State council outlines 2023 issues

by Jane McClure

Adequate and accessible housing, reforms for working people with disabilities, and dealing with the direct care crisis are among issues the Minnesota Council on Disability (MCD) will champion during the 2023 legislative session.

Council members, staff and self-advocates presented the 2023 legislative agenda, outlined priorities and discussed issues with state lawmakers during the annual legislative forum December 16. The forum was held virtually, with hundreds attending. A recording will be available on the MCD website in January.

More than 30 state lawmakers indicated they would attend the forum. But one key change this year was that several self-advocates and state council members took a lead in explaining issues, rather than simply listening to state lawmakers.

Many of the stories were moving. A man outlined how his parents helped him with personal care needs and his current living situation, and he wonders what he will do when they are gone. A young parent described her efforts to save her child with a rare disease and hitting obstacle after obstacle with medical care and insurance.

A young man who uses a wheelchair told of finding out how truly limited his living options are, especially when a lack of rides in showers is seen. The high cost of hearing aids and the difficulty in paying for them were a recurrent theme.

Time flies! Another year is in the books, so here is our annual look back at what Access Press covered in 2022.

January 2022

The year began with optimism covered in 2022. The 2022 Minnesota Legislature was among groups seeking additional state resources at the capitol. Council leaders pointed out that funding and staffing hadn’t kept up with demand for services. Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner Kris Ehresman was stepping down. Several state lawmakers also announced that the 2022 session would be their last, eventually leading to a mass exodus at session’s end.

ProAct program participant James Benjamini spoke in opposition, citing safety concerns. “The suggestion that asking questions back on those in need but instead reflect the majority of our residents who really care,” Member Aaron Van Moorlehem.

The Minnesota Council on Disability will champion during the 2023 legislative session, outlined three pillars of priorities that will reflect those few people who turn their face to town,” said former City Council Member Aaron Van Moorlehem.

Go to page 4

New 16-bed mental health center eyed for West St. Paul location

by Kevin D. Hendricks

After a hearing packed by almost 100 people December 13, the West St. Paul City Council unanimously approved a new mental health crisis center. The project goes on the Dakota County Board.

Thirty-four people spoke during the public hearing. A majority of the crowd—roughly 10 independent supported the crisis center, speaking in favor of mental health services. A minority of residents spoke in opposition.

Dakota County and Guild Services proposed a 16,000-square-foot building with 16 beds for immediate mental health treatment, crisis services, and a “welcoming place to go” 24/7 staffed by the Dakota County crisis team.

The proposed location is the northeast corner of the Dakota County’s Northern Service Center property along Livingston Avenue.

Nearby residents have voiced concerns at past public meetings, including the November 15 Planning Commission, a neighborhood meeting attended by more than 80 people, meetings with the police chief, and more.

Complaints focused on security concerns and a problem of community notification. Last week there was disclosed a client of Guild that seemed pretty dangerous to the public. I’m concerned our biggest nightmare would come true that something like that comes into our backyard and the first responders are our children,” said John Hansen.

“The suggestion that asking questions back on those in need but instead reflect the majority of our residents who really care,” former City Council Member John Bellow.

“You are going to make us make accommodations for our entire life. The staff at Guild, the staff at the county, they get to go home. We won’t ever get to stop worrying about when something will happen. It might not be for years, but some time it will happen,” said Britt Drake.

Other residents and community members spoke in favor of the crisis center. “Three police chiefs are on record, including our Chief Sturgeon, saying they are not concerned about this facility. So I’m personally really proud to welcome this facility to town,” said former City Council Member Aaron Van Moorlehem.

“People who are in treatment for mental health deserve to know they are valuable people. We value them. We welcome them. And we will support them in their recovery. Let’s not let the reputation of our city reflect those few people who turn their back on those in need but instead reflect the majority of our residents who really care,” Council Member John Bellows.

