

## **Meeting Minutes – Approved**

### **Mayor's Advisory Committee For Equal Access (MACFEA)**

**Tuesday, October 20, 2015**

**Mo'ikeha Building, Meeting Room 2A-2B**

**4444 Rice Street, Lihu'e, HI 96766**

Members Present: Rita Manriquez – State Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board (STBIAB); Roberta Eiben, Consumer; Dr. Lucy Miller – DCAB (Disability and Communication Access Board) Board Member; Kathy Sheffield – National Alliance on Mental Illness; Betty Bell, Kaua'i Federation for the Blind; Kathy English, Hawai'i Disability Rights Center

Members Excused: El Doi, Kaua'i Developmental Disability Council; Ellen Ching, Easter Seals Hawai'i; Suzie Woolway, 'Ohana Home Health

Staff members also present: Linda Nuland-Ames – ADA/EEOC Coordinator; Jay Furfaro, Boards and Commissions Administrator; Darcie Agaran, Support Clerk; Stephen Hall, Deputy County Attorney.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Roberta Eiben called the meeting to order at 12:32 p.m. with 6 members present.

### **INTRODUCTION OF MACFEA MEMBERS AND STAFF**

#### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

- Regular Open Session Minutes of July 21, 2015

**Action:** Ms. Bell moved to approve the minutes as circulated. Ms. Sheffield seconded the motion. Motion carried 6:0.

#### **GUEST SPEAKER**

- Mark Perriello, President of the Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Perriello: I started at the Kauai Chamber of Commerce a few months ago. I have come here from Washington DC and I don't pretend to know all the solutions, let alone what the problems are. At the Chamber of Commerce I have been spending most of my time getting to know people, getting to know the island, getting to a place where I have a better understanding of the issues. At that point I will work together with the Board of Directors at the Chamber, with other community groups, with other community leaders, to really craft what the plan is for the next 3 to 5 years for the Chamber of Commerce and what we hope to accomplish for the business community and ultimately for every day citizens on the island. If the businesses are succeeding, more people are

being employed and there is more job growth. It means people are spending money on different facets of the economy.

How I got here is an important part of the story. I was very privileged back in 2008 to be invited to work at the White House as President Obama's Director of Diversity for the start of his administration. As is often the case, here I was the Director of Diversity but disability wasn't in my portfolio and that is all too often the case when you have people who are looking at diversity that they don't necessarily look at disability. It was really through the unfortunate passing of a gentleman named Paul Miller who was working at the White House and was in charge of Boards and Commissions and appointing people to Boards and Commissions for the president. He had the disability portfolio rather than the person with the disability who was running the diversity outreach program. When Paul passed away they asked if I would take on the disability portfolio and of course I did. I am blind in my right eye and I shared that with some of the folks I was meeting with for the first time and they gave me this big bear hug and said you are one of us; you are part of our community. I hadn't really been too involved with the community in the past, I am blind in one eye and I have ADHD but I don't necessarily see how I have a lot in common with people with disabilities. But through my work at the White House and through the work with people in the community I really came to see my own story through that disability lens much more so than I had in the past. To the point that I identify now as a person with a disability because my experience is, even though they were different than everyone else's experiences, I still face the barriers of low expectations that so many people with disabilities face whether it came to school work or athletics. I understood pretty intimately what it means to be person with a disability and what it means to be treated like a person with a disability. And sometimes it is not necessarily a good thing.

I decided to get really involved in the community. I worked with a few people to found a group call Disability Power and Pride which was an organization that was really dedicated to helping change people's attitudes around people with disabilities. We founded a political action committee that was designed to help elect candidates to offices that supported people with disabilities and joined the board of the American Association of People with Disabilities as well. The job came open at AAPD and I threw my hat in the ring and was fortunate enough to get the job and worked there for 5 years or so before I came here to Kauai. The American Association of People with Disabilities is the largest disability rights organization in the country and they promote equal opportunity, economic power, independent living and political participation for people with disabilities. When I started I was taught was that it is sort of an adversarial relationship sometimes between the business community and the disability rights community. By the time I left we had sort of flipped that model on its head and were working really closely with businesses in order help people with disabilities succeed. What I really want to drive home today is that businesses don't have to be seen as an obstacle; in many instances I think they are the solution. An example of how things have unfolded at AAPD, early on in my tenure one of the issues we were dealing with was swimming pools and whether swimming pools should be accessible for people with disabilities. We worked with the hotel industry to have a dialogue about making pools more accessible but in the end we didn't see eye to eye. AAPD along with other groups

chose to do a boycott of the hotel industry, specifically the leaders of the hotel industry who were making the most noise around making swimming pools accessible. I am really proud to report that the Department of Justice and the Obama administration moved forward and actually made swimming pools accessible. So now if you go to a swimming pool in a public place, nine times out of ten and hopefully more than that, you actually see one of those lifts that is permanently attached to the side of the pool that someone with a mobility disability can use in order to get in and out of the pool. That was really the only time that we sort of took it to the streets as it were where I had the bull horn and was out there pounding the pavement and screaming for our rights.

Most of the positive change that happened when I was at AAPD happened when we were in conversations with people a great example is the section 503 rule which requires federal contractors that are hiring target around people with disabilities of 7%. It is an aspirational goal. That rule was the result of nonprofits talking with the US Chamber of Commerce and with folks at the Department of Labor about how we best move forward. The rule was actually put into law in 1973 but it was never really enforced. So by coming together, the three entities, the nonprofits, the government and the Chamber, we were really able to craft a rule that made sense not only for people with disabilities but for the businesses that were going to have to conform to the rule. In the end there were a number of companies who were really at first very nervous about what section 503 would mean for them and their businesses and we helped them through those concerns and now they are some of the biggest cheerleaders of section 503. So when you are thinking about any disability advocacy, figuring out ways to partner with people, to work with people is really critical.

Another thing that we did was partner with a group called the United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN) that works connecting businesses on disability issues. We developed the Disability Equality Index. One of the things I did in my past in the Human Rights Campaign was work on the Corporate Equality Index which rated companies on LGBT issues. What we wanted to do was a similar type index on disability issues and I couldn't be happier with the results. We had 81 companies participate in the first annual survey right before I left, 19 of whom got 100%, but that leaves a lot of other people who have room for improvement. The survey is a tool where we are partnering with businesses and just the simple fact that they are willing to put themselves out there to take the survey means they want to learn how to do better. The best part of the tool is that AAPD and USBLN are now working with these companies directly to help them do better when it comes to hiring, their benefits packages, and a whole host of things. You can find it at [disabilityequalityindex.org](http://disabilityequalityindex.org) and I will pass one around as well so you can take a look.

I am now with the Chamber of Commerce and have put on a different hat when it comes to my work around people with disabilities but I don't see them as mutually exclusive, I really see them as working in tandem. My hope is that there will be space in my portfolio at the Chamber of Commerce to do work with you all, to work with businesses here on the island in order to help move forward with economic opportunity and independent living for people with disabilities. I thank you for your time and I am open for any questions.

Ms. Nuland shared that she receives calls monthly from people coming to Kauai asking specifically about accessibility. She said Kauai is getting a good reputation for being helpful and welcoming. A group of residents put together a website, [accessiblekauai.com](http://accessiblekauai.com) addressing mobility, with pictures of how close you can get your wheelchair to the beach, to recommended restaurants for people who are accommodating. The Disability and Communication Access Board has travel tips that can be found on the County of Kauai ADA webpage. Ms. Nuland said there are very few complaints from tourist although there have been some problems at the airport. She said DCAB is sending her to the airport to do some ADA customer service training to get the staff more motivated and open minded. She also mentioned that the Opportunity Index 2015 put together by Opportunity Nation rates each county for economic opportunity; Kauai came in with a B minus. Ms. Nuland attended their conference last year and they are helping her put together an employment program for Kauai.

Ms. Bell shared that she is representing the blind group. She said although there are services to teach technology and vocational rehab does a good job with younger people being trained for jobs, the older people with vision problems are kind of left behind. If you wanted to learn how to read using the Barb system there is no one to teach you. She said she can get that skill and pay for it but there are a lot of people that can't. Ms. Bell said it would be nice if there were teachers that could work with this particular group of vision impaired and asked Mr. Perriello if he was aware of such an agency. Mr. Perriello responded that there might be some tax breaks for businesses to bring in someone but he is not aware of any agency that is specifically training folks on the latest technologies but that it is an excellent idea.

Ms. Sheffield asked Mr. Perriello what his experience has been with people in recovery from mental illness. She said the chief complaint within the NAMI systems is that people are relegated to very menial tasks and many of these people are very bright and educated but just can't keep an 8 to 5 job. They are worried they are going to lose their benefits and because they have return to work programs, if you go back to work you lose your benefits and getting it reinstated is almost impossible. Ms. Sheffield said these people are chronic and even though they are in recovery, they are never going to be well as we know it. Mr. Perriello responded that it is really tough. He shared that one of the people who worked for him at AAPD was bipolar and as much as she was an advocate for people with disabilities and people with other mental health conditions, she said that if she was working any place other than AAPD she would never have disclosed that information to someone because of all those things Ms. Sheffield talked about. People worry they will lose their job, they worry they will be assigned to menial tasks. He said he thinks that is changing slowly as more people talk about their story and talk about their mental health conditions. Mr. Perriello said he is part of a group the Now Campaign and NAMI is a part of it, [nowcampaign.org](http://nowcampaign.org). It is about trying to change the stigma around mental health conditions and addiction issues through the presidential election. They are trying to get the presidential candidates to pay attention to these issues. The organization was founded this year by Patrick Kennedy, the former congressman and there are a lot of groups out there doing a lot of good things to try and

change things as well. He added that to some people it makes sense to disclose and for other people maybe it is not the right time.

