

MINUTES

Advocacy & Abilities Committee Meeting

January 3, 2017

Attendees: Beth Marmolejos Chair, Cynthia Miller, Ruth Patterson, Linda Chavez, Dr. Lorenzo Puertas, Christina Tesoro –Sunga, Melody Bundy, Josephine Sardina, Lisa Fiore,

Welcome and Introductions

Beth Marmolejos, Chair called the meeting to order at 9:41 a.m.

Minutes

Minutes were reviewed and accepted.

Transition Fair – January 25 2017 Wayne SPA

Beth Marmolejos noted that the committee will have a conference call on January 4, 2017 to follow-up on the Transition Fair and Beth has a project plan to make sure that we are up to date on the logistics.

Ruth Patterson wanted to know if the flyer for the transition Fair has been completed because it was not distributed to the committee members.

Beth Marmolejos will forward the information to Cynthia to email to the committee. The following changes will need to be made on the flyer.

- Flyer to say that all are welcome and not limited to Passaic County
- Add the WDB logo

Committee agreed to have workshops in a separate room instead of being held in the center or in the open as discussed at the last meeting. Committee suggested to have a workshop on **Independent Living** which Sandy LaCorte could do a presentation or a combination of transportation and DVRs. The name of the workshop could be **Pre-employment Transition Services**.

The committee talked about sharing information that students with an IEP may remain in high school for an additional 1-3 years or until they are 21 years of age to transition out if they do not accept their diploma and allowed to still walk with their class and participate in the festivities and have the experience of graduating which the decision is made by the IEP Team.

What was the outcome of the meeting for Project Search program? Beth noted there was a meeting

with Dr. Chris Irving, Freeholder Bruce James and others as of now the program is under consideration and there will be another meeting with further discussion.

Dare to Dream Conference 2017

Beth asked Linda Chavez to give a brief overview about the Dare to Dream Conference. Linda Chavez reported the following:

- The New Jersey Department of Education and Special Programs host a conference every year focusing on students with disabilities strengths and accomplishments there are 5-6 conferences that take place around the state.
- The two representatives that spear heads the program are Bill Freeman and Bob Haugh. Bob Haugh presented the Dare to Dream to the northern region which is hosted at Montclair State University that has been a long time arrangement.
- Two years ago the Department of Education decided to add another conference in Passaic County that will allow more districts to participate so in collaboration with WDB and William Paterson University hosted a Dare to Dream in 2016 and will be hosting another conference for 2017 which is open to all schools but the schools have to take the initiative to attend. The Disability Committee setup tables and distributed Passaic County resources.

Beth noted that the keynote speaker for this year will be Kerry Magro who is an autistic individual that was able to get his Doctorate and was employed by New Jersey speaks. Mr. Magro had a movie about Valerie Mobile who is an engineer that invented the machine that slaughters cows in a more humane manner. Bob Haugh made the contact.

Beth stated during a conversation with Valerie Mobile she asked what the key to her success was. What made her believe that she had a chance? Valerie explained that when she was in high school the art teacher noticed her ability to design and there was a cottage behind the art building which was given to Valerie as a workshop which turned her life around. Committee will contact Sandy to determine if she will provide a workshop at the Dare to Dream.

Disability Award

Ruth Patterson noted that the committee is still in need for an employer to evaluate as a candidate.

Cynthia noted that the candidate criteria was forwarded to the committee members and Beth issued assignments to the members which included:

- Melody Bundy/Dr. Lorenzo Puertas will recruit the providers
- Linda Chavez/Ginny Chiller will recruit the Employee
- Ruth Patterson and Rosemary Petrizzo will recruit the employer, Lisa can work with Ruth and Rosemary
- Will present the awards during lunch time and the candidates do not have to stay for the entire conference
- Beth asked that each group that is in charge of getting the (3) candidates and also choose one person that will receive the award and report back to the committee.
- Cynthia will email the criteria to the committee again. The nomination form and the criteria will be sent out again to the committee. The nominating forms will be forwarded by February 1, 2017 and the deadline is April 1, 2017.
- Beth nominated Sandy LaCorte because she really goes above and beyond when advocating for the disabled individual.

Job Fairs

Ruth Patterson apprised the committee of the next Job Fair which will be hosted at William Paterson University on January 12, 2017.

Old Business

Beth announced the new name for the Disability Committee which is the **Workforce Advocacy & Abilities Committee**.

Action Items

- ✓ Send a letter to all of the committee members saying Happy New Year and include a list of all of the events coming up and the new Disability Committee name change.
- ✓ Have Transition Flyer changes made
- ✓ Develop a survey for the Transition Fair
- ✓ After the Dare to Dream event in May create a wish list of what the committee desire to accomplish in Passaic County.

Wrap-Up

Beth noted that it would be good to ask Dr. Irving to provide transportation.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

The Schedule for the next meeting: **April 4, 2017**
