

**TOWN OF AMHERST
COMMITTEE on DISABILITIES MINUTES
Monday, August 12, 2024**

Member Name	Present/ Excused	Member Name	Present/ Excused
Erica Rodman, Chair	Present	Barbara Robertson, Member	Present
David Wantuck, Vice Chair	Present	Susan Zummo, Member	Absent
Rachel Martin, Secretary	Present	Dave Whalen, Member	Absent
Luci Miranda, Member	Absent	Tom Roetzer, Member	Present
Chong Cheng, Member	Present	Jamie Mobberly, Member	Present

Other Participant Name	Present/ Excused	Address if applicable
Town of Amherst Liaison – Angela Marinucci	Absent	N/A
ADA Coordinator – Bob McCarthy	Present	N/A
ADA Coordinator – Doug Gesel	Absent	N/A
*Bill Prenevau – Building Department	Present	N/A
Interpreter – Miriam	Present	N/A
Interpreter – Barbara	Present	N/A
Secretary to the Council Members – Martha Taggart	Present for Intro	N/A

Guests:

David Willer, Director of IT, Town of Amherst - Joined by Phone

Andrea Morgante, Member of Amherst Concerned Citizens Group

*Bill Prenevau will be filling in for Doug Gesel permanently

The meeting was called to order at 6:34pm.

I. Minutes

- a. June minutes reviewed.
- b. June minutes approved as read
 - i. David Wantuck – first
 - ii. Chong Cheng – second
 - iii. All in favor

II. Accessibility Reminder – reviewed at the beginning of the meeting

- a. Please use the hand button on Zoom
- b. Please share your name before speaking each time.
- c. When passing a motion, please state your name before saying “first” or “second”.

- d. If you are sharing your screen, please read what is on your screen for those who are not able to visually experience what is on the screen.

III. **Guest Speaker**

- a. Dave Willer, IT Department
 - i. Dave assists the committee to make sure items are posted to the Town website
 - ii. Dave also assisted with updates to the sound equipment for the Town Board Meetings.
 - 1. Adjustments were made to the speaker system
 - 2. Written notices for how to make things more accessible during meetings with tips
 - a. Improvement seems to be happening, but continually looking to improve.
 - 3. Upgraded the assisted listening devices. Available at every meeting for those who request the technology.
 - a. Testing has not been done yet, but Dave said they would be open to testing.
 - 4. Erica shared a suggestion of having a video of both the speaker and the board (split screen).
 - a. They don't have this capability yet. They do have a backup camera in case they need it.
 - 5. Erica said another option could be live captioning services (CART) during meetings. Noted that when they are live streamed on YouTube, there is captioning, but it is often inaccurate. Bob McCarthy said they would be willing to explore this option.
 - 6. David Wantuck pointed out that any person can benefit from the more accurate transcription CART can provide.
 - 7. Guest Andrea Morgante – agreed that there have been improvements. Asked that the availability of the accessibility items be shared with Town residents i.e. in the agenda so that people know they can request them. David Wantuck suggested it be shared in the beginning of the Board meetings in the House Rules. Suggestion was taken and will be followed up on.
 - iii. Town of Amherst Website – Committee on Disabilities section
 - 1. Erica explained that in looking at other town websites, we found some good practices related to accessibility of websites and asked what our capabilities are to upgrade our own webpage.
 - a. Dave explained we are on a 2-3 year cycle for updating websites (content, style, etc) and always looking to make improvements.
 - i. He said we can send suggestions, updates, changes, etc. and he'd work on the suggestions with the committee.

2. Erica suggested the committee look at the website again and make suggestions – share with Erica. She had some suggestions to share of things that could be linked and old articles that could be removed.

IV. Old Business

- a. Health Fair – Tabling Event – July 27th
 - i. Sue, Chong, and Dave Whalen attended along with Erica
 - ii. Marty provided print materials.
 - iii. Thank you to all who assisted!
 - iv. Barb asked what the most popular thing was that people wanted to know about. Erica said it was a mixed bag – a lot of service dog interest, resources for people who are aging with disabilities, questions about service animal access from community businesses.
- b. Video Remote Interpreting for Town Facilities
 - i. David Wantuck is working on a communication for the Town Board with useful information about VRI and what the committee is requesting. Will share when ready.

V. New Business

- a. Future Guests and Projects
 - i. Emergency Management – Brandon Peters – Confirmed for September
 - ii. Chief of Police – Chief Chamberlin – Confirmed for October
 - iii. Highway Superintendent - Steve Floss – Pending Invite for November
- b. Preparing for Brandon Peters' Visit in September
 - i. Winter preparedness/awareness
 - ii. Last year there was an emergency preparedness event tabled by Rachel and Luci
 1. Recommendation for handouts explaining how people can be better prepared for emergencies, how to contact different important entities, etc.
 - iii. Bob recommended having Tom Merrill (Deputy Senior Fire Dispatcher) be a guest at a meeting – he is in charge of all dispatch in TOA.
 1. Suggested topic concerning emergency dispatch capabilities of identifying households that have disabled residents in case of emergency. This is an option in TOA, and it would be a resource to share with the community.

VI. Upcoming Meetings

- a. September 9, 2024 @ 6:30 pm on Zoom
- b. October 7, 2024 @ 6:30 pm on Zoom
- c. November 4, 2024 @ 6:30 pm on Zoom
- d. No meeting in December

VII. Closing

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:34 pm
 - i. Motion to adjourn
 - 1. Erica – first
 - 2. Barbara Robertson – second
 - 3. All in favor