

Acton Commission on Disabilities (COD) Minutes - November 19, 2024

Members Present: Joan Burrows, Lisa Franklin, Pesha Kokis, Leslie Johnson, Melissa Wingfield

Members Absent: John Gianetto

Also Present: Jim Snyder-Grant (Select Board Liaison), Wanjiku Gachugi Town Staff, Thom Begin (Assistant Town Manager), and Laura Ducharme (Town Social Worker and part of the Transportation Team).

Meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM.

Public Concerns:

1. The COD received an email from someone in the town asking for transportation resources now that the Taxi Program is no longer running. Melissa (on behalf of the COD) and Laura Ducharme responded to the email. It was suggested he send an email to FinCom, who was having a "Listening Session" about the town budget and what the priorities were.

The June 2024 and September 2024 **minutes were approved** unanimously. There were no minutes for October, as we did not have a quorum. Town clerk was told about this situation.

Laura Ducharme explained her role as Town Social Worker and described the new transportation team, replacing the position of Transportation Director. People can get in touch with her directly with individual issues about the Town transportation, CrossTown Connect. We discussed tips on how to successfully run the vans to the special town meeting. Laura gave her number to call and will coordinate the trips to make sure no one is left behind.

Thom Begin is Acton's Assistant Town Manager. His role is to help different communities coordinate projects, achieve their goals, and help the Town Manager with anything he may need help with. He is visiting Boards and Committees. His current office is on the first floor of Town Hall, next to Wanjiku's office (Julie Pierce's old office).

Jim Snyder-Grant gave the Select Board (SB) update. They have been going over the preliminary town budget and preparing for the special town

meeting next week. Members of the COD had concerns about possible cuts to the transportation in the budget for the coming year. Jim will also let the COD know when he gets notified of new Town Staff hires.

The **COD website** is completely outdated, and does not have features on it that we would like to have. Jim will be working with IT on it, and Melissa and Pesha will work with him.

We unanimously approved the slate of **new officers starting in January 2025**. Lisa will act was Chair, Pesha will be Co-Chair, Leslie will continue as Treasurer, and Joan and Melissa will make up the Secretary position, as we discussed.

Wanjiku is working on creating an email address that will contain all of the Commissioners' personal email addresses.

We voted to make **an official statement at the FinCom budget hearing** tonight. We created the points we wanted to make, for example asking that transportation be considered be an essential service in Acton. Lisa and Pesha will present these points by Zoom at the meeting.

We adjourned at 11:56 AM.