

MAYOR'S DISABILITY COUNCIL (MDC)



A NEW DAY.

Mayor's Disability Council Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 6, 2025, 3:00 to 5:00 PM |

City Hall, St James | 117 W Duval St | 4th Floor | Mayor's Conference Room

Members Present: Natalie Alden, Barbara Brown, Dominique DeWitt, Teona Haugabook, Jose Morales, Dan O'Connor, Anida Pollo, Ray Pringle, Stephanie Young

Ad-Hoc Members Present: Tonja Ferrell (Public Library), Gonzague (VR), Lou Anne Hastey (CareerSource), Megan Hyman (Brooks Rehab), Mia Johnson (JTA), Shannon Nelson (JFRD), Leland Peterson (MV Transportation), Rebecca Scissors (DCPS), Alba Spragins (MV Transportation), Amy Valentine (DCPS), Ed Vanheel (MV Transportation),

Citizens Present: John Nooney (Advocate), Maria Duque (Arc Jacksonville), Sara Gaver (Advocate), Alice Cross (Occupational Therapist), Grace Mincer (Occupational Therapist), Morgan Regan (Occupational Therapist), Devon Snow (Occupational Therapist), Maya Goodman (DSD Intern), Isaiah Wright (DSD Intern)

Staff Present: Kara Tucker, Matthew Jackson, Tereese Goodloe & Tamika Gloston

Meeting Called to order at: 3:06pm by Ray Pringle, Chairman of the Board, and started with

Pledge of Allegiance: Lead by Natalie Alden,
Followed by a few words of

Welcome: by Ray Pringle, Chairman of the Board

Parliamentarian: by Jose Morales

Vote to Approve Minutes:

- Moved by: Jose Morales to approve minutes from: April 1, 2025.
Second by: Teona Haugabook.

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Motion made:

- Natalie Alden made a motion to request a formal change in the agenda to do membership before moving forward on the agenda.

Vote to accept Membership:

- Moved by: Natalie Alden to accept Dominique DeWitt's membership to the Board. Second by: Jose Morales
- *Discussion:* started by Jose Morales, states that he loves the fact that we are getting a great advocate and it's somebody that represents the veteran community. Natalie Alden states that Dominique also represents multiple disability groups.

Guest Speaker: None

Announcements / updates: Kara Tucker, Chief COJ Disabled Services

- Changes in the DSD Office –
 - *Matthew Jackson* celebrated 10 years with COJ
 - New DSD Manager: *Tamika Gloston*
 - 2 Interns from **FSCJ Vertical**:
 - ✓ Isaiah Wright
 - ✓ Maya Goodman
- Still have memberships available on MDC, just filled 1 - will submit Dominique's new member application up to the Administration for final approval from the mayor
- Stephanie Young will speak about the Entrepreneurship program in her subcommittee report
- Jax Ready Fest was April 25th & 26th
- Disability Expo – July 26th (Natalie request to give update) –
 - Now that Tamika is here, she will help with planning
 - We'll meet with Brooks, Sports Alliance and MDC on the Adaptive Sports portion of the Expo
 - Kara advised the mayor will not be there in person but will do a video
 - Presenters have already confirmed

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- Call for Exhibitors sent out and exhibitors are registering
- Dan O'Connor suggested we extend an invitation to the mayor to come to one of our MDC meetings before the year is over, Kara advised she would like to have a full board first, but we can still do it!

Subcommittee Reports:

• **Employment – Stephanie Young**

- Entrepreneurship Program application - we will keep as an evergreen content on the mayor's website
- 28 applicants applied / 12 accepted / 2 MDC members to audit the program
- Classes will start either May 13th or 20th at FSCJ
- Media Coverage – Greg Grant, JSEB Entrepreneurship Program Partner will announce the program at the ribbon cutting for the opening of their Golfair location
- Pledge card: Jose was working on getting additional resources, however Kara found on the ADA Tech support side of the jaxada.com website
- We've been working on a list of resources for employers on ADA accessibility and are now up on the website, www.jaxada.com
- Future agenda items, Mentoring Day – looking to partner with Disability: IN (former business network), Kara will reach out to them.
- Educational videos (IT Symposium 2025) also added to the website
- Chamber Events – sending a special invite to the Expo
- Gathering resources and getting them all in one hub
- Employee of the year application – on the website, can go on and nominate and employee. We also would like to see it launched

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out and advertised as a social media campaign through the city so Kara will make that request

- October – NDAM planning and hiring an Abilities Campaign, will add the planning for to our agenda in June
- New Business – Entrepreneurship Program as a break-out session at the Expo

