

## WHATCOM COUNTY - AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

### MEETING SUMMARY

Date: Tuesday June 7, 2022; 1:00-2:00 PM  
Location: Virtual Meeting (via Zoom)

#### **Committee Members Present:**

Mark Challender  
Paul Glasser  
John Radwanski  
Rebecca Xczar, County Assessor

#### **ADA Coordinators and County Representatives:**

Karen Hemmett, ADA Coordinator, HR Rep  
Bea Acland, HR Rep  
Julie Smith, HR Office Coordinator  
Trevor Speidel, Facilities Spec. Projects Coordinator  
Rob Ney, Facilities Project and Operations Manager

#### **Guest Speakers**

Mike Sweeney, Hearing Loss Assn of America  
Louis Touchette, Hearing Loss Assn of America  
Kristin Nguyen, Cascade Connections Vocational Administrator

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- 1. Welcome, roll call, meeting instructions** (Karen Hemmett)
  - 2. Committee Member Introductions**
  - 3. Whatcom County Facilities Report:** (Rob Ney)

#### **Courthouse Restrooms Accessibility Issues**

- Rob shared a PowerPoint presentation showing the entrance doors to restrooms
- Due to amount of space (11 inches) to the side of each door and the buildings existing structure, wheelchair access is hindered.
- Rob asked the Committee to share ideas on how to resolve or improve issues
  - Mark Chandler: Recommends push button openers, but advises to ensure the heights are set appropriately. Also suggested to have one for both doors if there is a double door entrance so one doesn't have to stop in middle to push another button. Also suggested battery powered ones.
    - John Radwanski agreed
    - Paul Glasser agreed and recommended round buttons

#### **Judge Chambers and Courtrooms**

- Hardware issues going into courtrooms have been identified and crash bars have been purchased.
- Having an architect recommend accessibility improvements in courtrooms.

#### **Follow up Regarding Elevator Ramp Project in rotunda**

Mike Chandler asked Rob if there were updates on the project. Rob suggested they meet at the courthouse to discuss and will report back any updates at a later meeting.

#### **4. Hearing Loss Association of America – Whatcom Chapter (Mike Sweeney)**

- Mission: To open the world of communication to people of hearing loss by providing support, education, information, and advocacy.
- Mike shared a PowerPoint presentation which covered group objectives including requesting various public places and entities to adopt loop technology, closed captioning, and other hearing assistance tools.
- Group meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at 9:30a.m.  
Website: <https://www.hearingloss.org>

#### **5. Cascade Connections Vocational Opportunities (Kristin Nguyen)**

- This organization creates vocational opportunities for persons with disabilities and has created 1015 jobs in our community.
- It is not a charity, but assists in getting to know clients as well as potential employers to help find not only accessible work but customizable positions for persons with disabilities. Asks employers to think outside the box to allow more job opportunities to those with disabilities.
- The organization offers job coaching, technology assistance, access to interpreters etc.

#### **6. Public Comments**

- Joel Bergsbaken (Hearing Speech and Deaf Center) – This group helps people with all levels of hearing loss.
  - Access to immediate interpretation services is often a barrier for people and they have to reschedule visits for weeks out. This group has worked with multiple municipalities to offer on demand video interpretations services, which allows for immediate assistance.
  - There is a challenge w/ getting looping technology at the senior center. There are grants available but the center is run by the city of Bellingham and the building is owned by the county, which makes things challenging. Would like to advocate for loop technology there.
- Louis Touchette – Has asked in other court buildings before for hearing assistance devices. The devices were available, but it wasn't known or advertised. They had to be asked for. Louis has seen no signage or verbiage of any assistance offered by Whatcom County either.

#### **7. Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 7, 2022**

#### **8. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM**