



Hingham Commission on Disabilities

DATE: Wednesday, January 21, 2026

TIME: 7:00 pm

PLACE: Remote meeting

Members Remote: Stephanie Gertz, Chair; Emma Lee, Jane McGrath, Amy Muldoon

Absent: Shannon Burke, Jessica Foley

Call to Order

At 7:38 pm, Chair Gertz called the meeting to order, read the Open Meeting Law statement, and asked if anyone is recording the meeting. The Town of Hingham is recording the meeting.

Review of December Minutes

MOTION: J. McGrath moved and A. Muldoon seconded to approve the December meeting minutes.

ROLL CALL VOTE: S. Gertz, aye; E. Lee, aye; J. McGrath, aye; A. Muldoon, aye

MOTION CARRIES: 4-0

ADA Officer Report (Americans with Disabilities Act)

This item was continued until a future meeting.

Town Meeting Report

ACTION: J. McGrath will edit the draft report for review by the Commission on Disabilities.

Update on Ideas for Accessibility Purchases

Members discussed offering to purchase an OWL system for the Library at a maximum cost of \$1,800.

ACTION: S. Gertz will contact the Library to see if there is interest.

Smile Mass (Small Miracles in Life Exist) grant for a floating, beach wheelchair

A. Muldoon confirmed with Mark Thorell from the Recreation Department that lifeguards are at the beach but he is not sure how available they would be for assistance with the floating device, due to other responsibilities in their role. A Trustee, Ed Johnson had connected and phone tag and email back and forth are starting. We are working on steps to confirm if Trustees can meet what the criteria is if a grant is approved. If so, a floating device could potentially be provided free of charge to the Commission. Further information is expected at the next meeting.

A wheelchair accessible picnic table has not been seen for one or two summers and may be stored in the old bathing storehouse. We will try to locate it before the Commission makes a further expenditure. If necessary, the Trace's Program could possibly build a wooden substitute.

ACTION: S. Gertz will prepare a list of accessibility tools offered at the Library and request permission to post the list to the Commission's web page.

Ideas for New Projects in 2026

1. **Awareness Follow-up** - Teach communication awareness in the schools using videos of differently abled dogs such as Cole, the deaf dog, and Piglet, the deaf and blind dog, who use other senses to compensate. This could teach children resilience and better understanding of disabilities.

- a. Cole lives in New Jersey. The family is only available during the Summer months. Cole responds to sign language. Children can make noise which does not bother the dog.
 - b. There is an on-line price list for Piglet who lives in Connecticut. **ACTION:** J. McGrath will try to locate a disabled dog closer to Hingham through Working Dog Foundation or NEADS Inc.
2. E. Lee reported on accessibility of desks at her school.
- The Math class has white board desks with detached chairs for use by someone in a wheelchair.
 - Other classes have desks with attached chairs that are inaccessible to a student in a wheelchair or students of various sizes.
 - The Special Education class has tables with detached chairs. Some of the Science labs have tables and stools or desks with attached chairs.
- ACTION:** E. Lee will obtain the number of desks with attached chairs for all classrooms.
ACTION: A. Muldoon will learn the cost of accessible desks.
The Commission may ask the Town to obtain a grant from the Massachusetts Office of Disabilities.

Community Questions & Town Outreach - J. McGrath will attend the MBTA Communities meeting.

Next Meeting Date - Wednesday, February 11 or 25. **ACTION:** S. Gertz will poll S. Burke for availability.

Matters not anticipated by the Chair within 48 hours of the meeting

- Members confirmed that Ballot voting is preferable to the Standing vote at Town Meeting.
- Members will discuss participation in the July 4th Parade at the February meeting.
- J. McGrath shared the high school Graduation accessibility plans with members. Everyone approved.

Adjourn

MOTION: J. McGrath moved and A. Muldoon seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Unanimously approved.

MOTION CARRIES: 4-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary