



**Commission on People with Disabilities
Meeting Summary Minutes
February 8, 2023**

**** MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM ****

Welcome and Approval of January 2023 Meeting Minutes

Trish Gallalee, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the January 2023 Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the January 2023 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd.

InterACC/DD (Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Developmental Disabilities) Request for Additional Supplement for Providers of Development Disability Services – Rick Callahan, Executive Director, Compassion Maryland and Patricia A. Ritter, Ph.D., Executive Director - The Treatment and Learning Centers

InterACC/DD is a coalition of 41 service providers operating community-based support services in Montgomery County, funded primarily by the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). Provider agencies receive approximately \$278 million annually from DDA to support about 4,000 Montgomery County residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

For over 40 years, Montgomery County Government has provided supplemental funding to the InterACC/DD provider community. In Fiscal Year 2023, supplemental funding was for \$20.2 million. This funding ensures that Montgomery County residents can access comprehensive DDA services that help to ensure the health, safety, and achievement of personal goals for some of the county's most vulnerable residents.

InterACC/DD used the 8.7 % Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) information for 2023 to determine the DD-Supplement request for Fiscal Year 2024. The total supplement request for Fiscal Year 2024 in general assistance provided by Montgomery County is \$22,014,020. InterACC/DD has made a request regarding the supplement to Odile Brunetto, Chief, Aging & Disability Services (ADS), and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). They have also met with the County Executive's Office. Montgomery and Prince George's Counties are the only two counties in Maryland that have a supplement, although Prince George's County's supplement is much smaller than Montgomery County.

Eric Salzano, Commissioner, supports the supplement and the role it plays in providing critical services to citizens of this county. Avner Shapiro, Commissioner, also supports the supplement.

A motion was made to support the supplement. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Update on the Developmental Disability Advisory Committee (DDAC) and the Establishment of a Commission on People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities – Beth Shuman, LCSW-C, Chief of Staff, Councilmember Gabe Alborno; Ken Hartman-Espada, M.P.A., Director of Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive, Montgomery County, Maryland; Eric Salzano and Karen Morgret, Co-Chairs, DDAC Committee; and Odile Brunetto, Chief, Aging & Disability Services

Ken reported that legislation for the creation of a new Commission on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) will be introduced by Councilmember Gabe Alborno at the County Council session on Tuesday February 14. Legislation states that the new Commission will include members that have I/DD, family/guardians/caregivers, organizations that support I/DD, and ex-officio members including county agencies, state agencies, and a member from CPWD to maintain a strong collaboration. Legislation states that the mission for the new

Commission is to advocate for people with I/DD, to enhance communication with the community, to report every year on the needs and gaps in services and make recommendations to the County Council and the County Executive and will have the ability to lobby at the state level. There are a number of delegation at the state level who are concerned about I/DD issues and there is new administration at the state. The CPWD cannot advocate at the state level without prior approval from the Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR). A copy of the legislation will be available for review next Thursday.

A public hearing will be scheduled after legislation has been introduced. The hearing is tentatively scheduled for March 9. After the hearing, the County Council HHS Committee will hold a worksession. Feedback from the public can be sent to Ken or Beth as well as during public testimony during the hearing. Legislation is always subject to change and revisions can be made before finalizing. Once the legislation has been finalized, the county can proceed with advertising for open positions on the Commission. The county is fully committed to continuing the work that DDAC has been doing.

DHHS will be meeting with the County Executive this Friday to discuss the FY24 operating budget. The Executive branch supports the Commission having a full-time staff person. The County Executive's proposed operating budget for FY24 will be released on March 15. It is the intention that the full-time position will support the Commission but also have a level of program expertise to support the community.

Jeneva Stone, Commissioner, suggested that an individual on the Commission represent the needs of self-directed services and complex medical needs. Beth will follow-up with Jeneva to ensure her testimony is submitted.

Trish reported the Commission can testify in support of this Commission and provide feedback on the legislation. The Commission can discuss this issue further at the Steering Committee.

Commissioner Introduction of Issues/Barriers to Establish A Workgroup with Outcomes

Richard Shermanski, Commissioner, introduced the issue of barriers in the court system for people with visual or hearing barriers. Often, there are issues accessing sign language and communication accommodations in the court system. A workgroup would establish a list of current and potential barriers. Current issues include closed captioning technology in court rooms, better sound systems for individuals with hearing disabilities, and access to sign language interpreter services. Other barriers could expand to other person with differing disabilities. Richard's mentor Gary Norman, an attorney who is blind, also has many suggestions. Richard asked for a motion to create a workgroup to allow more inclusion for attorneys, work staff, jury members, defendants and witnesses in the court room to allow those with visual and hearing impairments to have better accessibility in court rooms and court houses. Jeneva made the motion. Myra Coffield, Commissioner, seconded the motion. The motion was called into question.

Jeneva suggested including physical access needs such as adult changing tables in all county facilities. Karen Goss, Commissioner, suggested determining resources already available in the county and if it is currently working. Michael Greenberg, Commissioner, reported individuals with I/DD frequently enter the justice system, sometimes for violent acts, and in many cases do not understand why they are at court. Betsy Luecking, Staff, suggested inviting Matt Barkley from the County's ADA Team join the workgroup.

