

PINELLAS COUNTY COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MEETING MINUTES

March 3, 2025, at 10:00 AM

Pinellas County Extension, Magnolia Room

12520 Ulmerton Rd, Largo FL 33774

Call to Order – Jody Armstrong, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

Roll Call –

Present

Jody Armstrong, Chair (Disability Achievement Center)

Ross Silvers, Vice Chair (Commissioner Eggers)

Kerry Carlisle (Commissioner Peters)

Michelle Detweiller (PARC)

Jack Humburg (Boley Center)

Todd Jennings (Commissioner Scott)

Bradlee McCoy (Commissioner Nowicki)

Angel Overly (PVA)

Stuart Strikowski, Area on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas

Jacqueline Wunderlich (Commissioner Scherer)

Not Present – Excused/Unexcused

Misti Pollaro, Secretary (Family Network on Disabilities) – Unexcused

Doreen Caudell (Latvala) – Unexcused Absence

Deborah Figgs-Sanders (Flowers) – Excused

Others Present

Betina Baron, Compliance Manager, Pinellas County Office of Human Rights

Carol Strickland, Pinellas County Office of Human Rights

Keiah Townsend, Pinellas County Assistant County Attorney

Other interested guests

Approval of Minutes – A quorum was met at this meeting. The minutes from September 9, 2024, were unanimously approved.

Sportsability Alliance – with the hurricanes, all of the accessible beach mats were pulled up and due to the devastation, most of them have not been put back down. At this time, the biggest one at Treasure Island, and Madeira Beach mats are down. More information is forthcoming.

Parks Accessibility – the parks are very busy trying to reopen. Ft DeSoto, swing set, a member noted no accessibility at north beach, near the first shelter you come to.

BCC meeting – Jody met with most of the commissioners one on one to update them, with Commissioner Nowicki or Commissioner Scherer being the exceptions.

New Business: Introductions – went around the table introducing themselves, where they work, a little about their organization, and some included personal information with people they're related to or working with who have disabilities.

Public Records – access to any records. You cannot talk to each other privately on items being discussed by the council. If you have a voting conflict, please let Keiah know. A quorum is needed to vote on any topic, and it was recently changed to 5 members. Any information you wish to share with the council, please send to either Carol, Betina or Keiah for distribution.

Appointments Up for Renewal – Kerry, will see if Connor can replace her as representative for Commissioner Peters. Secretary Pollaro has left the state due to issues from last year's hurricanes, so Family Network on Disabilities needs to provide a representative.

Change agenda to include comments from each member regarding what they're seeing in and around the county, and how this council can help to improve accessibility. A request for a lift at a public boat ramp so that one can transfer someone with a disability onto the vessel.

Emergency Management – kits to be used in the shelters for folks on the spectrum. The kits have a variety of items: a guide, touchable items, pickable items, fidget items, etc., to help reduce anxiety. They cost around \$400.00. There is also a reunification kit, should a school go under lockdown.

Post Hurricane Discussion – PSTA did pretty well: helped with moving people to shelters. PVA dealing with accessibility and service animals of temporary housing. Carlisle said she was to go to St. Anthony's, but experienced some gaps in the process; and had co-workers displaced. PARC has 340 employees, and many of them had damages to deal with, while the facility itself did pretty well. Wunderlich: whole neighborhood was damaged, and neighbors are still living in filth, cell phones didn't work well so video or calling family outside the area didn't work. Lack of interpreters in services that were provided regarding meetings or pop-up meetings/events. Special needs aren't mobility only. Boley centers has 50+ apartment complexes and didn't have to relocate any of their tenants; roof on a campus on the southside was ripped off; seven roofs needing replacement. McCoy, neighbors had a lot of issues; currently working on a device to aid in cell phone usage during outages. Jennings: no real issues but wants to know how many special needs

children are in shelters to determine the need for the kits. Townsend: will forward feedback to Emergency Management. Baron, minor damage, but had staff with damage, team helped with their home cleanup. Disability Achievement Center lost their sign and had minor flooring in some offices; lost roof, awning, a 60-year-old oak tree. VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) steps up during these times and has resources. There are a lot of people still needing a lot of help, replacing power chairs, etc.

Patient Discharge – people who are hospitalized discharged in their hospital robes and left out on the streets, with no warm hand-off to other organizations to help. Who would be able to assist with this? Social workers should be following through with the discharged patient. Perhaps the Health & Medical Preparedness Coalition (ESF8). Reach out to Betina if you know of anyone that can assist with this.

Open Discussion/Announcements – Perhaps it's a state level situation or department of education no longer over some organizations. A senate bill is realigning or streamlining agencies within the state, including. centers for independent living. It's realignment only and any monies that would shift won't do so until next fiscal year.

Secretary – what the duties are were identified. Jody has an app. Jacqueline volunteered, motion to approve and voted unanimously.

Beach access video to be shown at next meeting. Fair Housing Symposium is coming up on April 23, 2025. June 2nd will be the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.