

Disabilities Committee
Meeting

Jan 11, 2022

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.
Roll Call Taken, following were present:

Kim D Hopewell
Marcia Carnes
Ron Menard
Michael McConville
Patrick Crowley
Edward Ramstrom

Not present

Others Present-
Invited Guest- Michael Edwards
Citizen - Kate Dennis

Chairwoman Hopewell started the meeting by reading Chairman's statement:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of West Boylston Selectboard is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to view this meeting while in progress may do so by:

Call Meeting to Order

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: • Nov.2, 2021 Regular Session:
Mr. McConville moved to approve motion, Mr. Menard second.

Roll Call Vote

Kim D Hopewell - Yes
Marcia Carnes – Yes
Ron Menard – Yes
Michael McConville – Yes
Patrick Crowley – Yes
Edward Ramstrom – Yes

Minutes Approved

- APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: Nov. 30, 2021, Regular Session: --
Roll Call Vote
Not needed for this was not a posted meeting!

Business-

INTRODUCTION OF MICHAEL EDWARDS- Public Services Manager of the Collins Center

I would like to re-introduce Micheal Edwards, Public Services Manager of the Collins Center, Umass Boston. I am quoting from your website here. It is pretty impressive Mike.

The Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management is dedicated to improving efficiency, effectiveness, governance, and accountability at all levels of government, with a particular focus on local and state government. The Center's aim is to enable public entities to provide high quality services to the people they serve on a sustainable basis.

Mike joined the Collins Center in 2020.

He spent more than 11 years serving the City of Auburn, Alabama in the Office of the City Manager, departing as the Budget & Strategic Planning Manager to relocate to New England.

He held primary responsibility for developing and implementing Auburn's \$160M+ biennial operating budget and six-year capital improvement plan, including development of budget documents each biennium earning GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award Program recognition.

A proponent of citizen and staff engagement and collaborative team building, Mike oversaw Auburn's Annual Citizen Survey and was deeply involved in several high-profile cross-departmental initiatives, including a major departmental reorganization/realignment, a comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan and numerous strategic planning efforts centered on public facilities and operations.

During his time in Auburn, he also served as the City's ADA Coordinator and an Adjunct Instructor in the Political Science Department at Auburn University.

Mike is a graduate of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service LEAD Program at the University of Virginia. Mike is going to give us an update and progress report

Updated report on the following;

- a. on the A/D/A Self Evaluation
- b. the Playground Project & Variance
- c. and on moving forward with Transition Plan

so at this point, I am going to turn it over to you Mike. And then have a Q and A for our Commission. This being our 2nd meeting we are new and need to absorb all that we can any information that you can bring to our Commission would be very helpful and very much appreciated. So with that. Here your go. Thank you

Thank you again Mike. We look forward to working with you in the future. And will schedule further meetings with you in the future. Thank you.

To the rest of the Commission we have more to discuss so hang on for a little longer.

Future Business

One of the main duties of a Disabilities Commission is to coordinate or carry out programs in cooperation with departments and agencies in town to accommodate people with disabilities. In the spirit of that we should consider further

CONSIDER ATTENDING A REGIONAL COMMITTEE AND DISABILITY MEETINGS

One of the main duties of the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) is to support and guide municipal Commissions on Disability (CODs). These commissions promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life. They are established by town meeting or city council vote.

I am planning to reach out to Jeffrey Dougan, Assistant Director for Community Services at the Massachusetts Office on Disability to come out and talk to our Commission or to do a Zoom Mtg. If not Marcia and I can do a meeting with him and bring back our information to the board. We are also contacting the Town of Upton's Disabilities Commission for a pow wow to see how they set their goals etc.

(617) 727-7440 ext. 27316 or email Jeff at jeff.dougan@state.ma.us.

All Disability Commissions have Mission Statements which include the date they were approved and the role of the commission.

Ours is as follows;

MISSION STATEMENT-

The West Boylston Disability Commission was created on May 17, 2021, at the Semi- Annual Town Meeting when the Town accepted the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 8J. This section of Massachusetts General Law promotes the inclusion and integration of persons with disabilities in the activities, services and employment opportunities or the community.

Role of the Commission:

- To advise and assist municipal officials in ensuring compliance with federal and state disability laws;
- Review policies and activities of municipal departments and boards as they affect persons with disabilities.
- Provide information, referral, advocacy, and technical assistance to individuals, businesses, and organizations in all matters pertaining to disability.

I have provided a copy of this to the Town Clerk to put on the Town Website as to be consistent with our website policy.

Consider learning more about Disability Non-Discrimination Training

Learn about the training we provide on your obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability rights laws.

Training is available for businesses, employers, municipalities, Massachusetts state agencies, and more.

TRAININGS

1- Employers and Businesses

This training covers obligations under relevant state and federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Topics include:

- Definition of disability
- Reasonable accommodation requests
- Who is a qualified individual with a disability
- Essential job functions
- Confidentiality
- Service animals
- Barrier removal
- Reasonable modifications to policies, practices, or procedures
- Nondiscrimination
- Effective communication
- Accessibility

2- State and Local Governments

This training is offered for:

- Massachusetts state agencies

Municipal officials and staff

- training can be geared towards specific municipal departments if there is enough interest and attendance.

This training covers obligations under relevant state law and federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Topics include:

Employment

- Definition of disability
- Reasonable accommodation requests
- Who is a qualified individual with a disability
- Essential job functions
- Confidentiality

State and Local Government Services

- Programmatic access
- Reasonable modifications of policies, practices, and procedures
- Effective communication
- Nondiscriminatory eligibility criteria
- Administrative requirements
- Holding accessible meetings and events
- Service animals

Customized Training

Training can be customized to meet your needs.

SAMPLE TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Any combination of training for employers, state and local governments, and or businesses
- Service and or assistance animals
- Obligations of colleges and universities
- Fair Housing

Schedule Next Meeting

- Question to set up Bylaws
- Procedures and Goals
- Training

So Marcia and I will do our contacts with the State and the Town of Upton and we will forward the information as it becomes available. If any of you wish to come to these events and it becomes a quorum we will post a meeting. Thank you in advance.

Next meeting was not scheduled at this time, Chairwoman Hopewell will send out several dates to committee members.

Adjourn Meeting

Meeting was adjourned at 7:15

Massachusetts Office on Disability, One Ashburton Place, Room 1305, Boston, MA 02108

Main [617-727-7440](tel:617-727-7440)

This line is open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. M-F. Mass relay: Dial 7-1-1 and connect via main number.

Toll Free [800-322-2020](tel:800-322-2020)

This line is open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. M-F.

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) publishes a variety of informational materials to assist you in understanding your rights, responsibilities, and resources when it comes to disability. Many publications are also designed to assist cities, towns, state agencies, employers, and businesses in meeting their obligations under disability related laws.

Michael McConville
Scribe