Ms. Manriquez said she wanted to share something personal and confidential, to which Deputy County Attorney Hall responded that these records are public and wanted to make sure she was aware of that. Ms. Manriquez said she was aware but wanted use herself as an example because she represents the disabled community. She shared that she started working for the disabled community via independent living. She received a statement from social security asking her if she was still disabled because they saw she was working. She said she was being scrutinized for trying to better herself and not wanting to take from society. People had warned her about working because her benefits would be taken away from her so she had to quit her job. Ms. Manriquez asked Mr. Perriello to take that information to Washington because it is a big statement for many disabled people.

Mr. Perriello said he thinks in Washington sometimes people get focused on big numbers, like it will impact hundreds of thousands of people but they sometimes forget the real stories. There is an organization called Fix the Debt that is talking a lot about actually how do you look at some of the big entitlement programs and make them work in the situation where there is a debt but also acknowledges the fact that people need these services. He said if Ms. Manriquez was willing there might be some opportunities through them to talk about how these programs could be revised in order to allow people to go to work and still maintain their benefits.

Ms. Nuland asked Mr. Perriello what his impression is of Kauai in regard to ADA accommodations to which he responded that places seem generally accessible to the public. He asked Ms. Nuland if the transit system was accessible to which she responded that all the transit buses are accessible. Mr. Perriello said he feels like in general the island is doing a lot right. He said from the ADA perspective that is what he has noticed but from a community perspective he is still looking for that community of people but has only been on island for two months.

Ms. Miller shared that her issue is captioning. She said we are the only county that doesn't have open captioning in movie theaters. For some reason when that was passed for the state, Kauai managed to get an exception because our movie theater is not part of a company that has more than one location. Plus our local television stations, the internet, every time she goes to a story in the news on the internet and instead being able to read it do a video of it without captioning. Ms. Miller said on a daily basis she runs into difficulties which most people aren't going to think about and it has to do with all the loop holes involved with all the new technology. She said she can read a book but not all information comes that way. She asked Mr. Perriello if he is accessible to anyone who may want to get involved or has questions to which Mr. Perriello responded that anyone can email him at [mark@kuaichamber.org](mailto:mark@kuaichamber.org). He said if there is ever anything going on that they think he might be interested in please let him know. He added that in addition to his role at the Chamber he would like to get more involved with the disability community personally as well.

Ms. Sheffield welcomed Mr. Perriello and asked if he was recruited outside of the Chamber to which Mr. Perriello said he applied to an ad in the newspaper

Ms. Sheffield shared that NAMI has support groups once a month and a 12 week class that meets for 3 hours at a time and she is having hard time finding free space that can accommodate these classes. She asked Mr. Perriello if he knew of some businesses that could donate space because they have a limited budget. Mr. Perriello said he ask around.

Ms. Eiben thanked Mr. Perriello for coming and said they hope he can come again.

## **BUSINESS**

- MACFEA Goals for 2014/2015 (On going)
  1. Increasing Emergency Preparedness
  2. Increasing employment of Persons with Disabilities in the County

## **REPORTS**

- ADA Coordinator's Report

Ms. Nuland said part of her report is in response to the goals. On Emergency Preparedness, she has been very concerned about not being ready and not having our shelters up to standards to meet all functional access needs especially with repeated hurricane warnings. The people responsible for shelters have really come together much better and are more aware of being accessible. They have worked on increasing capacity for people to bring their family pets with them to more shelters. If you go to [kauai.gov](http://kauai.gov) and look for the Civil Defense page you will see that more information has been added. She said there is a new pop-up with a map of Kauai and when the shelter is open it will light up and be readable by a screen reader. Ms. Nuland said she would be interested in hearing from people if they look at the Civil Defense website and had any suggestions or recommendations on the shelter information and the map.

