



**Fishers Fishers Advisory Committee on Disability  
Minutes  
9/16/2025**

**BOARD/COMMISSION: Fishers Advisory Committee on Disability**

**DATE: 9/16/2025**

**DIRECTIONS:**

**1. Call to Order / Roll Call**

The meeting of the Fishers Advisory Committee on Disability convened at 5:30 p.m. Members present: Cecilia Coble, Kelly Hartman, Wilbur Sutton, Katie Jackson (virtual attendance), Darcy Keith, Chrissy Pogue, Michelle Stelz, and Molly Connolly. Jason Wagner was absent. Paul Walters, Stephanie Miller, and 2 ASL interpreters were present including Mark Holcom and a female interpreter. In attendance were Lauryn Geralrd, Andy Miller, Nancy Chance, Mindi Cooley, and Patrice Smith.

**2. Approval of Previous Minutes**

- a. FACD Minutes 6-10-2025 DRAFT

The Minutes from the 6-10-25 meeting were approved, 8-1

**3. Guest Speaker(s)**

- a. Nancy Chance: Guest Speaker on ER Response COAD

Nancy Chance: COAD handed out docs to team. Formed in 2009 comm of active disaster, stellar response in 2020, had ordered resources in Nov before the march shut down. Staying awake thinking of the positions that still need to be filled. Would like all sectors filled, looking for good people that can help make decisions. Reaching ot to county disability members. Meeting with ham co foundation, wanting to move money. Timber creek fire, called at 4am, helped the families before they went to the hotels. Still providing support to those families. Work with “smaller” local disasters and large scale (covid). All clinics have disaster plans. Asking if committee would like to join.

Cecelia- great timing, each city now has advisory committees for disability, could be a great opportunity to share info and get members.

Nancy- numerous agencies that they work with, mental health, big brother/sister, incarceration programs. They are a fast acting and ever-changing group. Has a dynamic leadership group.

Meetings are on zoom right now due to people doing so many different groups and hard to physically get together. Looking to meet in-person quarterly. They have a better financial impact now thanks to Good Samaritan partnership. Using QR codes now. Better organization for donations- can better allocate funds quicker. Hard to attract younger members, hard to think ahead for what could happen.

Wilbur attends COAD meetings, he would be willing to be a point person/represent the fishers group

Nancy- thanking Fishers for such great involvement and impact on local community.

b. Mendi Cooley: Guest Speaker on COOLabilities and Parent Networking

Mendi Cooley – and Patrice Smith, leadership members. PowerPoint presentation. 2/7 members. All in for All Abilities. Why now- social isolation crisis. Even worse for those with a disability. Opportunity to build social capital with new west field growth. When families get connected, they have higher quality of life. What is a fam network- group of people living together with similar experiences – family peer support and community development. Encouraging families to recognize their gifts and share with others. Peer to peer grass roots. They are the go-to network in Westfield, advocates to schools/healthcare, city offices. Inclusion focus. Pilot project through gov council, west field, Gary, Elkhart County, and Evansville. going through Sept 2026.

Wanting to grow-visiting Fishers. Reviewed leadership team. Vision- see community as a space where all families have a rightful presence and accepted and supported. Advocacy. Survey June- Westfield had highest response-115 families, 90% said less than 2 sources of support – huge need for connection. Be the starting point, be the source. Top 3 needs- inclusive events, clear/simple information, connection with similar families. 15% non-white, responses in Spanish and English- non-white had even lower feeling of connection. Can help with living opportunities and education/jobs (on their own for romantic relationships). Council has been around 4 years, looking to get codified next year. Will attend summit coming up. WFN is the bridge to the community from mayors' council. “the gapers” asset based comm dev. Reach 600 people. Having a launch party. Patrice spoke on marketing strategy. Branding first, then marketing. Start with the heart. Get the story. All in for ALL abilities. Make the plan realistic, effective with time, ran launch event, go from the ground up in collaboration. Make sustainable changes and plans. Build the system first. Now getting media coverage and growing. Getting more voices. Homecoming parade. Through the grant they are getting technical assistance. They are hitting their year 1 goals. Will resurvey those 115 families to see if they've made an impact on the social side. Thanked for the time. Solicited partnership with FACD, resources, wisdom, anything would be great.

Kelly - asked about connection with IN state program – they are familiar with them, but they are more grass roots. When grant is done- how are they sustainable? They are working on it.

Reaching out to other orgs/groups, trying to secure future financial options if grant is not renewed. Worried about it.

Cecelia - asked if they have a website for resources in the area – in progress- have been in the mayor's council primarily.

Kelly- asked in non-profit – not yet. Operating thru LLC Coolabilities.

Cecelia – speaking from experience, sometimes the resources are in just one place, you have to go to multiple places. Need to pool resources to build up their list. Presenters will send a follow up email to connect and share resources.