Go to page 4

Go to page 4

Go to page 4
Dubious causes and cures were part of speech disorder treatment. People were labeled as “dumb” and many impediments were not well understood. Special concern, as communication is such disorders and must find ways to adapt. Possible causes. People on the autism and can include stuttering, apraxia and speech disorders in children can be of origins. Many of us live with speech disorders, and can include stuttering. “stammer” and stutter” were used to refer to as stuttering. It is interesting to note how the words “stammer” and “stutter” have changed over the years. Today we’d consider “stammer” to be more of a British term for what people in North America refer to as stuttering. Looking back 110 years ago, larger cities had special schools for students with speech disorders. Those who stutter and camps were offered for children who stuttered. The Duke School for Stammerers offered a summer camp and also a residential camp without stuttering. The school had opened in 1893 and offered instruction for the correction of “stuttering, stammering and other speech impediments.” Urban school districts such as Minneapolis and St. Paul had classrooms for children with speech disorders. Most students would attend the special schools as well as their neighborhood schools.

One 1913 Star Tribune article described Minneapolis’ two schools, Greely and St. Paul’s Stammering School. The schools included pupils who lisp’d or had other speech disorders, as well as students who were deaf. Students who had learned how to speak without stuttering were held up as examples in the articles, reading aloud for newspaper reporters.

Along with the usual steps of teaching children to speak slowly and use proper tongue positioning, one therapy was for children to enjoy cooking and outdoor sports. Such activities were seen as making children less self-conscious and worried about what impressions they made.

In contrast, too much time spent at the movie theater was blamed by some teachers. “Movies are especially pernicious for their effects, it is said. The subjects are usually of the excitable sort, especially injurious to the nerves of stammerers. The light and wavering of the film have a bad effect on the eyes and consequently on the nerves. The show keeps the child out when he should be sleeping. The air usually is bad, and the association a harmful.” Children who stuttered were said to be “thrilled” by the excitement on the movie screen, which could rekindle problems caused by “diseased” nerves. Teachers also blamed “dame novels” which were often lurid stories in cheap books.

Another newspaper article blamed cigarettes for causing stuttering in children. It was reported that St. Paul schools were banned from drinking coffee and tea, and told to go easy on the candy. The newspaper observed that it was interesting to know how many of the 1913 students fared as they grew up, and what they would think of modern conventional therapies today. The History Note is a monthly column produced in cooperation with the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities. Past History Notes and other disability history may be found at www.mnddc.org.
New state grants allow Minnesotans to stay in their homes

Fifty-seven organizations will receive more than $7 million in Live Well At Home (LWAH) grants from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to support aging Minnesotaans. The goal is to help older adults stay healthy, independent and involved in their communities.

"Most people want to live at home as long as possible," said DHS Commissioner Jodi Hartzler. "Supporting aging Minnesotaans to remain in their homes can lead to better health and quality of life. It can also ease pressure on residential care facilities that are struggling to find enough staff."

Here is a list of grants by location, grouped by region.

Central Minnesota
- Minnesota Area Agencies on Aging, Cold Spring, $198,000. Community health workers will serve as front-line liaisons between health care, social services and community-based services, focusing on family caregivers and rural members of Latino and East African communities.
- Assumption Community Services, Cold Spring, $108,000. The program will increase accessibility and support to older adults from the City of Cold Spring, the Stacy and St. Cloud area, working with the Tri-Community Living at Home Block Nurse Program.

West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Elk River, $275,000. Chore services and Ready Ride Transportation continue for aging residents, serving more than 7,000 households with programs including energy assistance, transportation and home modification.
- Granite Falls Living at Home Block Nurse Program, Granite Falls, $58,000. Volunteers serve seniors, people living with chronic conditions and caregivers of the Montevideo, Dawson and Madison areas.
- Habitat for Humanity, Douglas County and Alexandria, $111,000. The Aging in Place program for low-income older homeowners will expand, to help people remain in their homes through low-cost, high-impact home safety and access modifications.