- **Legislation, Education & Public Safety (LEAPS) – Anida Pollo**

- Jose Morales (Vice-Chair) lead meeting in Anida's absence
- Went over Jax Ready Fest – great event
- Future items – CIL requested collaborate with MDC and co-host an Independent Disability Preparedness Conference in August
- Legislation – 2 pieces that have passed, Natalie came to us with a call of action: contact governor's office
 - SB 462 – disability placards for pregnant woman
 - SB 961 – lifetime placards for amputees
- We discussed why doesn't ADA and federal enforcement mirror state enforcement in our state disability law
- We talked about different campaigns we can do to help with that
- Talked about the legislation for DBS, VR to be a part of APD
- The NFB is doing calls May 12th – 15th at the federal level to advocate for what's going on with social security & Medicaid, they want to pack the zoom call for Duval so if anybody wants to be on the call let Jose know
- JTA announced their new autonomous vehicles facility, Kara and Jose toured it and it is accessible. Even though the vehicles are ADA compliant by law does not mean they're accessible, we hope we can work with JTA to help change the issues with the vehicle's accessibility
- Excited about the stops and there being a care attendant in all the vehicles

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- Pilot program will be free and JTA is working on fee structure
- We also discussed the Jim Brady scholarship, currently 6 applicants
- Testimonial email sent about the scholarship
- Public safety – following task forces for human trafficking and sexual assault to see if there's anything we can mirror
- Housing task force – accessible affordable housing task force meeting at CIL May 21st 2pm, will have partners and welcome anyone who wants to join
- **Adaptive Recreation & Medical Access – Ray Pringle**
 - Medical access symposium, mayor is involved in helping us with this, important that we get the partners together – the hospitals the doctors' offices and other medical facilities
 - The Jumbo Shrimp & Sharks game both are full, no more tickets
 - Access to Health – invited Baptist Representative, Ms. Hannigan to subcommittee meeting and she accepted
 - Kara read out all the topics for medical access symposium
 - We talked about the Parks Project – Inclusive playgrounds:
 - Friendship Fountain St Johns River – opened, ribbon cutting on April 17, 2025
 - Rivers Edge – will open in Spring 2025, date not set
 - Ringhaver – new synthetic field complete
 - Bob Hayes – new synthetic field being scheduled
 - We spoke a lot about ideas on how to get information on inclusiveness at the parks here in Jacksonville out, create an app for our community
 - Get involved with DIA (Downtown Investment Authority), interested in Emerald Trail
- Natalie pointed out a correction to the minutes, a correction in the date should reflect April 1st meeting minutes. Request to table the March

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minutes however clarification was given, the March minutes were voted on per the recording. Per Chair we will add the March minutes to the June agenda and typo will be corrected on the April minutes

Ad Hoc Reports:

- **Duval County Public Schools – Amy Valentine & Rebecca Scissors**
 - Approaching end of school, preparing for High School graduations, accepting requests for accommodations for guest attending graduations
- **Jacksonville Fire & Rescue Department (JFRD) – Shannon Nelson**
 - Jax Ready Fest – asking for feedback to make improvements, we did have more students this year – field trips from 10 different middle schools, 500 students. It doubled in size as far as footprint and attendance
 - States, interested in coming to one of the subcommittees. They are working on REVAMP Program, always trying to push that information out there. REVAMP is their Registry for Endangered, Vulnerable, and Missing Persons. For those with cognitive & sensory impairments that are prone to movement, part of their special medical needs registry through a state statute, they work with first responders and have a registry of those that are prone to wonder, pictures of their favorite places so when they are reported missing we have all that information for the first responders on the scene immediately, so the families don't have to try to gather while under stress, it cuts down on hours of information, but its only released if they are reported missing, the files are not accessed unless there is a need too, less than 10 people in the whole county have access to that registry, it's monitored 24/7

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- **Jacksonville Transportation Authority – Mia Johnson**

- Ridership – April
 - Trips – 26,035
 - OTP Connexion:
 - ✓ Pick up time 87.9%
 - ✓ Appointment time 94.8%

- **MV Transportation - Mia introduced the GM for MV Transportation, Ed Vanheel**

- Ed introduced his team: Alda Spragins (Happy Birthday!), Leland (Senior VP), states they are now fully staffed, and Jim Neddo & Brenda Matthews are no longer with the organization

Question: *Dan O'Connor asked, for Connexion Plus, if there could be standard information in the profile when calling to schedule transportation?*

Answer: *Ed Vanheel advised, don't have an answer for that but will have to get back with you for that information*

Mia Johnson advised once your disability is listed it's in your profile, but we do need to verify you are who you say you are and can't say if that is in the notes when you book your trip

Question: *Jose Morales states getting complaints about not being picked up on time, people being picked up late*

Answer: *Mia advised received they have no driver interest trips in a few weeks so she will take those complaints back to see what the situation may be*

Question: *Ray Pringle asked if there are any updates on the Autonomous Vehicles?*

Answer: *Mia Johnson states cannot answer that question but will politely take your feedback to my leadership team, I don't have any feedback. Will see if someone from the leadership team can be here for the next meeting*

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Question: Dan O'Connor asked about the awning at the regional transit center

Answer: Mia Johnson states she believes they brought that up at one of the JTAC meetings, I think they are working on it, but I can't say, that's out of my realm, can take back to leadership

Natalie advised trying to get a collaborative meeting between DOT, COJ & JTA so if any feedback getting that meeting that would be great!