#### **4. New Business**

##### a. Closed-Captioning Slides – September Initiative Deaf & Hard of Hearing Month

Molly- presented slides while Cecilia talked. Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Social media content coming. Jason unable to be here today. Closed captioning partnership with ham co tourism – simple way to be inclusive. Logo decal that businesses can display to advertise they have at least 1 tv set with CC. It's a free way to be inclusive. Good for ESL, quicker to read than hear and understand. Video about restaurants not having cc, rely on it to understand what is happening, hard to follow sports. Hard to hear over restaurant noise too. Sometimes no sound on anyway – who is that for? Important for emergency breaking news. Many Deaf and Hard of Hearing people are moving to Hamilton County to be close to deaf school, good place to live and work.

##### b. Fishers Community Center FACD Tour & Recommendations

Community center – FACD got a tour. Updates to community – wheelchair evacuation, strobe lights to signal emergency, accessible buttons to exits and doors, one recommendation from Jason- having CC for the fitness classes. Buying 2 water wheelchairs. Gave lots of suggestions for the pool originally, excited to see how it came together. Adult changing table, sinks are wheelchair accessible. Water ramp. The track is free. Sahn's café is accessible to the public. Community rooms.

Wilbur asked about outside the box, why aren't they going there? CC – it didn't work out, not able to meet all the needs (on both sides). KH – as the community grows the needs grow too, vision for what outside the box could do and what the city wanted to provide. Not enough space because outside has grown so much too. They might have to leave fishers- they've grown too much and just need more space.

Wilbur- possibility for outside box members to work at the café?

Cc- yes, in talks about café, or janitorial.

##### c. Working with Michelle Morton with Nature Engagement at Conner Prairie

Nature at Conner- molly update- met today with Michelle. Bird ability program in the works and will share the promotional materials once ready. Bird watching, appreciation. Building the program out still.

Wilbur- 3 eagles nests at Connor Prairie

##### d. FACD Summit 9/18 Updates

CC & Kelly Summit updates 9/18 invited local other committees- collaborate and share successes/resources. Will share updates at December meeting

Kelly- pulling the region together, can expand and target new communities. Get to know you, brainstorming sessions with different groups. Speed dating style – 8 minutes with each group. Scribes will share the highlights. Talk about future plans- do this annually?

e. October Initiatives – Reverse Job Fair Update

October reverse job fair- Chrissy & michelle, talked with a couple different groups, lost some fizzle. Kelly will lead a workshop, should know tomorrow if she has a space secured, looking at last week of Oct for resume workshop and interview skill building workshop. Chrissy- idea, need to send thank you cards to those that have helped – Michelle – do we have stationary? Idea proposed for official FACD stationary, cards, letter head.

Will know more tomorrow and work out details. CC- social media for disability employment month. K – stress importance of employment, improves mental health, doesn't need as much resources.

f. 10 Year Anniversary Initiative Ideas - December

10 yr anniversary coming up next year – taking ideas for March. Any ideas now? None – will talk more after thinking about it. Kelly- March 2nd kick off, 3/25 mayor breakfast.

## 5. Committee Update

a. Housing

Housing- Wilbur, attending county meetings, looking at land trust, owned by ham co, need for affordable housing. The land trust would own the property and lease it to the home-owner to build on – they would own the building but never own the land “property”, if sold, then the equity is split with the owner and the land trust. Can build strength over time, can happen anywhere. Pulls the cost of the land out. Would love for Fishers to be part of that.

b. Employment

Employment – Chrissy and michelle, break over the summer. Getting started back up. Sears training, Sean Weir from MN. Fishers event center, talked with director at comm center. 10/21 8:30 am meeting, invite event center and comm center.

c. Community Support

Comm support – Kelly, Waiver updates – 30-day period for public comment. Service caps on multiple therapies (music, sports). Looking to see what people care about the most. Complicated system with federal match. Submitted last week – training for service providers, looking at 12/31 target date – policy is going to change on the last day of the year, lot is going to happen over the next 60 days. Waiver reset 2027 will glean from these changes. Completely changing the system.

d. Networking/Social/Accessibility

Networking – darcy – farmers market 7/12, 2nd annual. Amazing experience. Vendor had such a great turnout she wants to be a regular vendor. One sold out of their t shirts. Outside the box performers. ASL interpreters did a sign your name session- kids learned how to sign their names, sparked their interest in learning more. Great feedback. Exciting positive time. FISHERS in sign language t-shirt sold out.

## 6. Community Comment

a. Public Recommendations

Community comment: cc- wants to get the meetings advertised more, try to get more folks in person. Shared comment from canine companions- national service month. Founded 1975. Celebrated 50 yrs of service dogs. Tasked trained service dogs. 70 mil adults have disability on 16,000 service dogs. 2022 survey. 65 diff types of disabilities, 8 locations, 2800 active teams. Over 500 people on the waitlist to get paired.  
-would like to highlight/educate more on service animals.

## **7. Adjournment**

Next meeting December 16, 2025, at 5:30 pm. Last quarterly meeting of 2025.

Michelle motion to adjourn, second by Kelly

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.**