

Wheelchair Repair Task Force

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 31, 2023

11:00 AM in Room 1A of the LOB and Zoom and YouTube Live

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 AM by Chairman, Beverley Brakeman.

The following task force members were present:

Members: Beverley Brakeman, Sen. Seminara L. S08, Rep. Case, J. 63, Rep. Smith, F. 118, David Morgana, Jonathan Sigworth, Joseph Shortt, Seth Johnson, Melissa Marshall, Sheldon Toubman, Wayne Grau, Diane Racicot, John Lee Goetz, Gary Gilberti, Darrell Ruopp, Jon Slikfa, Julianne Avallone, Ginny Mahoney, Barbara Cass, Jim Carson, Hilary Felton-Reid in place of Susan Halpin

Guests: Sen. Lesser, M. S09, Rep. Gilchrest J. 18

Absent were: Rick Famiglietti, Michelle Duprey

Opening Statements & Introductions:

Chair Beverley Brakeman asked Human Services Committee Ranking Members, Sen. Seminara and Rep. Case, to give opening remarks. She then asked Human Services Committee Co-Chairs, Sen. Lesser and Rep. Gilchrest, to give opening remarks.

Chair Beverley Brakeman introduced herself to the task force and asked task force members to introduce themselves. In order, the members that introduced themselves were David Morgana, Jonathan Sigworth, Seth Johnson, Melissa Marshall, Sheldon Toubman, Wayne Grau, Diane Racicot, John Goetz, Gary Gilberti, Hilary Felton-Reid on behalf of Susan Halpin, Darrell Ruopp, Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services appointee Jonathan Slifka, Commissioner of Consumer Protection appointee Julianne Avallone, Commissioner of Social Services appointee Ginny Mahoney, Commissioner of Public Health appointee Barbara Cass, Rep. Frank Smith, and Joe Shortt.

Review of Special Act 23-22:

Chair Beverley Brakeman presented the timeline of the task force, reviewed the legislation that prescribed the task force, and described the charge of the task force.

Establishing Goals of Task Force:

Chair Beverley Brakeman opened the meeting for discussion on what the collective goals of the task force are. Comments were made by Sen. Seminara and Rep. Case.

Jonathan Sigworth presented priorities from a consumer advocate perspective.

Further comments were made from an industry perspective by Wayne Grau, Gary Gilberti, and Diane Racicot.

Questions were asked by Jonathan Sigworth, Sen. Seminara, and Sheldon Toubman to industry representatives.

Ginny Mahoney offered Department of Social Services data regarding wheelchair users who receive Medicaid benefits. Gary Gilberti and Diane Racicot presented data on the ways wheelchairs are covered, whether by Medicaid, Medicare, or private insurance.

Chair Beverley Brakeman summarized the discussion.

Creating a Regular Meeting Schedule:

Chair Beverley Brakeman suggested that the task force meet bi-monthly and presented proposed dates for future meetings. Questions and suggestions about the task force timeline were put forth by Sheldon Toubman, Diane Racicot, and Jonathan Sigworth.

Chair Beverley Brakeman adjourned the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:29 PM.