

BRAINTREE COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
Fletcher Hall Meeting Room, Town Hall
1 John F. Kennedy Memorial Drive, Braintree MA
Monday, April 1, 2019, 6:30 p.m.

IN ATTENDANCE: Lynn Vaillancourt, Vice Chairman
Mary Russo, Member
Crystal Evans-Pradhan, Treasurer

NOT PRESENT: Meredith Lincoln, Chairman
Robin Torpey, Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Marybeth McGrath, Director of ML & I
Kristina Ziniti, ADA Coordinator

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Vaillancourt at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of February 4, 2019 were reviewed.

Motion made by Crystal Evans-Pradhan to approve the meeting minutes of February 4, 2019. Motion seconded by Mary Russo. The motion passed by a 3-0-0 vote.

Public Meeting on Closed Captioning:

Andrew Marron from the Mayor's office was present to discuss closed captioning, as well as the town website. He stated they have discussed closed captioning with BCAM. Under FCC guidelines they are exempt from having to provide this service as they bring in less than \$2 million a year. He stated through the town's website vendor, CivicPlus, they have a module called CivicClerk that can be layered onto BCAM's feed and provide captions based on the agenda items through artificial intelligence. They are currently looking into this and at this time are on the ground level. He stated there is a cost associated with this service.

Vice Chairman Vaillancourt asked what other local towns use this platform. Mr. Marron stated he does not have a local sampling, but will look into this. Vice Chairman Vaillancourt asked if the agenda comes up on a separate screen or is it superimposed on the video. Mr. Marron stated it will be a dual screen. Ms. Evans-Pradhan stated the town of Lowell is looking into a similar system and asked if this is the same system. Mr. Marron stated it does not appear to be the same system but he will be contacting them for further information.

Audience member Karen Cobb asked if the town would be eligible for a grant to cover some of the cost. Mr. Marron stated he has not identified any grants at this point but would welcome suggestions. Ms. Evans-Pradhan stated the Mass Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing may have something available, or perhaps something at the federal level. Mr. Marron stated he would be better able to provide pricing at a future meeting, but just for the agenda based system the approximate cost would be \$20,000 a year. He stated there is the option of live captioning or post captioning, which would be less expensive. Vice Chairman Vaillancourt asked if Braintree would be looking at post captioning, as not all of the town meetings are shown live. Mr. Marron asked for feedback from the Commission members on this question.

Ms. Evans-Pradhan asked if there is any technology that would provide live streaming during a meeting. Mr. Marron stated he is not sure at this point. Ms. Evans-Pradhan wondered if this system could be used as a live CART, as this would be beneficial in general. Vice Chairman Vaillancourt asked how many public meetings are presently shown live on BCAM. Mr. Marron stated primarily the Town Council. Ms. McGrath stated the Planning Board may be shown live at times, as well as School Committee.

Vice Chairman Vaillancourt stated once they know what CivicPlus actually covers they should determine what the cost would be at various levels, as well as what grants may be available. She stated the important thing would be to cover all of the governmental and public meetings, with live coverage if possible. If not, to provide post production availability for those who cannot make it to the meeting, and perhaps eliminate the need for an interpreter.

Ms. Cobb stated an interpreter is not a substitute for CART. An interpreter uses American sign language, which is different than CART. She stated this may seem cost effective, but will not serve both equally. Ms. Evans-Pradhan stated there is an older deaf population who were never taught written English, so CART is not helpful for them. Another benefit to captioning is for English as a second language individuals, who may be able to read English. It was agreed that Mr. Marron would work with Ms. Ziniti and provide an update to the Commission in July.

Ms. Evans-Pradhan asked if the town is working on providing assistance for vision impaired individuals when a slide show is presented at a public meeting. Ms. Ziniti stated she is currently working on gathering information from each department on how they provide services. She will then meet with each department head to identify weaknesses and strengths. Ms. Evans-Pradhan recommended reaching out to R-TAG, an organization that advises the MBTA on transportation issues that affect people with disabilities, as they have experience with providing services for large meetings.

Review Action Items from February Meeting:

1. Purchase wheelchair carriers for BFD/BPD: Ms. Ziniti stated this is currently being reviewed by the Town Solicitor. The Fire Department has expressed interest in three carriers. The Police Chief is not interested in this time as their vehicles would not accommodate the carriers.

2. Benches in South Braintree Square: Ms. Ziniti stated in the Commission's packet are photographs of the picnic tables to be installed between the Yogurt Bar and Southside Tavern, as well as the proposed benches. Ms. McGrath stated the benches will be made of composite material and have already been purchased. Ms. Evans-Pradhan expressed concern that the arms of the benches are rounded and may provide difficulty for people with limited mobility to push themselves off. Vice Chairman Vaillancourt stated that having a curve actually assists many people so they can lean easier. A curved item allows for different heights to put your hand on and more surface area to push off. Ms. Cobb asked what the height of the benches would be. Vice Chairman Vaillancourt stated the standard height for any type of seat is 18", with a possible 2 inch +/- adjustment. Ms. Cobb provided detailed measurement information required under ADA standards. Vice Chairman Vaillancourt stated the town is only considering purchasing tables that are ADA compliant. Ms. Evans-Pradhan recommended having umbrellas for shade with the proposed picnic table.
3. Accessibility photo campaign: Vice Chairman Vaillancourt stated discussion of this item was tabled until all Commission members were available. As they do not have a full Commission at this meeting she recommended tabling this discussion once again. She asked members to have ideas ready for the next meeting so they can have this discussion.
4. Special education busses being passed while stop sign active and lights flashing: Ms. Ziniti stated they are still trying to setup a meeting with Dr. Hackett and Police Chief Shastany, and possibly the transportation director, to start a conversation on this issue and develop an action plan.
5. Sound amplification system for public meeting rooms: Ms. Ziniti stated the amplification system the Commission agreed to fund for the three meeting rooms is moving forward. A PO has been given to Andrew Marron and he is proceeding with the approval process. Ms. McGrath indicated the expenditure has been voted on by the Commission by not yet spent, pending the approval process.

Announcements/Information:

Vice Chairman Vaillancourt asked about the status of the painting of the utility box in South Braintree Square. Ms. McGrath stated the Commission would have to decide what they would like to put on the box and the design would have to be approved by Traffic Advisory Committee.

Karen Cobb stated that some tactile plates in Braintree have been damaged by snow plows and she asked if they would be repaired. Vice Chairman Vaillancourt stated they will discuss this with the Department of Public Works and provide information at the next meeting.

Motion by Crystal Evans-Pradhan to adjourn the Commission on Disabilities meeting at 7:29 p.m. Motion seconded by Mary Russo. Unanimously voted.