



COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES MINUTES Thursday, January 21, 2021 5:30 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING
GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, 951-826-5427

MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of the Commission on Disabilities is to promote greater awareness of, respect for, and the total participation of individuals with disabilities into all aspects of life.”

State law restricts the Commission on Disabilities from taking action on an item unless it has been included on an agenda and posted at least 72 hours in advance of a meeting or unless the matter falls within one of the narrow exceptions. Consequently, any item not listed on this agenda will normally have to be delayed until the item can be made part of a posted agenda.

CALL TO ORDER: 5:33 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ABSENT: Antonia Quezada and Don Coon

Also in attendance was Analyst Jessica Spiking, Deputy General Services Director Shari Call, and Deputy City Attorney Ruthann Salera.

1. **Public Comment Period** - This is the portion of the meeting specifically set aside to invite your comments regarding any matter within the Commission’s jurisdiction. Individual audience participation is limited to 3 minutes.

There were no public comments.

PRESENTATIONS

2. Presentation from Attorney Lindsay Appell with Disability Rights California about the services offered to people with disabilities.

Attorney Lindsay Appell is a special education attorney with Disability Rights California (DRC) and she represents students with disabilities all throughout the state to help them get the services that they need in school. She explained what the organization does and how they can be a resource to

the community. The DRC intake line (1-800-776-5746) is staffed Monday through Friday 9AM- 4PM and is available for anyone in the public who believes that they might need legal assistance for a disability related issue.

DRC is a Protection and Advocacy Agency and they work to improve the lives of people with disabilities by guarding against abuse, advocating for basic rights in all the different systems that serve people with disabilities, and ensure access to community education to make sure people know what their rights are. The mission is to advance the rights, dignity, equal opportunities, and choices for all people with disabilities in the state of California. The goal is for people with disabilities to be able to live barrier free lives and to have choice and self-determination in how they live their lives.

DRC consists of many non-attorney advocates who assist people with disabilities through accompanying them with meetings with various systems. They provide trainings for community members and have many publications on the website that provide answers about various systems and laws that impact people with disabilities. DRC has an investigations unit as part of the agency that investigates abuse and neglect of people with disabilities particularly people with disabilities that are living in facilities.

DRC provides free legal services and to be eligible, you need to be a person with a disability who is either trying to become eligible for a system or you are already eligible. Lindsay Appell is a special education attorney and a common question that she encounters is “my child is not eligible for special education yet, but I think that they might need those services. Is that something that DRC is able to assist with?” The answer is yes, DRC will assist with getting the eligibility for an individualized education program (IEP) or any other type of system that people with disabilities are working within.

The goal of DRC is to serve people with disabilities from racial and ethnic diverse communities particularly communities that traditionally haven’t had access to legal services or who are most marginalized in a lot of the systems that people with disabilities are interacting with. DRC ensures that they can serve people with disabilities from diverse linguistic communities by having staff that are bilingual as well as staff that can communicate in ASL.

The legal advocacy unit is one branch of DRC that does legal advocacy for various types of issues. There are the seven different practice groups: Civil rights, healthcare/home and community-based services, Intellectual/Developmental disabilities, mental health, pathways to work, voting rights, and youth. Attorney Lindsay Appell highlights a few of these practice groups and programs.

The Youth Practice Group (YPG) provides free legal services to students with disabilities and this ranges from trainings and counsel and advice to make sure parents and students are empowered and understand what their rights are in the system so that they can advocate for themselves in IEP meetings and expulsion proceedings. The YPG can provide representation to families in meetings if they are trying to advocate for particular changes to an IEP or 504 plan, in expulsion hearings and manifestation determination reviews, and in due process hearings and complaints to the California Department of Education or the United States Department of Education. The YPG covers children from the ages of 3 up to 22.

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is a group of primarily non attorney advocates that assist people with disabilities that are trying to navigate the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR). The DOR provides services like training, education, and it tries to connect people with the workforce. The CAP

helps to work alongside people with disabilities to advocate for them within that DOR system. Services can be obtained from this program at any time from when you're applying to become eligible for DOR up to when you are already receiving services and might need assistance obtaining more or different services.

The Office of Clients Rights Advocacy (OCRA) is similar to CAP however as opposed to advocating within DOR, OCRA advocates for people who are regional center eligible from birth until the end of life. For OCRA there are two clients rights advocates located at every single regional center throughout the state and they provide assistance with navigating IHSS, SSI, and other systems and provide representation at IPP and/or IEP meetings.

Commissioner Krick asked if there is much of a problem with school districts regarding IEP's. Are some districts better or worse and how is it working with IEP's during these times? Are there significant problems that the districts are having? Attorney Appell stated there are a big range in IEP's and there are a lot of issues with disparities, some districts are getting more resources than others. A lot of clients are being significantly impacted, especially students with behavioral challenges who are used to having an aide in the classroom and no longer have that service with at home learning. Some districts have found ways to provide aides in the home but that varies throughout the state.