Northern Minnesota
- Lighthouse Center for Vital Living, Duluth, $350,000. A donated building will become into an assistive technology center for older adults, aging into Lighthouse’s long-term services and supports.
- Legal Aid Service of Northeast Minnesota, Duluth, $93,000. Attorneys will serve the health care teams of rural American Indian elders, helping address social factors impacting the health of American Indian elders and their caregivers.
- Volunteer Services of Carlton County, Canalton, $186,000. The Communities Called to Care Program will restaff services closed during the pandemic, increase assisted transportation and Daybreak Group Respite. The program will also enhance other services such as caregiver counseling.
- Care Partners of Cook County, Grand Marais, $45,000. Funding will support services including specialized medical care, care coordination and caregiver support for people with serious illnesses.
- Access North, Hibbing, $122,000. Assistance helps homeowners return safely to their homes after a hospital, rehabilitating facility stay with physical improvements.

Funds will provide affordable transportation to help older adults engage with friends, family and community. In Koochiching County, with a focus on transportation needs.

"Something Cool Inc., McGregor, $44,000. Three initiatives focus on veterans, American Indian elders and adults with disabilities, with chore services, socialization and youth mentoring and work with youth to provide outdoor activities.
- Angels, McGregor, $41,000. A raised-bed vegetable and flower garden offer easy access for seniors living with disabilities. Angels will provide transportation to the garden and assistance will be provided for people with hearing loss.
- Red Lake Reservation Housing Authority, Red Lake, $101,000. The Enhanced Modernization Program will assist homeowners to make health- and safety-related modifications to their homes. Fifty tribal elders will receive personal emergency response systems.
- Northwoods Caregivers, Bemidji, $260,000. Expanded home and community-based services and caregiver support will focus on the Red Lake Nation, White Earth Nation, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Fond du Lac Band of Chippewa, and Lake of the Woods County.
- Living at Home of the Park Rapids Area, Park Rapids, $110,000. Services include local and long-distance transportation, light housekeeping, repair services, friendly visits and phone calls, ramp building, respite care, youth mentoring and dementia education and awareness.
- Horizon Family Services, McIntosh, $60,000. A pilot program in Polk and Norman counties will offer Lyft ridesharing.
- Stephen Living at Home, Stephen, $40,000. Essential services will expand, including transportation, meal delivery, friendly visits, phone reassurance, medication reminders, caregiver support and homemaking.

The report raised red flags in Greater Minnesota, with many key bills weren’t passed at the end. Many health fared well but other focus areas did not. Hopes were slim to none for a special session.

July 2022

A Big Adventure Awaits! was the theme of the annual Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebration in July. The virtual celebration highlighted
Deteriorated pool, other camp facilities deserve attention this session

By True Friends

“This is a great place. This is my first time ever coming. I became a quad amputee last year; this place made me feel normal again. I love coming. I became a quad amputee last year. I ever coming. I became a quad amputee last year. Last year; this place made me feel normal again. I love coming.” said Robyn Gulley.

From page 1

STATE COUNCIL

From page 1

needed places and staff can get paid. Another need is accessible and affordable housing. A fourth is improved insurance access for people with rare diseases. A big change sought is a Minnesota Human Rights Act amendment to include “epidemic disabilities.” Epidemic disabilities are life-long conditions such as diabetes, that cities permit them. The city had no better than others. People living with epidemic disabilities experience periods of fluctuating good or poor health and rely on proper care, monitoring and treatment. The need for this change: came up due to a legal case, where the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provided support while state law didn’t.

But the second pillar change that has drawn the most focus in recent years is reform of the asset limit for Medical Assistance for Employed People with Disabilities (MA-EPD). Many Minnesotans with disabilities rely on the program to access health care. Several speakers at the forum said the program is a barrier and a deterrent and does not contribute to the community. But strict income and asset limits perpetuate poverty, as those in the program have to either spend down the few assets they have or pay high premiums to access Medicaid. People cannot save up to buy housing or a car, and struggle to live independently under such strict rules.

Disability partner support is the state council’s third pillar, with a diverse array of issues to be supported with other entities. One is the Minnesota Inclusive Education Consortium’s effort to open up more college programs to students with intellectual disabilities.

Longstanding efforts to increase state parks’ accessibility will continue with a bill from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Another longstanding MCD priority is that of transportation improvements, including autonomous vehicles.

The Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind, & Hard of Hearing will get council help with its efforts to make hearing aids more affordable. A Minnesota Department of Administration study of disabled-owned businesses is another support item. So is support for the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities legislative agenda.

Turner said one focus will be seeking additional resources, in light of the state’s record budget surplus, saying there needs to be an effort to get supports and services to Minnesota’s disabilities need. See the state council’s full list of priorities and the video at https://www.disability.state.mn.us/

CENTER

From page 1

said Connye LaCombe. “When I hear about a resource like this that developed during the reaction is ‘we need it, but not here,’ my reaction is we need it so why not here,” said Katie Dohman. Some of the issues at play:

State law requires such facilities to be located in residential areas and requires that cities permit them. The city had no better than others. People living with epidemic disabilities experience periods of fluctuating good or poor health and rely on proper care, monitoring and treatment. The need for this change: came up due to a legal case, where the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provided support while state law didn’t.

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In the facility and backyards are separated by undeveloped woods. The location also offers easy access to transportation, services at the Northern Government Center, and other nearby amenities.

The city is requiring security cameras, fencing, and city review of intake policies, among other conditions. West St. Paul Police Chief Brian Sturgeon has repeatedly addressed the security concerns, saying “These people are in our community already, whether they’re in a home or houseless or what have you. But this is a place where you can rest, sit down, get away from whatever is causing their crisis situation, get them into a stabilized facility to seek treatment to get a more permanent stabilization plan in place to help them in the long run. These people are not going to go out and terrorize the community.”

Council Member Wendy Berry said, “The mayor and I are both on the South Metro Fire Board where we’ve been focused so much on the mental health of our firefighters for four years, and I know the chief of police has been really focused on mental health issues there. If we’re not also extending that same accessibility to people in our city, we’re doing ourselves an injustice.”

“When Dakota County built the Northern Service Center this room was packed three times as big with people against it. And they were so afraid of that building and that there were going to be criminals and people running their neighborhood. It just didn’t happen,” said Council Member Dick Vitelli. Council Member Robyn Gulley added, “For everyone who took the time to come and speak, it matters a lot. Not just for us to hear these stories, which were both heartbreaking and incredibly moving, but also because it helps send a message to people who are coming into our community, that this is the kind of community we are, that we are a loving and welcoming and caring community.”

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The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota elected Raquel Arismendez, Napoleon Howell, Jennifer Knapp, Dr. Jazlynn Paige and Meredith Vadis to the organization during its recent annual meeting.

Arismendez is a project manager working with schools and nonprofits that primarily serve young people of color in the Twin Cities, affirming what she learned through her own experience with the barriers queer youth of color face in accessing mental health services. She is passionate about NAMI Minnesota’s mission, both personally and professionally. She hopes to bring not only her lived experiences and professional background as well as to support improving equitable access to mental health services for historically underserved populations. Howell is a leader within Deloitte Consulting’s strategy practice. He has experienced the devastating impact of overt and covert manifestations of mental illness and seeks to leverage his capabilities to drive the solutioning needed. He is particularly interested in helping lower income communities gain access to mental health resources.

Knapp works as a program manager for a Fortune 500 company focused on community outreach, strategy, and meeting planning. She has more than 11 years of communications experience in the non-profit, sports, financial and retail industries. She was formally diagnosed with OCD, general anxiety and depression after the birth of her second son, just days after the pandemic lockdown. Her desire to be on the NAMI Board stems from wanting to impact those struggling to openly share their story or ask for help due to the lingering negative attitudes surrounding mental illnesses. Paige is the founder of Paige Psychological Consulting with eight years of experience as a school psychologist. She contracts with over ten school districts across Minnesota, providing school psychology services to kindergarten through 12th-grade students. Her expertise includes mental health, trauma, family support, homelessness, suicide prevention, special education equity and relationship building. Her passion fuels her desire to serve on the NAMI Board to improve the lives of her community. Vadis experiences the changing the attitudes surrounding mental health and providing the tools and resources that families need to be successful in all aspects of their lives. Vadis is a longtime public servant and current business executive in the occupational health and wellness industry. Mental illnesses are prevalent in her family, and her younger sister recently died by suicide. Her public service background in low-income housing and public transit gives her unique insight into how mental health plays out across many public policy areas, and she looks forward to advancing NAMI’s initiatives at all levels of government.

