

**Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA)**

**Disabilities Advisory Council (DAC) Meeting**

**VOPA Conference Room – Richmond VA**

**Final Minutes**

**June 24, 2011**

<b>Members Present</b>	Barbara Barrett, Melissa Meade, Lisa Ritchie, Mary Jane Sufficool, Monica Wiley  Provisional Members: James Alexander III, Marvette Humphrey
<b>Members Absent</b>	Steven Hornstein, Shirley McInnis, Arva Priola, Linda VanAken
<b>Guests Present</b>	Chris Harrison, Angela Thanyachareon (VOPA Governing Board Member), Teresa Turner
<b>Staff Present</b>	Sherry Confer (Deputy Director), Kim Mendella (Executive Assistant)  <i>For portions:</i> Dana Traynham (Staff Attorney), Colleen Miller (Executive Director),
<b>Call to Order / Introductions</b>	Lisa Ritchie, Chair, called the meeting to order. Ms. Ritchie welcomed the guests and asked everyone present to introduce themselves.
<b>Public Comment</b>	No public comment was offered.
<b>March 2011 Meeting Minutes</b>	Ms. Ritchie referred the Council to the March 2011 meeting minutes. With no changes, Ms. Ritchie asked if there was a motion to accept the minutes as written. Melissa Meade made the MOTION and Barbara Barrett SECONDED the MOTION. The MOTION carried unanimously.
<b>Staff Presentation – Fair Housing</b>	Dana Traynham, VOPA Staff Attorney, talked about the Federal Fair Housing law. Ms. Traynham discussed how to request housing modifications and accommodations related to a person's disability.  Council members had many questions about service animals and pet policies of apartments. Ms. Traynham explained that housing situations are covered by the Fair Housing Act and not by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Fair Housing Act recognizes that service animals are not limited to dogs and also recognizes emotional support animals.  Ms. Traynham discussed who has to pay for accommodations and modifications. Landlords have to pay for modifications for people with disabilities living in public housing on federal assistance. In private housing situation, the landlord has to allow for the accommodation and the tenant will have to pay for any modifications. Ms. Traynham also spoke that people have one year to make a complaint after the landlord violates their rights and two years to file a lawsuit.

**Executive  
Director's Update**

**Progress on Objectives**

Colleen Miller answered questions about the Department of Justice (DOJ) letter regarding the Central Virginia Training Center (CVTC). DOJ concluded that issues at CVTC were common at other training centers throughout the state. DOJ is working with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to negotiate a possible settlement.

Ms. Miller also talked about VOPA's settlement with the Virginia Lottery and the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council's advisory opinion on disclosing those settlement details.

**Litigation Report**

Ms. Miller was pleased to announce that VOPA won its case before the US Supreme Court. The US Supreme Court ruled that VOPA could go to federal court when necessary to enforce federal laws against another state agency. VOPA had sued in federal court to obtain investigative records.

**Working Lunch**

The Council members and staff had a working lunch where they networked and shared resources.

**Work Session –  
DAC By-laws  
Revision**

Sherry Confer, Deputy Director, stated that the current by-laws are very prescriptive and not reflective of how the Council operates. Members discussed items such as mission and member representation. Members discussed serving multiple terms to aid in leadership development. Members talked about recruitment strategies, membership diversity, and about the desire to have military veterans on the Council.

**Greetings from  
Governing Board**

Angela Thanyachareon introduced herself as a member of the VOPA Governing Board. She reported that new Board officers were elected. Bill Fuller was elected as Chair and Darrel Mason was elected as Vice Chair. Ms. Thanyachareon stated that the next Board meeting will be on July 17 and 18 in Lynchburg, Virginia.

**Governing Board  
Committee Reports**

**Public Awareness and Goals**

Ms. Thanyachareon talked VOPA's current public input survey. There was also a discussion about the use of social media to increase awareness of VOPA and VOPA's work.

**Finance**

Ms. Confer talked briefly about information reviewed at the last meeting. The next meeting will be in July and will review VOPA's budget for the next fiscal year.

**Other Business**

**Recruitment**

Kim Mendella talked briefly about a formal recruitment plan to attract new members to the DAC. Ms. Mendella asked members if she could accompany them to their communities to create interest in the DAC.

Council members offered suggestions.

**Next meeting date**

DAC will discuss FY2012 objectives at its next meeting. Ms. Confer will schedule the next meeting date based on the objective setting timeline to ensure that DAC's recommendations are received.

**Membership**

Ms. Ritchie asked the guests present to address the DAC and talk about their interest in becoming a Council member. There was no quorum present so the final vote was delayed.

**Travel forms**

Ms. Mendella reminded members present to return their travel reimbursement forms.

Lisa Ritchie asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Meade made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Barrett SECONDED the MOTION. The MOTION carried unanimously.

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*FINAL MINUTES*

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8/12/2011

Date

**Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy  
Mission Statement**

Through zealous and effective advocacy and legal representation, to: protect and advance legal, human, and civil rights of persons with disabilities; combat and prevent abuse, neglect, and discrimination; and promote independence, choice, and self determination by persons with disabilities.