Regarding employment of people with disabilities in the county, Ms. Nuland said she meets almost every day with an employee who has a disability. They usually don't want to discuss it, they are worried about what is a reasonable accommodation and if they will lose their job. She said every department has gotten wiser about how to provide accommodations and they are much more mature about accepting that as a fact of life and working together with the person in need to provide an accommodation that works for everybody. Ms. Nuland shared that the Mayor made a commitment to the Developmental Disabilities Council to increase employment opportunities. She said in February she attended the Opportunity Nation conference about youth unemployment which is very high; it is the 16 to 24 age group. At that conference she learned about the Work Innovation and Opportunity Act and the funding that would become available. She said working with our office of Economic Development and with Vocational Rehabilitation and with Ellen over at Easter Seals we are making more progress now in getting a special program, federally funded, which will probably be housed in the

employment office. There would be a coordinator, a clerk, and a job specialist who will go through the county and find out where there are some employment needs, see what the job description would look, and working with Vocational Rehabilitation students, start them in some kind of school or training program. The training program might be through Easter Seals. They would begin training people to do the jobs and then come in as summer hires at ten dollars an hour. She said this program will be one of the first in the nation and there is an incredible amount of support at the state level. The nice thing for the county is they will get some trained assistants in the offices that are understaffed and overworked and all this is linked to federal dollars; it is not going to cost the county but will bring some great benefits. At the end of the summer they will see where changes have to be made and hopefully if can be more than just summertime, someone might be available to work during the year. Ms. Nuland said how grateful she is to Kaeo Bradford in Economic Development because she knows the ropes of getting through all the federal and state regulations and there are a number of people employed in the county to get this done.

Ms. Nuland said she met with people from the Assisted Technology Resource Center located in Honolulu and they were upset with the lack of technology for people with disabilities in the state. It took some real fights and people who got what they needed usually wound up suing medicade to get the equipment they needed. These people decided they couldn't wait for all this to happen and they got donations, they got grants and set up this resource center. They help assess people's needs and arrange to get their loaner equipment or low cost or free equipment. She said they would like to come to Kauai and put on an all-day fair and bring all the things that are available these days. People don't see it so they don't know what is available. If anyone has questions about wanting to learn the new technology, that would be the place to call or email.

Ms. Bell asked Ms. Nuland if there is a transportation component with the hurricane preparedness to which Ms. Nuland responded there are special buses that pick people up. Information shows up on the television through captioning, on the radio and on the county Facebook page.

Ms. Sheffield asked if information could be given via the CTY system to which Ms. Nuland said she wasn't sure but most likely not as it is an additional service purchased by the county. She said if there is a Tsunami warning there will be announcements about when the buses will shut down and if they think there is going to be a major storm they will announce when the last buses will go through a neighborhood. Ms. Nuland said to always have a backup plan.

- Updates / Announcements

Ms. Bell announced that the library for the blind in Honolulu is having workshops on November 10, 12 and 13<sup>th</sup>. The facilitator is Dr. Dixon who has written a book on brail to English and is very knowledgeable and talented. There are going to be programs on BARD which is the system that can teach you to download books and all sorts of things on your computer and have it read verbally to you in addition to the current digital

system which is a very simple one. She said she has the information if anyone is interested.

Ms. Manriquez reminded the committee that she is no longer with Aloha Independent Living and they have just hired a new specialist on Kauai, Julia Hall. She said any disabled person here looking for information can call Roxanne Bolton in Honolulu and can be directed to the new specialist on Kauai. She said we need to let the AIL in Honolulu know that it is very much needed here on Kauai. The disabled community on Kauai only has DVR but that is only to assist with jobs and not every day living skills or activities. She added that anyone can also call the 800 number that is on the brochure she handed out at a previous meeting.

Ms. English asked if Aloha Independent Living has a physical address on Kauai to which Ms. Manriquez said he does not and that is one of the reasons she is no longer working for them because she had to work from home and wasn't comfortable with that.

Ms. Sheffield announced that she needs 3 more people and she can have her second class for NAMI, Family to Family, and if anyone knew of any families that have members with mental illness. She said it is a free class and it is usually 12 weeks however she is going to try 6 weeks on Saturdays this time to see how that works if she can find a place. Signups for the classes can be done on the NAMI website, namikauai.

Ms. Miller said that at a previous meeting they discussed the Ho'ike problem and a few people wrote letters about the noncompliance of the captioning issue. A month or so ago the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs had a public hearing regarding the renewal of the franchise for Ho'ike that she attended and testified that if they are going to renew the franchise she hopes they will comply with ADA and (inaudible) requirements.

Deputy County Attorney Hall said he would be happy to work with Linda and discuss a follow up letter asking if they could give us more information or any action they may have taken. It may not go anywhere but looking forward to the next meeting, he will work with Linda to provide the committee with an update.

Ms. Eiben announced that she might be moving to Alaska in a couple of months with her family.

**Action:** Ms. Sheffield moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:34 p.m. Ms. English seconded the motion. Motion carried 6:0.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 12:30 p.m., Mo'ikeha Building, Meeting Room 2A/2B.

Respectfully submitted by:

  
Lani Agoot, Administrative Specialist

Approved as circulated

Approved as amended