

MADISON CITY DISABILITY ADVOCACY BOARD

MINUTES FOR JANUARY 2011 MONTHLY BOARD MEETING

Date: January 17, 2011

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Central Office of Madison City Schools

Presiding: Claudia Rice, Chairperson

Recorder: Claudia Rice

Board Members Present: Claudia Rice, Cana Farr, Don Gardner, Beth Newlin, Maria Kilgore, Tony Osani, Jane Dow

Board Members Absent: Debrah Underwood, Trish Switzer

Call to Order: The Chairperson, Claudia Rice, called the meeting to order and noted that a quorum was present. It was also noted that sufficient prior notice of the meeting was given, in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

Announcements: Claudia Rice distributed a list of announcements. Maria Kilgore reminded everyone that Dr. Caroline Gomez, State Autism Coordinator, will speak January 18th at Madison City School's Parent Advisory Meeting at the Central Office at 6:00 pm. Don Gardner reported that GOOD (Governor's Office on Disability) will hold a summit where an accessibility award will be presented. The date for the 2011 summit has not yet been determined. Beth Newlin reported that she read that low-income housing will be built in the City of Madison. Jane Dow reported that the Children's Policy Council will hold a meeting at noon on January 24th to discuss a bill to allow first responders to help mentally ill adolescents. The meeting will be held at the Agricultural building on Cook Avenue in Huntsville. Local representatives will be in attendance.

Minutes: The last meeting occurred on December 14, 2010. The draft minutes were distributed to board members for review on January 6, 2011. No additional revisions were suggested. Claudia Rice motioned that the minutes be approved. Maria Kilgore seconded and with no opposing votes, the minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Cana Farr handed out the report and no discrepancies or errors were noted. The ending balance was \$11,073.79 which reflects the board's \$1,500.00 annual appropriation from City Council. An updated Hand-in-Hand Playground/Brick Report was presented by Claudia Rice. The balance changed due to the cost of limestone - used for the name plates on the brick wall - being less than the projected cost of granite. The balance of that account is now \$629.41.

Activities for 2011:

Claudia Rice noted that 4 board members have terms expiring in May of 2011. Debrah Underwood has expressed that she will not remain on the board after that time. Don Gardner stated he plans to renew his board membership in May. Both Jane Dow and Tony Osani have not yet declared their intentions.

Discussion ensued regarding potential candidates for the open board position and the criteria for that position.

Each committee had previously submitted their projected plans for 2011 (see attached). Claudia Rice advised Don Gardner to add to his plans to investigate complaints regarding accessibility issues reported in the Needs Assessment. Don is interested in presenting a public awareness campaign on accessibility issues.

Maria Kilgore discussed the possibility of partnering with the City of Huntsville and Madison County in sharing info on Day Services and Housing. Neither have a disability board so she will investigate possible persons of contact. Beth Newlin reported that she has placed Housing options that Debrah Underwood presented to the board in December on MCDAB's web site; however, Day Services have not been listed. Beth feels it may offer false hope to advertise services that do not have openings, as well as the fact that people must qualify and be on a waiting list that holds over 2000 people. Cana Farr feels this is the very reason many service providers do not advertise: most do not maintain a web site, and it is difficult to even find a phone number or address for some of them. Claudia Rice asked that the Day Services information presented in November be compiled into a letter or report that can be presented to City Council to help them understand the current needs in this area. Cana Farr will develop a draft to present to the board at the next meeting.

The Emergency Preparedness Committee was unable to hold their meeting in January due to weather conditions, but the meeting is being rescheduled. Beth Newlin stated that Madison City Firefighters are interested in partnering with their committee. She reported that Virginia Tech offers a free- 15 hour training on emergency preparedness and the committee will investigate this opportunity further. To date, approximately 950 Emergency Preparedness Kits have been distributed. They have also discussed creating a booklet to help people create their own emergency preparedness kits.

The Employment Committee was unable to hold their scheduled January meeting due to weather conditions, but have rescheduled for Monday, January 24th. The committee plans to develop a calendar of their 2011 events. Maria Kilgore reported that the State Dept. of Education now has a waiver for students on the AL Occupational Diploma. If they are unable to earn the required hours of paid employment because of the economy, they may substitute a specially-designed class for those hours.

In the area of Housing, Claudia Rice presented a draft of a letter for the Mayor and City Council as well as Representative Bill Holtzclaw. The Housing report Debrah Underwood, chairman of the Housing Committee, presented in December shows there are currently no group homes or assisted living facilities in the City of Madison for people with disabilities. City of Madison officials are in the process of developing a growth plan for the City; therefore, it is important that the board makes this situation known and advocates for change in this area. The board agreed that after checking with Debrah Underwood, and if she is in agreement, the letter should be sent. In addition, the board requests that the Housing Committee prepare a synopsis of the Housing Report for presentation to city officials.

Even though Tony Osani has not yet determined whether or not he will renew his board membership, he assured the board that if they host a 5K runs in conjunction with the Madison Street Festival he is committed to completing the project. He stated he has the volunteers to manage the race. The board's main function would be fundraising through securing sponsors. Other responsibilities of the board would include advertising, collecting registration fees, securing tee-shirts, goody bags, water bottles, and so forth. Tony will discuss this project with Taylor Edge prior to the next board meeting and report on his findings. Claudia Rice will contact Jenny Evers, president of the local BUDS chapter, to procure more information on running this type of event. The BUDS group held a similar event last year that was very successful.

Discussion ensued regarding some type of fun run which would have a disability component as well as the possibility of tying this to the school system in the form of a fitness challenge. All board members are to develop a list of potential sponsors they would be willing to approach and email that to Claudia Rice who will compile a master list to bring to the next meeting. The board will continue discussing the 5K Run/fundraising event next month after more information has been secured.

Claudia Rice proposed to the board that we consider developing mini-grants to be given to those in the community who work with or provide services to people with disabilities. Recipients may be individuals, groups, companies, churches, etc., who provide, or want to provide, services to Madison citizens with disabilities. The board agreed that she will develop a draft of a Request for Proposal. The draft will be distributed through email, adapted as needed by board member's recommendations, and presented at the next meeting. Beth Newlin recommended we check with the Mayor's office about the grants. The board will continue discussion of this topic at the February meeting.

The last page of the Planning Sheet for the January meeting contained two categories titled "Ongoing Business" and "Suggested Activities" which will be carried over to the next meeting.

Meeting Adjournment: The next meeting will be held February 8th at 6:00 pm at City Hall.