Many named to state posts

Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan have recently announced a number of appointments. One new group is the Governor’s Advisory Council on Substance Use, Opioids, Addiction, and Suicide. “The Advisory Council, along with the recently appointed Addiction and Recovery Director, will provide valuable insight from a variety of perspectives, including those with lived experiences and those from communities that are disproportionately impacted by addiction,” said Walz. “This partnership will work to ensure that individuals at all stages of recovery, and their families, have a voice to improve an Aging. The Minnesota Board on Aging administers federal and state funds for its aging, makes grants to seven area agencies on aging and nonprofit agencies, and serves as an advocate for older persons.

Dave McAuliffe, North Branch, was reappointed to the Minnesota Commission of the Dead, DeadBlind, and Hard of Hearing as Metro Advisory Committee representative. The Commission of the Dead serves as the principal agency of the state to advocate on behalf of dead, deadblind, and hard of hearing Minnesotans by working to ensure those persons have equal access to the services, programs, and opportunities available to others.

Trevor Turner, Minneapolis, was reappointed to the State Rehabilitation Council as a current or former recipient of vocational rehabilitation services. Kyle Van Acker, Ham Lake, was reappointed as Governor’s Workforce Development Board Representative. The State Rehabilitation Council’s duties include guiding decisions about Minnesota’s Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), coordinating between VRS and centers for independent living and other state councils with interest in issues pertaining to disability and employment and reporting to the governor and the U.S. Department of Education on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs. Joseph Dailey, Prior Lake, was reappointed to the Statewide Independent Living Council. The Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council (MNSILC) works collaboratively with the Centers for Independent Living to create, monitor, review, and evaluate the State Plan for Independent Living. MNSILC coordinates activities with other entities in the state that provide services similar or complementary to independent living services.

Angeline Piper of Ramsey and Panou Xiong, Minnetonka, were reappointed to the Ombudsmian Committee for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities. The Ombudsmian Committee for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities advises and assists the ombudsman in developing policies, plans, and programs to benefit persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities, chemical dependence, and emotional disturbance.

Oluwagbenga Ogungbe, Oakdale, was reappointed to the Board of the Minnesota State Academies. The Board of the Minnesota State Academies governs the Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and Blind. It promotes academic standards based on high expectations and an assessment system to measure academic performance and to achieve the advancement of those standards.
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- Fraser: V-612-661-6568, fraser@fraser.org, www.fraser.org
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REHABILITATION: PHYSICAL, OCCUPATIONAL, SPEECH, AUDIOLOGY, TECHNOLOGY


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- Highland Friendship Club: V-651-340-0711, info@highlandfriendshipclub.org, www.highlandfriendshipclub.org

TECHNOLOGY


VISION IMPAIRMENT


WAIVER CASE MANAGEMENT

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New medical conditions added to program

The Minnesota Department of Health will add irritable bowel syndrome and obsessive-compulsive disorder to the list of qualifying medical conditions for participation in Minnesota’s medical cannabis program. The new qualifying conditions will take effect August 1, 2023.

“We are adding the new qualifying conditions to allow patients more therapy options for conditions that can be debilitating,” said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm. Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a disorder characterized by abdominal pain or discomfort and irregular bowel movements that can result in diarrhea, constipation, both diarrhea and constipation, or bloating. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is characterized by recurring, intrusive thoughts that often cause significant emotional distress and anxiety. This can lead to behaviors that the affected person compels to perform to reduce that distress.

Reviewers have shown patients who suffer from these conditions can see benefits from using medical cannabis to treat their conditions. As in past years, state officials conducted formal petition processes to solicit public input on potential qualifying medical conditions and held other meetings for feedback. Minnesota submitted petitions in June and July following that, the process moved into a public comment period and a review panel.

