

# Meeting Minutes: Executive Committee

Date: 2/13/2019

Minutes prepared by: Shannon Hartwig

Location: 121 East 7th Place, St. Paul, MN 55101

## Attendance

* Jim Thalhuber – In Person
* Nancy Fitzsimons – Via Phone
* Lauren Thompson – Via Phone
* Brian Bonte – Via Phone
* Joan Willshire, MCD Executive Director – Via Phone
* Shannon Hartwig, MCD Staff – In Person

## Approval of Agenda and Minutes

**Council Chair Jim Thalhuber called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.**

**Action:** Brian Bonte motioned for approval of the agenda; it was seconded by Nancy Fitzsimons. It was approved by unanimous voice vote. Brian Bonte motioned for approval of the minutes of the January 9, 2019 meeting. Nancy Fitzsimons seconded the motion. It was approved by unanimous voice vote.

## Executive Director Review, Discussion

Council Chair, Jim Thalhuber provided the group with a brief description of the process for the Executive Director annual review. The item will be held over to the next meeting, to allow members from former Executive Committee to respond with input, as they have worked with the Executive Director as members of the Executive Committee. The current members of the Executive Committee that have been newly appointed, will be included in the process. Extra time is allotted to allow time for all members to review the documents involved and provide input in a timely manner. Documents will be remediated and sent to members within the next week.

## Legislative Update

Joan Willshire gave a brief update on the progress she and Kody Olson have made. The MCD Policy agenda has been submitted for review. Document CM-4-2019 Public Policy Agenda-Tiers.doc. The group discussed the item and has made additional edits and changes. The item will be included on the next meeting agenda.

## 2019 Public Policy Agenda

The Minnesota Council on Disability supports policies that promote Access, Equity and Independence so Minnesotans with disabilities can live, work and play in their communities.

### The Minnesota Council on Disability Operational Budget (Tier 1)[[1]](#endnote-1)

**The Council seeks a $154 increase in our FY 20-21 appropriation for rising operational and IT expenses.** The Minnesota Council on Disability (MCD) exists to ensure programmatic, physical, and digital access to government for all Minnesota taxpayers and to promote Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility in the private sector to fuel a stronger Minnesota economy. The agency is a free policy, training, and technical resource for people with disabilities and their families, the private sector, and federal, state, and local governments to strengthen communities.

### Accessibility

#### #MNParksForAll (Tier 1)

**Make our state parks inclusive and accessible to all Minnesotans.** Our 75 state parks and recreation areas have barriers which prevent people with disabilities from a full park experience. In 2018, $500,000 was secured in bonding funds to bring park facilities up to the Americans with Disabilities Act standards. DNR’s Accessible Outdoors Project is now developing project designs to make Fort Snelling and William O’Brien State Parks inclusive and accessible for all Minnesotans. The Council supports bonding funds to develop designs for an additional state park.

#### Accessibility of Public Buildings (Tier 1)

**Ensure accessibility of government programs and services.** Modify the State Access Statue (MN State Statute 326B.106) to remove outdated language about the accessibility of public buildings. Current language is confusing, conflicts with state and federal law, and may delay the removal of barriers in public buildings. This “housekeeping” bill will ensure that programs, services and activities provided by state or local government is accessible to people with disabilities.

#### Accessibility of Assisted Living Facilities (Tier 2)[[2]](#endnote-2)

**Establish accessible standards within new Assisted Living licensure.** Minnesota is one of the few states that does not license Assisted Living facilities. These facilities are regulated under a variety of building code classifications based on number and type of residents. This often results in limited accessibility options for assisted living residents. New Assisted Living licensure should expand accessible facilities.

#### Voters with Disabilities (Tier 2)

**Improve accessibility of absentee ballots for Minnesotans with disabilities.** Amend MN 203B.045 to permit a voter with a disability to receive and submit absentee voting information in an accessible electronic format.

#### PCA Driving Reimbursement (Tier 2)

**Expand reimbursable driving activities for PCAs** in order to ensure the implementation of a person with disability’s service plan. Under current statute, PCA’s are not able to be reimbursed for driving their clients with disabilities for activities defined in the service plan. The Council supports amendment 18-7306 to MN 256B.0659 Subdivision 1.

#### Data Accessibility Standards (Tier 3)[[3]](#endnote-3)

**Enhance data accessibility standards in Minnesota government.** The Council supports adoption of best practices for universal accessibility of legislative documents produced for the public.

### Equity and Independence

#### Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) Policy (Tier 2)

**Establish CAV policy standards that include Level IV autonomy.** Autonomous Vehicles have tremendous potential to promote the independence and equity of people with disabilities to live, work, and play in the community of their choice. Level IV autonomy requires no steering wheel and no license drivers which will ensure people with disabilities have maximum access to CAV technology.

#### Transportation Network Companies (TNC) Legislation (Tier 2)

**Increase equitable, on-demand transportation services for Minnesotans with disabilities.** Transportation Network Companies (TNC) hold broad challenges and benefits for people with disabilities to maintain choice and independence. The Council supports policy solutions that ensure that TNC companies fulfill their legal obligation to provide equitable services to all.

#### Education Discrimination (Tier 3)

**Promote non-exclusionary disciplinary practices of students with disabilities.** According to student discipline data, significant disparities in suspensions and expulsions exist for students with disabilities and other minority populations. Students with disabilities are twice as likely to be suspended or expelled compared to their peers without a disability. Supporting students with disabilities in the classroom will reduce instances of suspicion or expulsion and ensure equitable access to public education for all students.

#### Volunteer Driver Services (Tier 2)

The Minnesota Council on Disability recommends that state laws affecting volunteer drivers and organizations that provide volunteer driver programs be clarified to ensure the availability, accessibility, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of transportation services.

#### Adaptive Fitness Grants (Tier 3)

**Establish a grant fund to expand adaptive fitness options.**

### Legislative Research and Projects

#### #MNParksForAll

The Council on Disability is working with the Department of Natural Resources to design and implement a fully inclusive, 72 hour recreational experience at William O’Brien State Park and Ft. Snelling State Park utilizing bonding funds secured in 2018. Future bonding funds will be sought for construction in 2020. Processes for predesign work have been established to create greater efficiencies for design work and construction at other state parks. These parks will serve as models for similar upgrades to additional parks.

#### Roundabout Accessibility for Pedestrians

Roundabout standards and design vary depending on governance and funding by city, county and state. The Council is collaborating with MNDOT in order to evaluate safety and access of state-funded roundabouts for pedestrians with disabilities, specifically blind and low-vision users.

#### Sign Language Interpreters

The Council will engage with and support the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, Deafblind, & Hard of Hearing Commission to identify and support policy solutions to increasing communication access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans across the state.

End Document.

## Committee updates

Council Vitality: we currently have sufficient applications for each area and are waiting on the appointments to be announced by the new administration.

## Meeting Planning

The full council meeting planned for February 19th will allow for members to participate in the Disability day rally at the capitol. The agenda will be updated with the information collected, and the will be mailed out.

## Executive Director Report

Joan Willshire brought forth staffing issues. Margot Imdieke Cross will be retiring this spring. Stuart Cross will be retiring this spring. More information will be provided about the position descriptions once they are completed.

## Items held over due to time

Items held over due to time, Committee Structure and Chair’s Report.

## Future Meetings

The next Full council Meeting will be February 19, 2019.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be on March 13, 2019

## Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:02 pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Shannon Hartwig

1. Tier 1: Council leadership and support [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Tier 2: Council support [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Tier 3: Council monitor [↑](#endnote-ref-3)