



# **COMMISSION ON DISABILITY**

## **MINUTES**

Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 1:00P.M.

Department on Disability

Zoom Video Conference

### **COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

David Wolf

Dr. Robert Bitonte

Robert Williams

Candace Cable

Iran Hopkins

Richard Rothenberg

Alisa Schlesinger

Betty Wilson

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

Myrna Cabanban (excused)

### **DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY:**

Stephen David Simon, Executive Director

Sergio Samayoa, Director, Administrative Services Division

Lourdes Sinibaldi, Director, Community Outreach Referrals and Education

**OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS:**

Chris Lee, City Attorney III, City Attorney's Office

**GUESTS:**

Brandon Hooker, Economist, Employment Development Department, State of California

Philip Kahn-Pauli, Policy and Practices Director, Respectability

Michael Dougherty, Festival Director, ReelAbilities Film Festival Los Angeles

**ITEM NO. (1): APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

The Commission will review the minutes of the October 2020 meeting and vote to approve them.

Action Taken: The Commission approved the minutes for October 14, 2020.

**ITEM NO. (2): PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (3): HEALTH IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

Discussion on various aspects of COVID-19 and the impacts on the disability community in the Los Angeles area.

- I. Commissioner Bitonte presented on the Mobile Social Security Unit that he has been collaborating with the Commission's ad hoc committee and DOD on. Continuing services during the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated that it is possible to provide services outside of brick and mortar facilities, in tents for example. A study by the University of British Columbia has shown that giving cash to individuals experiencing homelessness increased their ability to find housing, become food

secure, and put away money for saving.

- II. Commissioner Wolf presented his experience signing up for a COVID-19 test via CVS Pharmacy and expressed his concerns about the process. The sign-up needed to be completed online, and applicants are limited to 15 minutes to complete the process. Applicants are required to provide scans of Social Security, health insurance, and/or Medicare cards. CVS did not provide adequate instructions to have these items prepared ahead of on the company website, which may cause barriers in signing up, especially for people with disabilities or who are experiencing symptoms of illness. DOD will write a letter to CVS about the issue and report back to the Commission.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

#### **ITEM NO. (4): LONG TERM EMPLOYMENT IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

Presentation on current economic challenges and possible future collaborative solutions with the Commission and Department on Disability. Presentations by Brandon Hooker and Philip Kahn-Pauli.

- I. Workforce data from the EDD's Labor Market Information Division shows the impact of COVID-19 on employment. Los Angeles County's unemployment rate increased from 4.3% in January to 15.1% in September. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities increased from 8.5% to 17%. Employment decreased across industries, especially those involving in-person, non-essential services. However, certain industries experienced employment increases, including construction and administration. California continues to move toward economic recovery to reflect pre-COVID-19 status.
- II. Pre-employment services may help transition age youth in navigating the pipeline of employment. Students with disabilities age 16-18 could receive these services through a workforce system and be provided with financial literacy or security education to get a sense of what the job market is currently like. Some companies have really embraced working from home, and are in a position to interview, hire, and retain people with disabilities unlike ever before. Employers are making efforts to keep

social work interactions going through work cohorts in which groups of employees can have access to training and interact in a virtual environment.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

## **ITEM NO. (5): EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Discussion on items relating to Department activities, metrics, budget, planning, and/or other relevant issues. Presentations are by Lourdes Sinibaldi, Sergio Samayoa, Michael Dougherty, and Stephen David Simon.

DOD reopened the Meals to Angelenos Program, in collaboration with Khalsa Care Foundation and HUNGRY. The program is scheduled to run from November 2<sup>nd</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, but DOD is considering options to expand past that date due to ongoing food insecurity in the disability community during the pandemic. This program is funded by the CARES Act. DOD also collaborated with the South Central Los Angeles Regional Center to host a drive through event for personal protective equipment (PPE) and food. Constituents were given produce, meat, dried goods, and PPE.

DOD has written the budget plan for the fiscal year of 2021-2022. Due to lack of revenues from the economy, the City will need to cut costs for the upcoming year. The Department was asked to cut 3% from last year's budget. As part of the Separation Incentive Program, two members of DOD staff will retire. DOD will negotiate with the City Council for the positions to be filled again because they are crucial to the functions of the Department. Hearings will take place in the spring, where the budget will be discussed and finalized.

In October, DOD ran its third annual ReelAbilities Film Festival Los Angeles (RAFFLA). The event sold over 300 tickets. It also brought in donations totaling \$61,500, including funds from major entertainment industry sponsors Warner Media, NBC Universal, Walt Disney Studios, and CBS Entertainment. This year was the first all-virtual RAFFLA, which enabled guest speakers to join in from around the world and allowed the event to be more accessible than ever. Valuable discussions took place, including panels on talking to children and their relationship to disability through film, and on moving both the civil rights and disability rights movements forward, because Black Disabled Lives Matter. Recordings of panels and other guest speaker sessions will be made available by DOD after they are edited for accessibility.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

### **ITEM NO. (6): NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Suggested items for the next regular meeting's agenda and announcements from Commissioners, DOD staff, and guests, as well as follow-up items from this or previous commission meetings to be presented at the next meeting.

Commissioner Wolf recommended that the Commission and DOD work on a disability agenda with other cities for the incoming presidential administration. Commissioner Hopkins recommended that a future meeting should include a presentation on digital accessibility and communications. Commissioner Bitonte recommended that the Commission and DOD act as the central organization for any issues that the COVID-19 vaccines may cause among the disability community. The Commission emphasized that the disability community should be prioritized as an early group to receive these vaccines when they become available.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

### **ITEM NO. (7): ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT APPROXIMATELY 2:55 PM