

**PINELLAS COUNTY COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MEETING MINUTES**

December 1, 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 10:00 am.

Roll Call –

Present

Jody Armstrong, Chair (Disability Achievement Center)
Ross Silvers, Vice Chair (Commissioner Eggers)
Jacqueline Wunderlich, Secretary (Commissioner Scherer)
Connor Carlisle (Commissioner Peters)
Michelle Detweiler (Parc Center for Disabilities)
Deborah Figgs-Sanders (Commissioner Flowers)
Jack Humburg (Boley Centers)
Angel Overly (FL Gulf Coast Paralyzed Veterans of America)
Stuart Strikowsky (Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas)

Not Present - Excused/Unexcused

Doreen Caudell (Commissioner Latvala) -- Unexcused
Todd Jennings (Commissioner Scott) - Excused
Bradlee McCoy (Commissioner Nowicki) - Unexcused

Others Present

Betina Baron, Director, Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (OHR)
Keiah Townsend, Pinellas County Assistant County Attorney
Other interested guests

Approval of Minutes – A quorum was met at this meeting. The minutes from June 2nd, 2025, were unanimously approved.

Old Business

Beach Access Mats – Most of the beach access mats have been reinstalled. They need to be re-surveyed. There have been some changes in the Pinellas County access mats. For example, Madeira Beach were provided with one, and then they installed an additional four. We're looking for volunteers to go to the beaches and do the survey associated with the mats, about 45 minutes for each mat.

Park Accessibility Update – We currently do not have a Park Accessibility update as there hasn't been a park to review. Do we wish to continue to have this as an agenda item? After some discussion, the decision was to add it to the agenda if there is an update.

New Business: Office of Human Rights

New Office of Human Rights Director – Betina Baron announced that she is the new Director of the Office of Human Rights (OHR) as Jeffery Lorick has retired. She is

looking forward to hiring a new Compliance Manager who will replace her in these meetings. She still plans to attend some meetings.

TDD Phone Lines – The county TDD line is located in OHR, and our staff manages and answers the calls daily. We wanted to inquire if anyone knows of an updated phone as the one in the office is probably 15-20 years old. It still functions as a phone, but with limited capabilities: it doesn't transfer, hold, takes only one call at a time, etc.

Commentary – Some of the commissioners have made some commentary regarding the status of the OHR during the budget season, and inquiries made as to what services are provided and if they are repetitive or duplicative with other agencies as far as both fair housing and equal employment opportunities. Discussions have been made with the commissioners one on one as well as with the county administrator to provide as much information as possible. While this is not a solicitation, if members of this council would like to send support letters as citizens, or representing your organization, you are free to do so. Betina has offered to meet one on one with the council members to discuss further. Some discussions followed, including several members of the council expressing an interest with a one on one with Betina.

Council Member Updates – Personal updates from Jacqueline as well as professional. She is now the co-executive director of Family Center on Deafness. There seems to be a need for mental health among the deaf community. For example, if a deaf person gets Baker Acted, it's extremely difficult to get an in-person interpreter to aid in communication. In answer, one suggested Bay Care as they have an initiative every three years to provide funding for the needs in the community.

Michele with Parc Center for Disabilities states that their Children's Service Center is about 90% completed, but still lacking some funding. The Adult Community Center has been completely renovated. Their biggest issue is funding. So many are looking for services and support. Betina added that the most filed cases in our office are disability related.

Stuart with Area Agency on Aging states their working on acquiring a property in Pasco County to building housing for the elderly disabled. Angel with Florida Gulf Coast Paralyzed Veterans of America states there are lots of activities happening in the area including fishing tournaments, Paralympics, horseback riding, etc. They also work with veterans when they're updating their disability and being denied their claims to use certain buzz words to aid in getting the appeal approved.

The Boley Centers are working on a new land lease where individuals with mental health issues can be housed. Unfortunately, the funding has changed and they're losing \$1,000,000 in funding. Deborah piggy-backed on the funding issues and reiterated the need to speak at the BCC meetings, every meeting if possible. Speaking to them in a one-on-one basis is fine, but in a public setting it also brings the issues to citizens.

Ross suggested Meagan Young to come to one of these meetings to introduce herself as Lindell's replacement with the City of St Petersburg's ADA Coordinator. Lots of other changes in PSTA, including route number changes to more closely match the street number they travel on most. They are offering training to help but also recommend the Transit App to be the most reliable tool to use. There have been some changes to PSTA Access as well, and Ross encourages calling to work out any issues.

There is also an on-demand zone in an area of north Clearwater that is highly populated with seniors and people with disabilities.

Jody mentions that the Disability Achievement Center has a program for those that can work in competitive employment, the Florida Associations for Centers for Independent Living will pay for personal care attendants, reimbursement of over \$22,000/year.

Gas Station Ordinance – Betina mentions that OHR has been meeting with Code Enforcement, the Department of Agriculture, and Keiah to follow up on some initiatives. We are going to start a campaign to re-educate the community on the ordinance. It will be a task working with three different agencies.

Other OHR Updates – OHR has met all the contractual obligations with HUD and EEOC for last fiscal year. We have also started an initiative to have different agency members, internal and external, attend our staff meetings. Ross attended one to understand a little of what we do, and he provided resources to provide to our customers. We have been asking if you all are available and open to come to our meetings, maybe 15 minutes, just to introduce yourself and provide additional resources for the team. Also, on President's Day, our office has gone out to serve the community. If you have a volunteer opportunity for our 10-member staff to do for a few hours that day, please let us know.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.