

**Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities**  
**Meeting Minutes (Virtual)**  
 January 14, 2025

**Members Present:**

Gloria Whitehead, Chair	Michelle Bush	Pearley Yelverton
Marge Clemons, Co-Chair	Jackie Pilgrim	

**Members Absent:**

Hillary Honig Ensminger (Excused)	Deborah Kolesar
Michael Wilson, Co-Chair	Trevor Bower

**Staff Liaisons**

Sharon Williams, Equity and Inclusion Department Director	Danice Taylor, Equity and Inclusion Department Administrative Coordinator
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**Guests:**

Daniel Ellison Esq, Duke University	Captain Mark Morais, Durham Police Department	Cassandra Barnes, Department of Health & Human Services	Phillip Jordan, Neighborhood Improvement
Cynthia Holland, Durham Exchange Club Industries	Victoria Mosey, Alliance Health	Marlene Martinez	

**I. Call to Order.**

Called to order by Chairperson Gloria Whitehead

**II. Attendance and Announcements.**

Chairperson Gloria Whitehead attended the DECI Christmas celebration.

### **III. Minutes Approval.**

Before reading the December meeting minutes, Sharon Williams clarified the approval process according to Robert's Rules of Order: Reading, Correction/Questions, Approval.

Sharon Williams read the December meeting minutes. Gloria Whitehead called for Corrections or questions.

Jackie Pilgrim made a motion to approve the December meeting minutes. Pearly Yelverton seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

The revised November meeting minutes were tabled for a vote at the February meeting because we lost quorum before the vote was taken.

### **IV. New Business.**

National Disability Employment Awareness Month Honoree, Durham Exchange Club Industries (DECI) Representative Cynthia Holland, accepted the plaque awarded by the Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities and gave an overview of DECI work.

Ms. Michelle Bush asked if DECI works with blind and low-vision people and if management jobs are offered there. Cynthia Holland said DECI works with any individual referred to them by the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Cynthia Holland explained that because most individuals they have intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) in addition to other disabilities, they are not usually looking for management positions.

Jackie Pilgrim stated that she worked at DECI twenty-six years ago, during which time DECI worked with visually impaired individuals.

Cassandra Barnes stated that she works at Durham Office Vocational Rehabilitation, now known as Employment and Independence for Persons with Disabilities, and she can answer questions about services. Cassandra Barnes

stated that individuals with low vision or visual impairments work with the Division of Services for the Blind.

Gloria Whitehead asked if the service area has extended beyond Durham. Cassandra Barnes stated that Employment and Independence for Persons with Disabilities has an office in each North Carolina county. Cynthia Holland stated that DECI serves other counties across the state.

### **Old Business**

Sharon Williams stated that this committee created a list of actionable items during its June 2024 meeting, and revisiting those items would be helpful when deciding which actions the committee would like to take. Additional items 7 through 13 were added during this meeting. Some items (labeled as actionable) were labeled that way in a previous meeting.

#### Actionable Items from the June 2024 MCPWD Meeting

- 1) Serve as a resource referral hub with a viable presence –with office hours through procured funding from Council and City Budget.
- 2) Advocate for change, funding, and support of issues as identified directly by those with disability.
- 3) Work to address and correct discrimination and inequities associated with disability in Durham. (Actionable)
- 4) Waiver for the blind (does not exist - Elderly, Blind and Disabled (E.B.D. Waiver) provides access to long-term support services for individuals who are blind, elderly, or have significant disabilities, allowing them to remain living in their community setting).
- 5) Create a list of voting members and contact information. (Actionable)
- 6) Create subcommittees to address some of the issues (Actionable)
- 7) Housing for persons that have intellectual and or developmental disabilities (added January 2025)
- 8) Higher skill development employment for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (added January 2025)
- 9) Links or a database of resources for persons with disabilities in Durham added to the M.C.P.W.D. website (added January 2025)
- 10) Create a forum of Durham providers of services for persons with disabilities (added January 2025)

- 11) Epilepsy training for Police Officer and home health care providers (added January 2025)
- 12) Educate faculty, administration and parents on services available to children if they are between diagnoses (added January 2025)
- 13) Have a luncheon to increase visibility in the community (added January 2025)

Sharon Williams stated that the committee will have to decide which items from the list to focus on and form subcommittees who will work on those items with Equity and Inclusion Department staff.

### **Other Old Business**

Victoria Mosey from Alliance Health stated that Alliance Health has a housing department working to address housing for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities. She offered to share additional information about that department's work. Victoria Mosey also stated that a presentation about the TBI Waiver was given early last year. She said Alliance Health does a lot in the areas of supported employment and individual placement, which is more for mental health, substance use, and traumatic brain injury.

Victoria Mosey stated that there is a database of Durham Resources called the Durham Network of Care with over one thousand resources listed; the database is paid for by the Durham Department of Social Services and overseen by Alliance Health. Sharon Williams asked for permission to share the link on the MCPWD webpage.

Victoria Mosey shared that Alliance Health offers information sessions monthly that are open to the public in English and Spanish. She shared an overview of the different resources available by Alliance Health. Victoria Mosey shared her phone number: (984) 302- 1965.

### **V. Adjourn.**

Jackie Pilgrim made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Michelle Bush seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting February 11, 2025, at 12:00 pm**