New petitions for new therapy methods were submitted this year. Petitions for gastroparesis and opioid use disorder were not approved. Gastroparesis, or delayed gastric emptying, was not added as a medical condition because research indicates that cannabis can make the condition worse. As for opioid use disorder, the health department heard from mental and health providers who recommended against approving opioid use disorder as a qualifying medical condition due to a lack of evidence for its effectiveness and the availability of FDA-approved medications for treatment.

Under state rules, patients certified for new qualifying medical conditions will become eligible to enroll in the state’s medical cannabis program on July 1, 2023, and receive medical cannabis from either of the state’s two medical cannabis manufacturers starting Aug. 1, 2023. As with other qualifying conditions, patients need advance certification from a participating Minnesota health care provider.

(Source: Minnesota Department of Health)
His family led group home work

Stephen Lawrence Johnson’s parents saw a need for housing for people with disabilities, and helped founded Hiawatha Homes. Stephen, who passed away in Rochester, New York, last month, was born with several disabilities. His parents were motivated to work with his other family and the organizations to find Hiawatha Homes, to provide housing for people with special needs. Steve was one of the first residents and lived to enjoy various Hiawatha Homes for 46 years.

He participated in a number of places and activities at PossAbilities, which provided services and recreational outings to sporting events and Hiawatha softball games. He attended the University of Rochester and during his career years greatly enjoyed riding an adult tricycle in summer months. He also loved listening to country-western music.

He is survived by his parents, brothers and their families, and aunts and uncles. Services have been held. Memorials go to Hiawatha Homes Foundation, PossAbilities or ARC Minnesota Southeast Region.

Honored on Minnesota Relay

Jim Alan Schroedermeier transitioned from a successful broadcast career to working on the Minnesota Relay Service. Some of his work included work on the Minnesota Relay.

August 2022

Longtime Access Press Executive Director Benjamin Was textbook ad
after his death. He was remembered as someone dedicated to shining a light on supporting Minnesota’s disability community. Also championed the rights of people with disabilities who used his own experiences to make key points. Was had one of the Minnesota journalists to shed light on the directly supporting people with disabilities. He worked on Access Press for more than two decades. Was was born and raised in Arden Hills.

His death saddened those who had fought his health challenges since 2019, and had cheered on his progress.

Tim Benjamin was a real asset to the disability community,” said Access Press Board Chairman Joel Ulland. “He had an ability to connect with everyone he met and use the power of the newspaper to make positive changes for people with disabilities. He will be missed.”

Another one said was "Chevy” Chevrette, who championed the rights of people with disabilities. He worked on Access Press for more than two decades. Was had more than 20 years of work to address the community’s growing housing crisis. Housing Matters’ mission was to Housing Matters in Bemidji, for its commitment to providing housing, disability services and support to Minnesotans with disabilities. The scope of services that have been recognized for their many years of work to address the community’s housing crisis.

Disability advocacy organizations and their allies were putting the finishing touches on legislative proposals. Much focus will likely be on issues around the state’s support staff shortage.

Advocates will be back with an array of familiar issues, including higher wages, the ability for staff to be compensated for the ability to be compensated for working with those with disabilities.

Vision Loss Resources’ move to its new home brought back memories of Benjamin’s work to promote wheelchair racing. Bruce Ario used his experiences with mental illness and traumatic brain injury to advocate for himself and many others. Benjamin “Benny” James was a well-known figure in radio and talk radio.

October 2022

Moving disabled people out of subminimum wage work and into the workforce is the goal of an $10.5 million initiative. State grants to service providers throughout Minnesota will help people earn competitive wages and ultimately, live more independently.

Funding was approved by the Minnesota Legislature in 2021 and was allocated by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHHS) to housing service providers. The University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration received a national award for outstanding leadership.

NAMI Minnesota presented its annual awards to people who had a positive impact in the state’s mental health community.

Sadness after six months, a lengthy classaction lawsuit was coming to an end. The lawsuit, centered on living choice, should have been decided by the Minnesota Superior Court. It was likely the case would be heard in the St. Paul’s courtroom.