Commissioner Lewis asked the age requirement for the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR). Attorney Appell stated that this system serves people who are adults in the workforce however there is a new program called pre-employment transitions services which can begin as early as age 16. Students as young as 16 that have IEP's or disabilities that might impact their ability to access the workforce can get connected with DOR through the assistance of the CAP.

Commissioner Perkins asked if minors are still required to provide a social security card when trying to apply for the new pre-employment transition services. Attorney Appell believes it is a requirement but suggests going directly to the CAP website for verification.

Chair Alexander asked what the acronym for CAP was. Attorney Appell stated it is the Client Assistance Program and is open to students 16 years of age which is when they are eligible for DOR services. Parents can get information directly through the CAP website.

Commissioner Krick asked if schools are required to tell parents that DRC exists. According to Attorney Appell, as far as special education, when there is a decision to change placement or discipline the school is required to provide resources available for the families. It is not guaranteed that the district will provide specific information.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION CALENDAR

This portion of the Commission on Disabilities Agenda is for all matters where staff and public participation is anticipated. Individual audience participation is limited to 3 minutes.

3. Approve the amendment of the Standing Rules to reflect current Commission on Disabilities meeting schedule and location.

Ruthann Salera is a Deputy City Attorney and is a legal resource for the Commission on the Brown Act and other legal issues. She explained that the City Charter requires a regular monthly meeting schedule, however if there are not enough agenda items or lack of a quorum, the meeting can be cancelled.

Commissioner Perkins asked how this will look to the public. Ruthann stated that there haven't been any complaints about cancellations and the explanation would be that the Charter requires monthly meetings but if there are not enough agenda items, the meeting will be cancelled. Commissioner Lewis stated that when she became a commissioner, the meetings were every other month meetings and on the alternate months, members would be out in the community making presentations and soliciting guest speakers for future commission meetings. Chairs Alexander clarified that the meetings are monthly but because of lack of agenda items the meeting can be cancelled. He also stated that in the past when the meetings were monthly, there were attendance issues. Commissioner Perkins states that the commission should have the mindset that meetings are monthly in case there is a need to meet because of an important agenda item. Chair Alexander agrees with that statement.

Motion to approve – Commissioner Perkins
Second – Commissioner Foust
All in Favor

4. Approve minutes for the meeting of November 19, 2020

Motion to approve – Commissioner Nelson
Second – Commissioner Lopez
All in favor

5. Commissioner D. Coon's absence from meeting on November 19, 2020 with prior notice – excused/unexcused.

Commissioner Lewis made motion to designate the absence as excused
Second – Commissioner Davis
All in favor

6. Commissioner A. Quezada's absence from November 19, 2020 meeting with no prior notice – excused/unexcused.

Vice Chair Lopez made motion to designate the absence as unexcused
Second – Commissioner Nelson
All in favor

Staff member Jessica Spiking was asked to reach out again to Commissioner Antonia Quezada.

COMMUNICATIONS

7. Update Public Service Announcement regarding employment opportunities for disabled individuals.

Assigned to Vice Chair Lopez – was working with Commissioner Quezada on this item however, there has been no contact with her.

8. Update on Brochures

Commissioner Nelson has no updates to report. Requested that Staff member Jessica send him the electronic version of the brochure. Form a Subcommittee with Chair Alexander, Commissioner Nelson and his Father.

9. Updates on conferences, seminars, and regional meetings attended by Commissioners.

Commissioner Lewis sent Staff member Jessica the flyer on a stress workshop webinar with Parkview Hospital on January 28. Commissioner Perkins has attended this webinar and it is enjoyable. Commissioner Krick attends the Transportation Now meetings with Riverside Transit Agency and they have reduced capacity due to COVID but continuing to run everyday service but do have extra buses on standby. Commissioner Krick also mentioned that COVID vaccination websites are up and check daily for openings. Chair Alexander states that he called Kaiser's appointment line for a vaccination appointment. He also mentioned excitement in the Deaf community over the sign language at the inauguration.

10. Update on Public Outreach to publicize the Commission

Commissioner Lewis requested that staff member Jessica Spiking look into publicizing the virtual meetings as well as the e-comments.

11. Items for future consideration as requested by Commission Members

Chair Alexander suggested that a flyer be created so that it can be posted on Social Media sites to advertise guest speakers.

Commissioner Lewis suggested another presentation from Disability Rights California once the commission is able to advertise the guest speakers.

Commissioner Lewis would like a presentation from the former Mayor, Rusty Bailey, on the Path of Life Ministries about what services they provide for people with disabilities.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:06 pm

Motion to adjourn – Commissioner Lewis

Second – Commissioner Nelson

All in favor

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Thursday, February 18, 2021 Virtually, 5:30 pm.