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Gary Christenson, Mayor

Disability Commission Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2026

Attendance:

✓	Amanda Belles, Chair
✓	Marilyn Andrews
✓	Shanti Chilukuri
✓	Kate Doyle
✓	Chukwuka Ezewuzie
✓	Kathleen Higgins
✓	Ralph Long (late)
	Lisa Picardi
✓	Maria Luise (ADA Compliance Officer) (in-person)

Members of the Disability Commission present participated in the meeting remotely per the Governor's legislation of March 28, 2025, suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law. A Microsoft Teams link was also provided for members of the public who wished to attend

This meeting was also recorded through Microsoft Teams and called to order at 6:15PM.

1. Roll call of Committee Members

Amanda Belles started the meeting and mentioned that it would be conducted in person with a remote option in accordance with the Governor's orders and would be recorded via Microsoft Teams. She then called attendance as indicated in the chart above and a quorum was present to conduct business. Each member gave a self-description when responding to roll call. Michelle Luong, representing the Malden Lions Club, was also in attendance.

2. Amanda introduced Michelle Luong to the Commission and explained that she would be taking this new business out of order on the Agenda.

Michelle reported that on behalf of the Lions Club she wanted to announce that the Club had \$3,000 available in their budget which they hoped to use in partnership with the Disability Commission. The goal is to create a dedicated room at the library for the visually impaired.

Amanda suggested that Chuks, who has been working on related projects for the Commission, be designated the member to coordinate with Michelle and the Lions Club. Upon motion of Kate H., which was seconded by Maria, the Commission voted to have Chuks serve as point person.

Kate H. recommended reframing the language to make the room inclusive, suggesting it be dedicated to assistive equipment rather than exclusively for the visually impaired, and Chuks proposed naming it the 'Access Room' to reflect broader accessibility. Michelle Luong also stated that the Lions Club is committed to adding new equipment annually to the room, depending on future fundraising, and looked forward to future collaboration with the Commission.

3. Approval of the November 2025 Meeting Minutes

The November minutes were distributed late so members needed more time to review. Upon the motion of Maria to table the November 2025 Meeting Minutes, seconded by Chuks, the Commission voted unanimously by roll call vote to table the minutes.

4. Election of the Chair

Amanda announced her intention to step down as chair, and Chuks volunteered to take on the role. Upon motion of Maria to nominate Chuks for the Chair position, seconded by both Marilyn and Kate H., the Commission voted unanimously by roll call vote to elect Chuks as Chair of the Commission. Amanda stated that she would support Chuks during the transition by meeting to review responsibilities, transfer the email account, and answer any questions to ensure continuity for the Commission. For the vice chair position, the group agreed to postpone the election to the February meeting, allowing members time to consider nominations.

5. Updates or Action Items that need to be Addressed from Previous Meetings

- **Blue Envelope Legislation:** Marilyn Andrews provided an update on the draft letter supporting the Blue Envelope initiative. She sent a copy to Maria and Amanda. There was discussion about who should sign the letter. Amanda recommended using the Commission's name and the mayor's signature, and Marilyn agreed to update the letter accordingly. She will forward the final draft.
- **The Grit Freedom Chair:** Amanda informed the Commission that the all-terrain wheelchair ("GRIT Freedom Chair") that was secured with the Reeve Foundation grant was presented to the School Committee on December 8th. The wheelchair is now housed at the Beebe School but can be used whenever needed for city programs.
- **All Abilities Bird Walk:** Kate D. updated the Commission on the upcoming spring all-abilities bird walk and resource fair, noting that Darren Josey and "Nature Man Mike" secured six grant-supported walks before June 30th and requested input on suitable dates from the Commission.

5. New Business

- Amanda introduced a request from the Friends of the Fells for the Commission's involvement in a feasibility study for an accessible trail. Commission members expressed interest and suggested notifying the organizers of their willingness to participate and provide input.

- Maria announced the receipt of a grant from the Mass Office of Disability to upgrade high school bathrooms with accessible sinks and is working with Eric to obtain quotes and begin the project.
- Chuks informed the Commission about World Braille Day and offered to share information with all members and possibly post it on the Commission's website.

6. Public Comment

No one spoke for public comment.

7. Scheduling of next meeting and adjournment

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 6:00PM.

Upon the motion of Maria to adjourn, which was seconded by Ralph, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at **7:20PM**.