- **Vocation Rehabilitation (VR) – Gonza Gonzague**
 - no updates
- **Career Source of NE Florida – Lou Anne Hasty**
 - Hope initiative going on, we still have funding, we still have many people applying and going through
 - It looks like we will be using a large amount of the grant we have been given before the deadline which is July 31st (1st deadline)
 - We've helped some people get their merchant mariners certification, we helped another individual get clothing so she could start her first day at work, somebody else had some car problems, started the job, brakes went out and we were able to help so that they could get back to the new job the next week
 - On our website we consistently have job fairs going on, always one at South Beach every Wednesday, Gateway always has something going on, www.careersourcenortheastflorida.com

Ray Pringle questioned the Merchants Mariners Certification, Lou Anne Hasty gave a brief summary of what it entails. They've had 2 people to get certified both females

Question from a citizen: any programs to support Spanish speaking individuals?

Lou Anne Hasty: we have bilingual staff, media interpreters through phone, the WOA Program, work opportunity act which help

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individuals go back to school who have a disability or English is not they're first language

- **Brooks Rehab – Megan Hyman**

- Annual Celebrate Independence Challenge Mile takes place right after the Gate River Run, new location this year (downtown) right outside of Dailey's Place, over 1000 people showed up (largest event to date)
- Finally at the end of our travel season, national coverage for all our sports teams (5 adaptive sports team), a lot of good visibility for Jacksonville NE Florida area
- Our Sled Hockey Team just competed in the Sled Nationals this past weekend in Coral Springs, for the first time ever competing they went 2 & 2, and they scored the most number of goals for their tier, USA Hockey going to do a feature on them
- Thanks to Kara for coming to our March Connections Meeting, it's a monthly social and educational resource group, open to anybody in the community, we meet on the 3rd Monday of every month at the Brooks Rehab Hospital, we usually send out a sign up for that, we serve pizza. Kara Tucker was gracious enough to come to talk about MDC & the COJ. Mia and Ken will be coming this month
- Excited to be planning for the Disability Expo
- Annual Surf Event coming up in about a month, adaptive surf happening Saturday, June 7th, expecting 80 surfers, registration will be sent out in about a week or two
- The Ballers went to Richmond for the NWBA National Championship, they were in Division 3, they came in 3rd place, went in 4th place. The Juniors team went to Richmond the weekend before and they were in the Varsity National Championship, top 16 in the Country, they went in 4th place and

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played for the National Championship and lost by just a few points

- Power Soccer Team going to Fort Wayne, IN for the Conference Cup
- The Wheelchair Rugby Team unfortunately did not qualify for Nationals
- Golf – we're excited to be partnering (sponsorship) with Jim & Tabith Furyk and their foundation. We are actually doing a golf clinic tomorrow for kids at Jax Beach Golf Club
- **Public Comment – John Nooney**
 - States want to be reflected in the minutes
 - Seeking a resolution from MDC, recognizing and supporting real estate number 137044-0000 that was identified by the Jacksonville Waterways Commission and recognized by the Parks Department that would benefit all the people of Duval County Jacksonville
 - States the minutes are not really in depth and states he's having a real problem with the minutes, states he goes to a lot of meetings and he's not being reflected in the minutes, so you have destruction of public records and stuff
 - April 23, over 2 years ago and just recently we were put on a fine, we're on this list so I'm seeking right now resolutions of support from all these different groups, that's the show I'm on to be in the minutes
 - Spoke about the awning, states he was here when this place was packed
- Jose is looking for volunteers that want to be mentors to help people with social media, using AI and helping people build their website, or any type of accessibility app, editing videos, doing workshops at CIL every 4th Monday of the month

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- Natalie advised to use caution when utilizing AI and not giving clients personal information
- Disability Expo is July 26th Registration is open for Exhibitors and Volunteer Registration will be open by the end of the week, if you need Expo flyers you can get them from Tereese
- Registration will start at 9am not 10am
- Florida Rehab Council for the Blind meeting this Thursday in Gainesville, will email Kara if people want to participate virtually. And the Florida Council for the Blind is having its convention here in Jacksonville the weekend of the 15th – 18th at the Southbank Hotel

Motion to Adjourn:

- Moved by: Natalie Alden, Second by: Dan O'Connor