



Hingham Commission on Disabilities

DATE: Wednesday, April 15, 2026

TIME: 7:00 pm

PLACE: Remote meeting

Members Remote: Stephanie Gertz, Chair; Jessica Foley, Emma Lee, Jane McGrath

Absent: Shannon Burke, Amy Muldoon

Call to Order

At 7:19 pm, Jessica Foley called the meeting to order, read the Open Meeting Law statement and acknowledged that no one is recording the meeting. The Town of Hingham is recording the meeting.

Review of March Minutes

MOTION: J. Foley moved and J. McGrath seconded approving the March meeting minutes.

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

MOTION CARRIES: 4-0

ADA Officer Report (Americans with Disabilities Act) - This will be discussed at a future meeting.

Report/Progress from Other Committees

Human Rights Commission - Bystander Intervention training was fantastic! Free training is still available.

Update on Ideas for Accessibility Purchases

S. Gertz reported on responses from Cohasset and Scituate libraries as to their experiences using the OWL system to record meetings. Both had success using OWL which was a "light lift" to train committee members to operate. New users must visit the library during the day to test the system operation. The Hingham Library Director rejected the request for the Commission to purchase the OWL system for recording public meetings to make a hybrid format accessible to residents. The reason given was that the library does not have available Staff to support the OWL system. The Director is not open to discussion.

COD Grant award - Members discussed developing a COD grant opportunity using COD funds.

ACTION: S. Gertz will investigate State Legislature laws regarding authority or limits of a Commission.

ACTION: J. McGrath will obtain defined language for how the COD funds are to be used.

ACTION: Members will bring grant ideas to the next meeting.

Town Meeting Report

Members attending Town Meeting were encouraged to check accessibility features in other rooms. Features in the Main Room are excellent.

A resident complained there is no remote option to Town Meeting. The meeting is live streamed but allows only in-person voting. **ACTION:** S. Gertz will forward the complaint to Town Meeting personnel.

GAR Building Elevator - There will be a vote to make the elevator in the building accessible.

2026 Project Update

Accessibility Survey - E. Lee summarized the 7 responses received. The Survey did not contain a deadline. There were no responses from Staff or Teachers. The demographic was split between parents, students, and a few community members with 57% who do not have a disability, 42% who do have a disability.

- Question: Is it hard to move around the school building? 57% said yes; 42% said no.

- Question: With an injury, did the school feel accessible? 57% said they had no injury. Many said that with an injury, there could be improvements.

The Survey was obscured at the bottom of Dr. Buckley's "Monday Message".

Members discussed suggestions to improve responses to the Survey:

- On Monday, April 27, ask Dr. Buckley to include an introductory paragraph suggesting people scroll down to view the Accessibility Survey and include the May 8th deadline.
- **ACTION:** E. Lee will reach out to Student Council, Unity Council, and the Strategy teacher for ideas on how to communicate the Accessibility Survey to secure a more robust student response.
- **ACTION:** S. Gertz will reach out to Dr. Buckley.

Community Questions & Town Outreach

Public Safety Building - A resident reported that there was no pushbutton entry door plate to access the Public Safety Building. At the time of inspection, the door was in compliance of the code. New accessibility guidance was released on July 1. The Town is eager to make the door compliant. Members expressed gratitude for the Town's cooperation.

MOTION: J. McGrath moved and J. Foley seconded to approve that the Commission supports installation of an elevator in the GAR building.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Unanimously approved.

MOTION CARRIES: 4-0

Next Meeting Date - Wednesday, May 20 based on availability of members.

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

State Meeting Report - S. Gertz attended. The State will forward a handout. Another meeting will be held in October. MA Office of Disability is committed to helping Town Commissions to be successful.

Chairs of Boards and Committees Update - Chairs were invited to give a 2-minute presentation of their charter and updates on May 13. **ACTION:** S. Gertz will notify members of the place and time.

COD web site - Members discussed distribution at the Scituate Accessibility event of the COD magnets containing the QR code for the COD web site.

J. McGrath attended the Transportation Accessibility meeting. Members agreed to engage with the Commission on Disability to improve transportation accessibility for Hingham residents. Members discussed availability of the Senior Center shuttle van. **ACTION:** This will be discussed at a future meeting.

July 4th Parade - The OLaughlin family will not be walking with the Commission. J. Foley will be available.

ACTION: J. McGrath will reach out to other families.

ACTION: J. McGrath will find out the deadline for participating in the Parade.

ACTION: S. Gertz will investigate availability of the carts.

Adjourn

MOTION: J. McGrath moved and J. Foley seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 pm.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Unanimously approved.

MOTION CARRIES: 4-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud, Recording Secretary