

## Wheelchair Repair Task Force

### MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

11:30 AM in Room 1A of the LOB and Zoom and YouTube Live

The meeting was called to order at 11:31 AM by Chairman, Beverley Brakeman.

The following task force members were present:

Members: Beverley Brakeman, Rep. Case, J. 63, Rep. Smith, F. 118, David Morgana, Jonathan Sigworth, Rick Famiglietti, Sheldon Toubman, Wayne Grau, Diane Racicot, Jon Slifka, Ginny Mahoney, Barbara Cass, Jim Carson, Susan Halpin, Diane Racicot, Michelle Duprey, Joseph Shortt, Seth Johnson, John Lee Goetz, Jim Carson, Sen. Seminara L. S08, Gary Gilberti

Absent were: Darrell Ruopp, Melissa Marshall, Shirley Skyers-Thomas

Guests:

#### **Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomes everyone to the meeting.

#### **Approval of Minutes – November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

The Chair asks for a motion to approve the November 30<sup>th</sup> minutes, Sen. Seminara makes the motion and Gary Gilberti seconds the motion. The minutes are approved.

The Chair asks for a motion to approve the December 7<sup>th</sup> minutes, Rep. Case makes a motion and Wayne Grau seconds the motion. Sen. Seminara abstains. The minutes are approved

#### **Discussion of Final Report**

She states that there will be no meeting next week. She calls on Jonathan Sigworth to summarize the chart he created based on data from the industry.

Jonathan goes over his data related to technicians. He questions how the industry will decide how many staff they need. His data suggests you only need one technician in shop to do repairs and would need three technicians in home for each company on average, based on the number of completed repairs per month which the companies have reported to the task force. His data shows the number of expected repairs annually for both companies in shop and in home (428/855 and 684/684). He asks the industry how they calculate their rate of repair and what he is missing from the calculation of averages.

The Chair thanks Jonathan, but states she is ready to move forward with recommendations and that the group has gone back and forth for awhile and that there are a lot of variables. She states the problem needs to get fixed and that the group has good suggestions.

Wayne states the chart shows how nuanced it is to state how many technicians they need to lower repair times, because it leaves out variables the industry has laid out to the group over the previous weeks. Wayne thanks Jonathan for the presentation but agrees that the group needs to move forward with recommendations.

Jonathan believes it is a legitimate question to understand the industries thought process and disagrees with the industries position that the data doesn't account other variables.

The Chair states she didn't mean to imply it wasn't important, but that it isn't an easy number to nail down and there isn't one solution that fits the industry. She states it is important for the industry to think about what their goals are and how they will get to a point to improve timeliness.

Sheldon brings up again the question whether Numotion has 14 technicians and is hiring 3 to get to 17, and that Gary allegedly stated that there were 8 in the field and 2-3 in the shop, and that Numotion lost 3 technicians. Gary pushes back and says he never said they lost 3 technicians, and that his numbers are being misconstrued by Sheldon. He states he has 14 bodies and is happy to show proof via employee numbers. He states they did lose one tech in Rocky Hill, and his initial report that he has one opening and now has five open roles which would get over 17. He reiterates they have a 30% attrition rate, and they will continue to try and hire people so that they can bring the backlog down. Gary states technicians do various other jobs, and that technicians aren't doing that specific number of repairs a day and that you must look at the aggregate.

The Chair feels the problem has been well substantiated and doesn't want another meeting of going back and forth about staffing, everyone knows it is an issue and it isn't a good use of anyone's time.

David states he was told by Numotion staff that there were 4 people working on the road and that it is confusing. Wayne asks David to provide the name of the technician and that date, and that the industry is happy to share proof of the staff for both industries.

The Chair doesn't want the information provided because she doesn't want the employees being put into positions to be called out for information they may not have had, and it isn't a good thing to do. She states David's complaint is the exact reason she is tired of the conversation regarded to staffing because there are other solutions to the issue other than staffing.

Rick suggests the industry hiring someone to audit their process to see where the lag comes from if it isn't just staffing. The Chair states the backlog was talked about in the last meeting. Diane reiterates the cause of the backlog and the remedy that she discussed last meeting.

Sen. Seminara asks if there is a separate company that was hired to address the backlog. Gary states they are doing both, there is a company helping and getting additional resources from other locations to address the backlog.

Sen. Seminara states the group did a good job identifying the issues, and that the biggest issue was to address timely wheelchair repairs. She states the Chair said they will start putting together

recommendations and she asks the industry to provide recommendations other than the notion that they will hire more people and what they can commit to.

Wayne states they are in discussion on proposals and just want to make sure what they propose they can deliver on and will provide it to the group before the end of the year.

Sen. Seminara recognizes many things led to the creation of the Task Force and just wants to get to a point where the recommendations have legs and can move forward. She states the feedback she gave to Numotion seemed to be receptive and wants to make consumers happy. One recommendation she wants to see is that there is follow up to see how the changes are progressing within the industry.

The Chair states this isn't the last meeting and will have two meetings in January to talk about the report. The Chair believes this group has shown that the timeliness of a repair is a widespread issue and believes everyone on the group understands there is a problem and is committed to fixing the problem. The Chair thanks everyone for their work, and that she will start drafting the report. She states the charge is to make various recommendations in policy for timely repairs. She plans to reach out to various members for feedback and proposals when working on the final report and states no one will be surprised by what will be in the report. She believes the toughest challenge will be the ultimate policy recommendation because some things will have consensus, and some will not. She states it isn't the group's job to think of legislative strategy, it is only the groups task to give their recommendation.

Susan thanks the Chair for what they have put together and has done an excellent job being Chair. She states she looks forward to the report and acknowledges she will likely be a part of the non-consensus group but appreciates the facilitation of conversation and debate.

Jonathan echoes that the Chair has done a great job. He requests that parties that agree on certain points can help draft the recommendations/justifications and allow opposing parties to draft their rationality for their oppositions.

The Chair invites everyone to provide her information as she drafts the report and that the report will be fairly represented.

### **Upcoming Meeting Schedule**

The Chair announces that there will be two more meetings, January 11<sup>th</sup> and January 18<sup>th</sup>. She states that there will be two meetings in January at a minimum, and that the 18<sup>th</sup> will definitely be a meeting date from 9:00am-11:00am but potentially one before the 18<sup>th</sup> or after.

### **Announcement of Time and Date of Next Meeting**

TBD

### **Adjournment**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:22PM.

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Chandra Persaud  
Task Force Administrator

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Nate Kalechman  
Minutes Prepared by