

Minutes from Wednesday, August 24, 2011 Commission on  
Disability Meeting  
Levi Lincoln Chamber  
4:30PM

**Attendance:**

**Members:** Rachel Shannon Brown, Herbert Cremer, Charles Hianah, Deborah Malone, David Perry, Lynne Towler

**Guests:** Grace Clark, Jackie Norton

**Staff:** Derek Brindisi, Dawn E. Clark

Introductions were made and Charles Hianah was welcomed as a new member of the Commission.

The Chairperson suggested we take the agenda out of order to accommodate our guest. There were no objections.

**Guest Presentation**

Ms. Clark introduced Dr. Dale MaGee, Commissioner of Public Health in Worcester. Dr. MaGee provided the Commission with a power point overview of the "*Health of Worcester 2011*" Report.

**August 24, 2011 Minutes**

Approved as amended: 5 in favor 1 opposed

A question as to whether or not voting as a slate of officers was legal. Staff will consult with the City Solicitor and report back to the Commission.

The secretary identified the fact that she intended to tape record the meeting to assist her in the taking of notes. There was an objection by Mr. Cremer based on his disability and questioned the legality of tape recording the meeting. Given this conflict, the Chairperson asked staff to take the minutes until this could be worked out.

**Recognition of Service**

The Chairperson presented Grace Clark with a certificate signed by the City Manager in recognition of her service from July 2005-May 2011.

**Communication and Reports: Chairperson and Coordinator**

1. Intake Update will be presented at the September meeting.  
One concern was brought to the Commission as a result of an intake. A client who has a companion dog was requesting a free dog license. The City of Worcester waives the fee for service dogs and is not required to do so under any state or federal law. This Worcester ordinance which waives the license free does not include companion dogs. The concern was raised because under the fair housing law both service and companion dogs are to be treated the same. With this being the case the Office on Disabilities is concerned that both types of animals need to be treated equally by the ordinance that waives the dog license fee for service dogs. In an effort to be thorough, Chairperson Brown asked if other ordinances might be affected. Mr. Brindisi responded that the one place he could suggest is that the Commissioner of Public Health gives waivers when exotic animals are to be in Worcester and there may be a possibility that an exotic animal may serve as a companion. The Chairperson requested staff to pursue a request to review the ordinance on behalf of the Commission.

2. Meeting Times, Dates and locations: The Commission has decided to meet in different locations around the City to encourage more participation from people with disabilities. There was a request that the Commission not meet in the Esther Howland Chamber for a number of accessibility concerns. The next meeting will be at the public library.
3. Staffing interviews are on hold at this time.

### **Old Business and Updates**

1. Election Commission/Anna Maria College Polling Location. Mr. Brindisi reported that the City has requested that the AAB inspect the ramp as the Commission had asked. The ramp has not been inspected to date. Staff agreed to follow up with the AAB. Other items discussed was a reminder of the Warden and Clerk Training on August 3 and September 1<sup>st</sup>. Charles Hianah and Grace Clark volunteered to help with the training related to working with people with disabilities and the AutoMark (Ballot Marker). The Commission reviewed and voted to approve a Letter to the Editor about the use of the AutoMARK to be submitted to the local newspapers.

Due to the lateness of the hour the Chairperson asked that the Agenda be put on hold until the next meeting and called for a motion to adjourn. All approved.

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The Chairperson was reminded of an item of business needing immediate action. A motion was made and accepted, to reinstate the meeting to consider a request from REDD (Rights, Equality, Equity for the Disabled).

The Commission voted to sign on to a letter prepared by REDD addressed to the Worcester Regional Authority about the automated call-out system.

Motion to adjourn approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Malone  
Secretary  
Commission on Disability

Assisted by  
Dawn E. Clark  
Disability Intake Coordinator  
Office on Disabilities