But looming over all were questions about the makeup of the 2023 legislature and state offices. All were on the ballot, and with retirements the capital was facing one of its greatest challenges in decades.

Ending the deferment; if a property owner requests to end the deferment, he or she must state the reason for the request and the property must be assessed. If a property owner loses its homestead status or if the property loses its homestead status, the property must be assessed.

The full assessment and interest will come due in any of the following four scenarios: if the property owner requests to end the deferment; if the property owner loses its homestead status or if the property loses its homestead status. The property owner must state the reason for the request and the property must be assessed.

The Lake County DAC held a delayed 50-year anniversary celebration. The North Shore disability service agency had gone through many changes over the years.

Sen. David Tomassoni was one of many community figures who had died recently. He was a member of the legislature, died after a battle with ALS. Wheelchair racer and activist Gary Weber, 80, died in November.

Diane Reiser died in December. She was one of the first Minnesota journalists to shed light on the directly supporting people with disabilities.

His parents were motivated to work with his other family and the organizations to provide housing for people with special needs. Steve was one of the first residents and lived to enjoy various Hiawatha Homes for 46 years.
January 2023
Volume 34, Number 1

NEW GRANTS

From page 3

activities of daily living, respite care, meals, evacuations and more.

Pelican Rapids OAKS Living at Home Network, Pelican Rapids, $52,000. OAKS Living at Home Network serves to improve the health, well-being and safety of people in Pelican Rapids.

Southern Minnesota

Family Service Rochester, Rochester, $387,000. Neighbors Helping Neighbors will continue offering an engaged team of volunteer case managers to walk alongside clients to help them access community-based services and improve their quality of life. This program will be working with more than 300 clients to help them access community-based services and improve their quality of life.

Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Worthington, $145,000. The Age-Friendly Community Program will work to increase social engagement and reduce social isolation for older adults through community-based activities and social connections.

Vietnamese Social Services of Minnesota, Minneapolis, $125,000. The mission of the Vietnamese Social Services of Minnesota is to promote cultural and social cohesion in Minnesota’s Vietnamese communities through a variety of services and activities that support the cultural and social well-being of the community.

Cenex Senior Care-St. Cloud, St. Cloud, $250,000. The program will expand and improve access to community-based programs and services and increase community awareness of the services available.

Metro Meals on Wheels, Minneapolis, $190,000. The program will expand and improve access to community-based programs and services and increase community awareness of the services available.

Korean Service Center, Minneapolis, $185,000. The program helps Korean immigrants and older adults maintain their lives through services including transportation, virtual visit care service, caregiver support services and biodiversity care.

Southeast Seniors, Minneapolis, $60,000. Services include companionship in home nursing, respite care, meals and housekeeping, and transportation.

Philly United Communities, Minneapolis, $136,000. This program will provide social and community-based services to African American seniors in the Southeast Minneapolis neighborhood.

Apparelnation, Minneapolis, $50,000. The program will provide respite care and transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, caregiver respite, exercise classes and social interactions.

Ivy Life, Minneapolis, $25,000. The program will provide respite care to older adults in the community.

Ceresity Senior Care, Minneapolis, $20,000. The program will provide respite care to older adults who have increased need for assistance with activities of daily living.

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Art shanties to return

Art Shanty Projects return to the ice of Bde Maka Ska/Lake Harriet in South Minneapolis with a diverse and accessible outdoor program. The program offerings this year include 18 shanties (15 of them new) and more than 20 rotating performance groups. Many projects are movement-based, which helps keep both audiences and artists warm outside. The opening weekend features a new contemporary skating performance from American Ice Theatre. Wear a snowsuit for weekly yoga, also known as frog-yoga: yoga for the planet, and the people, or the weekly dance parties on Sundays (Pollinator Fracy). The festival closes out with community games from Twin Cities Native Lacrosse (Thakápsičapi).

