie with Diane from Cassy's place.

NEXT STEPS AND JULY AGENDA ITEMS:

CLUB 203

Job Search Program at the Library: Elaine D. (Human Services) & Bill Harmer (Library) requesting ARPA funds to create a on site Job Coach at the library to assist local individuals in developing resumes, to find employment (separate from E4E) and another resource E4E job searches. CPD to discuss ways to engage agency involvement. Also, can we get the DMA to put E4E on their website (Stacie will ask)

Next meeting July 21st - 9am

Lots going on around affordable housing - if you wish to follow - see website

10:30 - motion to adjourn