

July 11, 2023 Fitchburg Disability Commission Special Meeting 9:30 a.m.

Commission Members:	Bill Tolos, Chair	Present
	Barbara Slattery, Vice Chair	Present
	Marshal Haneisen, Secretary	Present
	Dan Cunningham	Absent
	Doris Matte	Present
	Carolyn Quirk	Present
	Tiffany Wells	Absent
	Camilla Arsenault	Absent
	Amy LeBlanc	Present

Note: The Disability Commission convened at 9:00 a.m. for an Ad Hoc meeting in preparation of the Special Meeting. At this Ad Hoc meeting, commission members discussed the information that would be presented to the public during the special meeting.

Special Meeting convened at 9:30 a.m.

In attendance included: Mayor DiNatale,
Samantha Sauer, Fitchburg Procurement Office
Rob Haneisen, resident and parent

Agenda items

1. Approved June minutes. Motion passed all in favor.

2. Events

3. Open Forum

a. Discussion of Van Pool transportation. – Mayor DiNatale was present and required a member of the Special Education office attend. Commission members provided an overview of the challenges that have been reported about transportation for students in special education.

b. Opportunity for people to speak about Van Pool experiences. Rob Haneisen explained several incidents of Van Pool failing to provide timely transportation. In addition, he provided examples of Van Pool management not providing clear communication to their drivers. Furthermore, he provided examples of Van Pool failing to provide communication with parents when the students were regularly seriously late in arriving home from school. In one instance, the students' school day ended at 2:30 p.m. but they did not arrive home until 5:50 p.m., after the Van Pool offices had closed for the evening.

c. Q and A – Mayor DiNatale asked several questions about the existing contract with Van Pool. Samantha Sauer from the procurement office explained that the contract renewal was completed but not yet signed. Mayor DiNatale asked that it not be signed until this matter is addressed further. Alicia Berrospe, explained that the Special Education Department has been collecting data on the parents' reporting issues with Van Pool. In addition, she said they have been researching other transportation options but at this time, there is a lack of available providers. She reported that there would be an emergency number made available for parents to call after hours if their child's van is not home before the Van Pool offices close.

4. Adjourn

