



# City of Fall River Massachusetts

## COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

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FALL RIVER, MA

**PAUL E. COOGAN**  
*Mayor*

**Dennis Polselli**  
Chairman

**Debbie Pacheco**  
Vice-Chairwoman

**Minutes of the Fall River Commission on Disability  
Conference Call Meeting  
Wednesday, May 12, 2021  
2:00 PM**

Chairman Dennis Polselli called the meeting to order at 2:00pm

1. Chairman Dennis Polselli opened the meeting by reading the Open Meeting Law statement.
2. **Members Present:** Chairman Dennis Polselli; Vice Chairwoman Debbie Pacheco; Commissioner Daniel Robillard; Commissioner Lisa Silva; Commissioner Ann O'Neil-Sousa

**Others Present:** Catherine Destremps, Health Department Clerk; Ray Hague, Veterans Agent for the city of Fall River

**Members Absent:** Attorney Gary Howayeck ESQ, ADA Coordinator

3. **Public Input:** No public input.
4. **Approval of the minutes for the meeting of Wednesday, April 14, 2021**

Motion made by Commissioner Daniel Robillard to accept the minutes from the Commission on Disability meeting from Wednesday, April 14, 2021.

Second: Commissioner Lisa Silva

All in favor; none opposed; abstentions; 0

5. **Guest Presenter:** Ray Hague, Veterans Agent for the city of Fall River, with an update on programs, services and activities for veterans in the city of Fall River.

The Veteran's Services Department's day to day operations is to administer and provide benefits through Chapter 115 which is a Massachusetts benefit for veteran's who are disabled or low income. They all so provide services for handicap veterans through several other programs like the Aid and Attendance Program which will give up to \$1,600.00 a month for services needed within their home. All other services are provided through the VA in Brockton and Providence. The Veteran's Services Department are continuing with applications for disabled veterans and they have a high success rate of getting veterans their compensation. Rides to the VA for doctor's appointments have been put on hold, due to Covid-19. The VA has been giving out transportation vouchers for private transportation services to the VA hospitals, if an appointment can't be done through ZOOM.

The Veterans Association of Bristol County located on 755 Pine Street, Fall River, MA is handicap accessible and the DAV meet there twice a week to help disabled veterans. They have expanded their services to include activities on Fridays like cards, ping pong and other things to keep them active. The Corky Row Club located on 602 Third Street, Fall River, MA has a food kitchen where veterans can go for a meal on Wednesdays.

Ray spoke of the activities surrounding Memorial Day. There will be a rolling parade type tribute on the Sunday before Memorial Day along with a filigree and maybe one other event on Memorial Day. Ray stated that the dedication of the Vietnam Wall will be held this Saturday. FRGTV will be covering the event and they are all so expecting national coverage. One of the guest speakers is Morton Dean - an American television and radio anchor, news correspondent and author. Dean is a former weekend news anchor for CBS Evening News, as well as ABC's Good Morning America.

- a. A proposal by Ray Hague to fund six scooters to benefit veterans with disabilities in the city of Fall River.

Ray explained the reason he is here today is to request that the Commission allocate monies for seven scooters to be used by disabled veterans within the city of Fall River. The scooters are given to a veteran that needs this type of service with the understanding that it is to be returned when no longer needed. All have been returned but one and all are being used successfully in the community.

Commissioner Daniel Robillard made a motion to adopt the veteran agent's proposal for the Fall River Commission on Disability to purchase six mobility scooters for disabled veterans with in the city of Fall River in the amount of \$7,440.00.

Second: Commissioner Ann O'Neil-Souza

All in favor; none opposed; abstentions; 0

## 6. Work Group Updates

- a. ADA Updates: No updates at this time
- b. Policies: Vice Chairwoman Debbie Pacheco with two policy proposals regarding the allocation of Commission funds.

**First Policy:** The Fall River Commission on Disability will entertain proposals on an individual basis to residents of Fall River on a case by case basis. Examples and such proposals may include ramps or the renovation of property for purposes of accessibility such as the installation of lifts. Once funding has been approved by the Commission, the money will be sent directly to the service provider and not the individual requesting service. In the case of renovation for purposes of accessibility, the funds will not be released until an inspection by the building inspector and has determined that the rules and regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board has been complied with. All proposals considered by the Commission will not exceed \$32,000.00 and must be a direct benefit to the residents of Fall River with disabilities.

Commissioner Daniel Robillard made a motion to adopt the first policy which will allow an individual Fall River resident with disabilities to receive funding on a case by case basis.

Second: Commissioner Ann O'Neil-Souza

All in favor; none opposed; abstentions: 0

**Second Policy:** The Fall River Disability Commissions will put a cap on any Commissions expenditures to not exceed \$32,000.00 per proposals, excluding the Handicap Enforcement Program.

Commissioner Daniel Robillard made a motion to cap any Commission expenditures at \$32,000.00 per proposals excluding the Handicap Enforcement Program. If there is ever a need to go above \$32,000.00 for any proposal - that it will require a vote by the Commission.

Second: Commissioner Lisa Silva

All in favor; none opposed; abstentions: 0

- c. Finance: Current pooled cash as of April 2021 \$246,253.18
- d. Outreach: Update on the Scholarship Program

Dennis stated that all of the schools have been contacted about the scholarship program and the schools were very complimentary to the Commission for this scholarship program. Dennis had a personal conversation with the principal from Durfee and his students will be writing essays about how this scholarship will benefit them. The Diman School Committee and Bishop Connolly are in the process of selecting their students.

Lisa has been working with the event planner/decorator who will making graduation themed table pieces for each table in the three area school colors. The podium and cake table will all so be decorated in the three area school colors with balloons and flowers. In addition there will be giveaway treats which will be chocolate covered Oreos. McGovern's restaurant is all set and all deposits have been made. Leddy's Bakery is making the cake and will delivery it directly to the restaurant.

Debbie stated that the Diman School Committee is meeting on Thursday because anything that is donated to the school must be approved by the committee. Diman has an Award Night scheduled for June 9, 2021 and would like to announce the winners of the scholarship that night. Debbie all so stated that it would be nice to issue each student a letter along with a certificate with all of the information on the scholarship luncheon.

**7. Old Business:** No updates, at this time

**8. New Business:**

- a. Next conference call meeting: Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 2pm with Guest Jeff Dugan.
- b. Dennis stated that he has heard of concerns from constituents with disabilities that the push pads are not working when people are coming into the Government Center for meetings and appointments. Dennis would like to send a formal letter to the Mayor about this situation.

Commissioner Daniel Robillard made a motion for the Fall River Commission on Disability Chairman Dennis Polselli to write a letter to Mayor Paul E. Coogan to ensure that the push pads are working and in functional order at the only public

entrance on the Third Street side of Government Center for the disability community to be able to access the Government Center at all times.

Second: Commissioner Lisa Silva

All in favor; none opposed; abstentions: 0

Vice Chairwoman Debbie Pacheco stated that she definitely thinks a letter should be sent, but she believes that the Commission should be following the chain of command. If a letter has never been formally sent to the Facilities and Maintenance Department requesting to rectify the push pad issue, the letter should first be sent to the Facilities and Maintenance Department to be given the chance to rectify the problem. If there is no resolution, then the Commission can go to the next chain of command.

Commissioner Daniel Robillard made a motion to amend and modify his motion to reflect the advice of Vice Chairwoman Debbie Pacheco to send a formal letter to Tammy Moutinho; Acting Director of Facilities and Maintenance, to ensure that the push pads are working and in functional order at the only public entrance on the Third Street side of Government Center for the disability community to be able to access the Government Center at all times.

Second: Commissioner Lisa Silva

All in favor; none opposed; abstentions: 0

## **9. Adjournment at 2:36pm**

Motion to Adjourn: Vice Chairwoman Debbie Pacheco

Second: Commissioner Ann O'Neil-Souza

All in favor; none opposed; abstentions: 0

### **Documents Distributed**

Agenda

Minutes from the meeting of April 14, 2021

Letter from Department of Veterans' Services for purchase of six scooters