The motion was amended to include the outcome to "Address the Barriers in the Court System for People with Disabilities." A vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.

Commissioners who volunteered to join the workgroup with Richard were Mandy McCarthy, Myra Coffield, Ricardo Lopez, John Whittle, Matt Barkley, Cindy LaBon and Karen Goss.

Betsy reported that once the workgroup's outcomes are achieved, the workgroup will end or if there is a decision to proceed or modify the workgroup, they must present before the Commission and receive approval. She added that 15 minutes will be set aside at every meeting to give Commissioners the opportunity to discuss new issues and workgroups.

Chair and Vice-Chair Updates

New member orientation was held on January 30. Discussions had during orientation helped to create the new workgroup creation process and guidelines.

Steering Committee meeting this month will be held on February 22 at 5:30pm.

Karen Morgret, Vice-Chair, reported she attended the DHHS Director's Quarterly Meeting with Boards, Commissions and Committees (BCC) on January 26. Karen reported on the creation of the I/DD Commission, pedestrian safety concerns, the early intervention program and collaborating with other BCCs. Raymond Crowel, Director, DHHS, retired from his position effective February 1.

Karen Goss will be making a presentation on ADA Title II at the March Commission meeting.

Update - Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee (DDAC)

At the January 25 meeting, Ken gave a report about the new Commission and allowed time to feedback and input. The next meeting is scheduled on February 13 from 4pm to 5:30pm.

Ex-Officio Member Updates

Angela Luskey, Department of Recreation, reported as of January 3, 2023, fitness passes are free for Montgomery County residents in 2023. The [free pass](#) provides access to fully equipped fitness rooms, open gym (drop-in) activities and game rooms at any recreation center during regularly scheduled hours. Aquatic centers are not included. Individuals with disabilities can make arrangements with county pools to have a chaperone come with them free of charge.

Karen Hochberg, Office of Human Resources, reported she is working on creating another position for the LEAP4MCG hiring program, which provides applicants with disabilities who have limited work experience and have not held merit positions with MCG, employment opportunities with the County with the intent of developing skills and gaining experience that may lead to employment post LEAP4MCG participation. She will have more to report at the next Commission meeting.

Denise Isreal, Department of Transportation (DOT), reported DOT increased frequency on 31 Ride On bus routes. Throughout the year, ridership data and on-time performance are monitored regularly to identify routes that could achieve increased efficiency with schedule updates. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/routesandschedules/allroutes/route031.html>

Matt Barkley, Department of General Services, reported the county will be working on ADA renovations at Avery Road and several pools and rec centers.

Bob Green, Montgomery Parks, reported he will share a list of spring events with Betsy via email for distribution.

Angelisa Hawes, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), encouraged Commissioners to [complete a survey](#) that will help MCPL redesign their website. The Rockville Memorial Library will be hosting Contemporary Conversations with bestselling author Sheree Renée Thomas on February 23. [Free tax preparation assistance](#) is now available for low-to-moderate income County taxpayers at various libraries throughout the county.

Public Comments

None

Meeting Adjourned – 7:18pm

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I
Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

Attendees

Commissioners Present: Myra Coffield; Kaylee Davis; Patricia Gallalee, Chair; Tonya Gilchrist; Karen Goss; Michael Greenberg; Sammi Hampton; Karen Herson; Angela Hughes Byrd; Samuel Korper; Cindy LaBon; Ricardo Lopez; Mandy McCarthy; Karen Morgret, Vice Chair; Coni Nepomuceno; Lisa Quinn; Eric Salzano; Avner Shapiro; Richard Shermanski; Jeneva Stone; Teresa Villani; John Whittle; Melissa Wyman

Commissioners Absent: Najla Wortham

Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members Present: Matthew Barkley, ADA Title II Compliance Officer, Department of General Services; Margie Parrott, Montgomery County Public Schools; Bob Green, Montgomery Parks; Candace Groudine, Human Rights Commission; Angelisa Hawes, Montgomery County Public Libraries; Karen Hochberg, Office of Human Resources; Denise Isreal, Department of Transportation; Angela Luskey, Department of Recreation; Susan Smith, Housing Opportunities Commission

Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members Absent: None

County Staff Present: Beth Shuman, LCSW-C, Chief of Staff, Councilmember Gabe Albornoz; Ken Hartman-Espada, M.P.A., Director of Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive; Odile Brunetto, Chief, Aging & Disability Services, Department of Health and Human Services

Commission Staff Present: Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison; Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I

Public: Rick Callahan, Executive Director, Compassion Maryland; Patricia A. Ritter, Ph.D., Executive Director, The Treatment and Learning Centers

**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
March 2023 Meeting and Events Calendar**

Full Commission Meeting – Wednesday March 8

6pm to 7:30pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced

Steering Committee Meeting – Wednesday March 15

5:15pm to 6:15pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced