

COMMITTEE CONCERNING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES MEETING MINUTES

City of Middletown

61 Durant Terrace

February 3, 2026

6:00 PM

1. Members Present: Marty Knight/Chairperson, Keith Vinci, Molly Carta, Richard Pelletier, and Emily McEvoy

Absent: Laurie McFadden, Phil Cacciola, and Joe Bibisi

Staff Present: Catherine Lechowicz – Director of Recreation and Community Services

General Public: None

2. Meeting Called to Order: Called to order at 6:03pm.

3. Public Hearing: None.

4. Approval of Minutes: *A motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 6, 2026, was made by Emily McEvoy and seconded by Richard Pelletier. Emily McEvoy stated that there was a word cut off at the end of the sentence pertaining to Marty's experience with voting. Laura will make the correction. The motion carries.*

Departmental Reports:

- Emily McEvoy stated that the Democratic Town Committee held a Legislative forum on January 15th at the Russell Library. There was a very good turn out and that she will be following up with a few of the people that attended about what is going on in the Legislative session that is about to start. There are a number of people that are following and tracking the different issues. She is a part of some sub committees such as; Social Services and how the State is going to help when the Federal Government is pulling out funding. A discussion ensued.
- Keith Vinci stated that the quarterly meeting of the State Advisory Board of Deaf Services, reporting to the State Department of Aging and Disabilities, was held on January 9th at the Legislative Office Building. Visiting representatives from the State Department of Education reported to the Board about a renewed commitment to ready access and improved services to students with challenges that need to be addressed including those deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, and students with communication issues. This report was well received, however clouds of doubt exist. Historically, State and local Boards of Education have been hesitant in allowing outside organizations, including other State agencies access to data that should be readily available for study. The Bureau of the Deaf reported to the Advisory Board activities that have occurred since January after the Bureau Head had been hired. Action by the Bureau has been slow but the Interpreter Standards Committee structure has been established and team members have been selected for that committee. Other committees are to be established. The Bureau head reported having had meetings with the State Dept. of Education, Department of Transportation, and Department of Aging & Disabilities representatives, as well as interpreter brokering agencies over the last 12 months. The Bureau continues to have staffing issues. The Bureau will be responsible for insuring working interpreters in Connecticut are credentialed and that ADA compliance in communication access matters are met. Wesleyan University has decided to continue its commitment to ASL classes by reactivating the ASL interpreting level classes beyond ASL 1 & 2. A discussion ensued.
- Richard Pelletier stated that he had just found out that there are 2 additional schools that are requiring new roofs. It was decided that since there is already a committee that is working with school roofs, that same committee will work with the 2 new schools. The committee that is working with the Public Works building was supposed to have a meeting tomorrow but it was cancelled due to a conflict with the Common Council. A discussion ensued.
- Molly Carta stated that they did have a McDonough School Building committee meeting. They are still very much in the beginning stages but they were given a budget breakdown. They decided to have a subcommittee for the playground and all outside activities to make sure that they are all as accessible and

inclusive as possible. Molly did a google search regarding the Blue Envelopes and saw that they are available at Aldi's and the Middletown Police Department. The envelope program assists individuals with disabilities during police encounters, ensuring clear communications. A discussion ensued.

- Cathy Lechowicz stated that there was a couple of ADA issues. Laura Runte received a phone call from a physician's office regarding a patient that is blind that needs transportation. Laura facilitated the process with River Valley Transit and the disabled resident. Laura has also been assisting a blind resident fill out his money order for rent each month. In addition, Cathy mentioned that she is going to explore potential volunteer opportunities for students to assist with snow shoveling for residents with disabilities. A discussion ensued. Cathy wanted to thank Keith for his help with Unified Theatre production which showcased kids of all abilities. Each year Keith teaches the kids sign language for a song and then they go to the Common Council and they perform the song. Thank you, Keith.

Old Business:

New Business:

Miscellaneous:

- Cathy Lechowicz suggested inviting community resource representatives to future meetings for discussions about disabilities and advocacy.

Adjournment: *A motion of adjournment was made by Emily McEvoy and was seconded by Richard Pelletier. The motion carries. The meeting adjourned at 6:25pm.*