The Art Shanty Projects On-Ice program will take place on Bde Maka Ska/Lake Harriet from Jan. 21 through Feb. 12. Public hours are 10 a.m. – 4 pm every Sat and Sun. Kickboards are available as mobility aids. There will be ASL interpreters and audio describers available daily from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. More specific accessibility information can be found online. There will be a suggested donation of $10-20 at the gate again this season. FFL: http://www.artshantyprojects.org

Open Flow Forum

The Artists with Disabilities Alliance meets via Zoom 7-9 p.m. the first Thu of the month. Upcoming dates are Jan. 5 and Feb. 2. Virtually join artists with disabilities and supporters to share visual art, writing, music, theater and artistic efforts or social justice efforts specific to gaming with Switch/Virtual Reality. FFI: PACER, 952-838-9000, 800-279-9000, 763-559-2237, www.pacer.org

Save the date for gala

Can Do Canines hosts its annual Fetching Ball Gala on Sat, Feb. 25. This year’s event will be held at the Radisson Blu Mall of America, with KARE 11 Reporter/Anchor Rena Sargianopoulos serving as emcee. Enjoy an evening that celebrates the amazing human-assistance dog teams of Can Do Canines. Enjoy dinner, inspiring stories, games, and silent and live auctions—all benefitting the organization. Tickets now available. FFI: candocanines.org/fetchingball

Children and families

PACER workshops sampling

PACER Center offers many useful free or low-cost workshops and other resources for families of children with any disabilities. Some in-person workshops are offered. Other workshops are online and livestreamed at this time. Advance registration is required for all workshops. At least 48 hours notice is needed for interpretation. Check out PACER’s website and link to the newsletter of statewide workshops that allows participants to pick and choose sessions designed for their needs.

Video Game Access: Part One: Xbox/PC is 1-2:30 p.m. Wed, Jan 25 online. In this first of two Video Game Access, learn about devices, software, and accessibility features specific to gaming with Xbox or PC.

Video game Access Part Two: PS4/PS5 is 1-2:15 p.m. Wed, Feb. 8 online. In part two of Video Game Access, you’ll learn about devices, software, and accessibility features specific to gaming with PS4/PS5.

Video Game Access: Part Three: Switch/Virtual Reality is 1-2:15 p.m. Wed, Feb. 22 online. In this part three of Video Game Access, learn about devices, software, and accessibility features specific to gaming with Switch/Virtual Reality. FFL: PACER, 952-638-9000, 800-537-2237, www.pacer.org

Info & Assistance

Help with insulin

Minnesota’s Insulin Safety Net Program provides a pathway to access the life-saving drug. Don’t ration insulin, reduce dosages or delay purchases save money. MINsure and the Minnesota Board of Pharmacy remind Minnesotans that the program provides fast, reliable help for those who need insulin and may be struggling to afford this life-saving drug. The program can help eligible Minnesotans who have less than a seven-day insulin supply, with an immediate 30-day supply. Pay no more than a $35 co-pay, one time per year. Or, long-term help to pay for insulin can be provided. In 2021, over 1,100 Minnesota residents received discounts on their insulin through the program, totaling nearly $6.9 million, but many more are likely eligible for assistance. In 2020, the Minnesota Department of Health estimated that 8.8 percent of adults in Minnesota (about 390,000) had been diagnosed with either Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, with more than 20,000 new cases diagnosed each year. FFI: https://www.mninsulin.org/

Many classes available

NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) has set up a wide variety of free and in-person online mental health classes. Choices include Hope for Recovery, Transitions, Ending the Silence, Understanding Early Episode Psychosis for Families, In Our Own Voice, Family to Family, Positive Psychology, Creating Caring Communities, smoking cessation, a suicide prevention class called QPR – Question, Persuade, Refer, and a QPR class for Agricultural Communities and many more.

Be aware that on Feb. 1, NAMI Minnesota’s Online Support Groups may move to a new and improved platform. HeyPeers, HeyPeers provides a safe, fun, and inclusive environment specifically designed for online support group meetings.

The classes and online support groups are designed for family members and caregivers, persons living with a mental illness, service providers, and also for the general public. Find a complete listing of these classes and how to join in by going to namimn.org and clicking on “Classes” or go straight to https://namimn.org/education-public-awareness/classes/scheduled

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