

Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns (KCDC)

May 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Commissioners present: Rob Egan, Chairperson, Anthony Fadale, Steve Miller, Brian Ellefson, Todd Thornburg, Bob Cantin, Rep. Carrie Barth, Shanti Ramcharan, Claire Regan, Rachel Mayberry, Ranita Wilks, Michele Heydon, Rene Hart, Joshanna Stone, Rep. Boog Highberger, Drew Adkins, Robyn Herzog, Mr. Jean Owens, Larry Rouse, Laura Jackson

Guests and Staff: Martha Gabehart, staff, Robert Cooper, Nalonna Korn, Wilhelm Polusny, Sarah Stewart, Kelsey Stark, Christina Pass, Bill Perez, Missy Bogart-Starkey, Teri Livengood, Rebecca Nimz, John Hedges, Jenny Kramer, Jeanette Graue, Laura Jackson.

Call to Order and Introductions – Chairperson Rob Egan called the meeting to order and introduced Representative Carrie Barth who is the new designee for Ex Officio member House Speaker Dan Hawkins. He also welcomed back Representative Dennis “Boog” Highberger as new House Minority Leader Vic Miller’s designee to the commission.

Commissioner Introductions

Introduction of business that will require a vote – none

Additions, Deletions or Corrections to the Agenda – When the meeting started the commission did not have a quorum. Approval of the meeting minutes for May 6 and December 22 would be done when a quorum was met.

Public Comments – none

Selection of New KCDC Liaison to the Statewide Independent Living Council of Kansas (SILCK) – Rachel Mayberry was selected to be the new liaison to the SILCK.

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Update – Michele Heydon, new Long Term Supports and Services (LTSS) Commissioner updated the commission on the status of the Final Settings Rule implementation and HCBS programs being renewed.

Feedback on the Types of Transit Technology Most Helpful for the Disability Community – Rene Hart, designee of the Secretary of Transportation explained their transit planning and requested feedback. Several commissioners provided feedback.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – A quorum was achieved. Brian moved approval of the May 6 and December 22 meeting minutes. Ranita seconded. Motion carried.

Nursing Facilities for Mental Health (NFMH) Settlement Agreement (Stuck in Institutions Report) – Drew Adkins, Designee of the Secretary of Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) – reviewed the progress their work on the settlement agreement and moving people with mental health disabilities out of nursing facilities. Lane Williams reported the Disability Rights Center (DRC) is happy with the progress they are making. Missy Bogart-Starkey report the housing status. Martha suggested they consider making comments on the recent Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) by the

US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on issues people with disabilities have with the current housing programs and availability.

The Commission took a break.

ABLE Accounts Update – John Hedges with the Kansas State Treasurer’s office updated the commission on the changes to ABLE accounts and the increasing popularity of them. Starting in 2026, people who became disabled by the age of 46 will be eligible to open ABLE accounts. Currently in Kansas there are 1,614 ABLE accounts with approximately \$15 million in assets. He also mentioned that people who are guardians or conservators of people with disabilities who cannot apply for themselves, can apply, but the process is not as easily navigated at the time. The application on the website needs to be printed, completed and mailed to the State Treasurer’s office. They are working fixing the website.

Presentation of the Michael Lechner Advocacy Award to The Mission Project – Martha talked about the award and why The Mission Project was selected. Mr. Jean Owens, Mr. Larry Rouse and Ms. Laura Jackson joined the meeting to talk about the project and their participants.

Kansas Active Transportation Plan – Jenny Kramer with the Kansas Department of Transportation, reported on the approval of the Kansas Active Transportation Plan and their work on implementation. The [Walk Bike Roll Summit](#) is schedule for September 10-22 at the McPherson Community Building.

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) Program Overview – Joshanna Stone, director of Disability Determination Services (DDS) and designee of the Secretary of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) reported she was collaborating with SOAR leadership in Kansas to implement efficient case processing and requested the commission have time on the July 14th meeting to learn more. Ms. Stone presented information on the program which is designed to increase access to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) for eligible adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness, medical impairment and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

K-LOAN Program Overview – Jeanette Graue is the director of the K-LOAN program. It was established and is directed by persons with disabilities. It is a consumer-run program designed to provide persons with disabilities and their families with access to financial resources toward acquiring assistive technology through education, saving and borrowing. People are often directed to the program because they need a van or lift, hearing aids, communication devices and other technology to help them live independently in their communities. K-LOAN is funded by the Assistive Technology for Kansans Project and the Southeast Kansas Independent Living (SKIL) center.

Executive Director’s Report and Legislative Update – Martha reviewed her report and the legislative activity followed during the legislative session.

Adjourn – Brian moved the meeting be adjourned. Robyn seconded. Motion carried.