



City of Salisbury
DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 17, 2020

Committee Members Present

Timothy Meagher, Chairperson
Gregory Tyler, Citizen
Michael Dyer, United Needs & Abilities
Stephen Bullock, PT Job Coach
Dr. Katherine Jones, Bay Area Center for Independent Living
Amy Crouse, Blind Industries
Jeremy Wolfer, Wicomico County Board of Education
Dominique Sessa, Citizen (New Member)
Adith Thummalapalli, Citizen (New Member)
Michelle Gregory, City Council Rep

In Attendance

Julie English, *Mayor's Office Administrative Assistant*
Caleb McBride, Student
Kerin Jones, Student
Virginia Bender, Citizen

The Disability Advisory Committee met at 3:00pm virtually via Zoom.

Call to Order

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) Meeting was called to order at 3:03pm by Mr. Meagher.

Introductions and Welcome

The meeting began with brief introductions of all in attendance. The two new members and two student guest speakers were welcomed. Mr. Meagher thanked everyone for taking time to join us.

Last Meeting Minutes Review

(The minutes from the DAC's last meeting on March 12, 2020 were located, reviewed, and approved at a later time via email communication by the committee.)

Guest Student Speakers

Dr. Jones told us about a great program that Bay Area C.I.L. offers through a partnership with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). This program allows students, aged 14-21 and diploma bound with intellectual disabilities, the opportunity to learn about self-advocacy, health systems, transportation, housing, and banking. The students also have the opportunity to go out into the community to work on their job skills. Dr. Jones introduced Kerin Jones and Caleb McBride. They were given the privilege, through Bay Area and DORS, to participate in a 6-8 week program at Salisbury University (SU) to work and get paid minimum wage. Other businesses in Salisbury have participated in this program as well.

Caleb spoke to the group about his experience working in the Commons (Dining Services) and with Event Tech Services at SU. He and Kerin were also volunteers for the SU Drum Ensemble. Caleb learned how to read music. He feels these programs are helping him learn what to expect when he gets his first full time job. The mentors Caleb worked with

taught him valuable skills that he can use as he progresses in life. Being able to practice some of the skills at home, such as cooking, will help his confidence. Caleb also shared that one of his favorite things about working at SU was getting to eat there. He learned about the need to wash his hands frequently and wear gloves while working with food. When asked what his dream job would be, Caleb responded that he would love to be a music producer. His least favorite job was washing dishes because it was very hot, dirty, and smelly.

In Dining Services, Kerin and Caleb were responsible for dish washing, culinary (food) preparation, quenchers (refill dishes, drinks, condiments), and kiosk (serving the food). Kerin's favorite food to make was at the pizza station. Caleb's favorite food to prepare was the chicken. Kerin explained that during Drum Ensemble some students had to play an instrument for about 2 hours. Kerin was responsible for putting instruments together and then putting them away. For Event Services, Kerin assisted with the lights and set up for various events. As his mom, Dr. Jones shared that this experience really helped Kerin come out of his shell and not be so introverted.

Dr. Jones wrapped up the conversations by asking both students to share what it meant to them to make money. Caleb said it helped him to see that he has a future. He bought clothes and food with some of his money. It made him feel good that he didn't have to ask his parents for money. Kerin shared that it felt nice to get paid for doing something. They both now have bank accounts for their money. Kerin and Caleb agree that this experience has given them more confidence in their abilities.

Agency Updates

Dr. Jones announced that there are several scholarships available for anyone transitioning to housing from being homeless or in a rehab facility. There are also a couple scholarships available for veterans with disabilities.

Mr. Dyer shared that they are scrambling to provide services to those whose day programs are now closed due to Covid. UNA has also worked with the Vulnerable Population group to overcome challenges many are facing now.

Mr. Wolfer shared that schools are still virtual. They are reaching out to see what should be in place before reopening the schools. They are also working on getting the Tri-County Program back to Wor-Wic the first week of October.

Ms. Crouse stated that Blind Industries has remained open. Their rehab department took a big hit since it was primarily seniors and they are urged to stay home right now. They are trying to figure out how to do the training safely. Most training is hands on so this is a challenge.

Community Updates

Miss Sessa shared the various groups she's involved with: Vulnerable Population, Delmarva Covid Crafters, Girl in the Pink Wheelchair, and homeless groups just to name a few. She is very involved with adaptive PPE for the disabled.

Disability Pride Month (July), October Activities (variety of awareness topics)

Mr. Thummalapalli shared some ideas for October: Voices of Disability Event, Oct. Movie on the River can be disability focused. Ms. English added that we can add facts and figures to the city's social media sites with permission from the city's Communications division.

Dr. Jones suggested that it would be nice to see a campaign to advertise the changes made downtown and behind the hospital to assist the disabled community; perhaps a video showing the purposes of the various changes and how it helps those in a wheelchair. The idea of involving Delmarva Life was shared. The committee feels this would be a great idea and that the executive office would be supportive. Ms. English will contact Chris Demone about his idea once the downtown plaza is completed.

Miss Sessa would like to put together valuable contact information for the disabled community in an effort to provide resources for various needs. She is also looking to put together a YouTube page for the disabled. Miss Sessa added that it would be good to include a highlight on students in October, as well.

Announcements

Mr. Tyler informed the committee of an app called Good Maps that shows outdoor and indoor maps for different locations. You have to subscribe to it but the app is free. This would assist those with disabilities, and visiting Salisbury, find their way around easier.

Any additional ideas can be sent to Ms. English for future discussion or follow up.

Mr. Meagher reminded us about the importance of voting, by mail or in-person. He briefed us on locations as well.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 3:00pm. The location is TBD.

Adjournment

The DAC meeting was adjourned at 4:31pm.

Minutes Recorded By: Julie English, Mayor's Office