

**Commission of Persons with Disabilities**  
**Quarterly Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 20, 2009**  
**Lucas State Office Bldg.**  
**321 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 201**  
**Des Moines, Iowa**

**Members Present:** Chair Thomas Crabb, Vice-Chair Barbara Faber, Julie Belstene, Edie Bogaczyk, Mike Dennis, Rachel Dray, Joe Hays, Kathy Hill by phone, Mary K. Moravek, Michael Pack, Mia Peterson, Jim Rixner, Brent Soderstrum, Karen Tedrow, Gene Van Grevenhof

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Director Karen Keninger, Iowa Department for the Blind; Bonnie Linquist, Iowa Department for the Blind.

**Members Absent:** Mary Ament, Joel Barnett, Reverend Howard Cole, Melissa Havig, Deborah Nagle, Michelle Ray-Michalec, Gary Schriver, Liz Smith

**Staff Present:** John TenPas, Mike Williams, Jackie Wipperman

**Staff Absent:** Jill Filitano Avery

**Call to Order/ Quorum:**

Chair Crabb called the meeting to order at 10:36 a.m. and announced the location of the emergency exits.

Roll call by Wipperman; quorum achieved. Wipperman explained that Administrator Avery was currently on medical leave.

**Agenda:** Van Grevenhof moved the agenda be approved. Motion seconded by Moravek. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting and the November 21<sup>st</sup> planning session were reviewed by the Commissioners. Hill moved that the minutes be accepted as presented and the motion was seconded by Dray. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Rixner formally thanked the Persons with Disabilities staff for filling in during Avery's absence and keeping the Division running smoothly.

**Friends Update:** Wipperman reported that all Awards Ceremony expenses were submitted to the Friends organization and have been paid. Bogaczyk noted that she has spoken with Friends member, Thomas Mayes, and he stated that he is the new President of the organization and would like to come to a meeting to clarify issues. Faber noted that this could be a positive move as long as it was to talk about the future and not to discuss the past. Bogaczyk agreed that it should be clear that any invitation would be to discuss issues from here forward. Crabb will contact Mayes and see if he would like to be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Wipperman noted there has been no notification by Friends of the change in leadership or if requests need to be mailed to a different address.

**Budget:** Copies of the current Division budget were reviewed and discussion was held regarding the first round of budget cuts affecting the current budget and the possibility of upcoming cuts for next year's budget due to state revenue reductions.

**Program Updates:** Division staff then provided updates to the Commission on the various projects and programs they are involved in.

**TenPas:**

- Continues to work with Public Health in regard to the accessibility of drug treatment programs.
- He has been working with representatives from the Department of Natural Resources to develop a uniform definition of "severely disabled" so that all of their programs that offer free and reduced licenses are using the same definition and require the same documentation.
- Has been working with staff from the Center for Disability Development located in Iowa City on the "Disability Ambassador Project". The project is funded through a grant from the Center for Disease Control and looks to train volunteers from identified Iowa communities to do local accessibility reviews in the community and dialog with city officials about improving the accessibility of their community.
- He continues to offer Evacuation Chair training to State of Iowa employees.

**Williams:**

- He has been doing some limited traveling to market Youth Leadership Forum(YLF) and College Leadership Forum (CLF) – trying to reach as many high schools, colleges, and local Vocational Rehabilitation offices as possible. The application due date for the YLF is February 27, 2009. Williams noted that he is going to be working with Dr. Bob Stensrud from the Drake Rehabilitation Counseling Program on a new project with YLF delegates to assist them to develop networking skills so they can return to their home communities and begin networking and developing social assets that could be beneficial in getting employment.

**Wipperman:**

- The Client Assistance Program (CAP) continues to stay very busy. Wipperman feels the number of clients is tied to the difficult economic conditions and worries that numbers may increase. She continues to work with Avery on getting administrative permission to post a part-time secretarial position to assist with information and referral calls, initial intakes, and other programmatic office duties. The current state hiring freeze should not affect this position since it 100% federally funded, but it still will need to be approved by the Department of Administrative Services before it can be posted and filled.
- A federal monitoring team from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), Department of Education will be making week-long monitoring

visits to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Iowa Department for the Blind the last week of January and first week of February.

Vocational agencies funded under the Rehabilitation Act, as amended are reviewed every four years and the visit from the monitoring team is part of the year-long monitoring process. Wipperman has been invited to attend several meetings at Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services as the CAP Director and mandatory member of the State Rehabilitation Counsel. The Department for the Blind has also invited her to attend the Exit Conference during their portion of the monitoring visit.

- Met with the head of Human Resources Department of Hawkeye Community College in Waterloo to discuss the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act and the ramifications of the changes for employers. Explained that the Amendment Act took effect on January 1, 2009, but that it still may be several months before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission can write the regulations and have them approved.

**Next Commission Meeting:** The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, May 18, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. and will be held at the AARP office in Des Moines, if this location is available. Wipperman reminded the group that the following meeting would be in conjunction with the Iowa State Fair Building Bridges Day, so the meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 20, 2009 at 1:00 pm and will also be held at the AARP offices in Des Moines. Building Bridges Day will be held on Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Iowa State Fair and Commissioners interested in representing the Commission at the display can sign up at the next meeting.

**Public Comment:** Hays had some questions about the proposed downsizing of the Commission of Persons with Disabilities. He understands that such a change would require a change in the Iowa Code and most likely would happen through attrition. He wants to bring this issue up and make sure that the minutes show that this is a concern for the Commission and they are actively talking about it. Faber noted that she is concerned that if the size of the Commission is reduced, it becomes even more important that those who are Commissioners are committed to do the work. She wants to know how this commitment will be verified before someone is named to the Commission. Moravek asked about how the issue of non-attendance is currently handled. Wipperman replied that Avery notifies the Governor's office regarding individuals who do not attend three or more Commission meetings in a row and it is then their decision how to proceed. Moravek also wanted to know what the "magic number" is for a Commission and wonders what the thinking is behind the decision to downsize. Rixner stated that one of the reasons is so quorum is able to be met regularly. He agreed that it will be important for Commissioners to be highly committed when the size is reduced and the Commission needs to be geographically balanced. Williams noted that the Legislative task force needs to meet to get something together to respond to the Governor's office and be included in the

process. Both Williams and TenPas noted that this is an active group and have only not met quorum once in the past two years. Also improved communication technology has made it possible for people more easily to connect by phone. Crabb stated that a smaller Commission might be better as long as the members are committed, which he acknowledged is difficult to know until after they are appointed, and there is a need for geographical balance. Rixner asked the staff to keep the Commissioners informed on this important issue. Pack asked if anyone knew the Governor's reasoning behind this push to downsize and Rixner responded that Director Reed made it clear that this is going to happen.

**Adjournment:** Chair Crabb called for further comments and since there were none he adjourned the meeting with a unanimous vote.

**Task Force Meetings:** The Legislative and Marketing and Communication Task Forces held short meetings.

Recording Secretary  
Jackie Wipperman