

## **Committee on Disabilities: What It Means and How to Start One**

The committee is appointed by the legislators. They can determine the number of committee members. Committee members should receive an official letter from a legislator noting their appointment. You may be requested to go to the clerk's office and take an oath. You are now acting under the auspices of a municipal government. You will need to ensure minutes are taken, recorded, and posted on the municipality's website or in another formal capacity. Be accurate but be conscientious as to the direction discussions take. Set your agenda in advance (preferably three days) and post that. The municipality should have a contact person for web postings. Your agenda should be consistent with your minutes in that you are focusing on the select areas of need or purpose and following up with these items. Agenda items will be consistent with other contents of this training.

A legislative representative should be appointed as liaison to the committee. They are not a committee member, they represent the municipality. They will take back both the issues and the advice the committee provides to the Board. As a relationship develops, they will use you as a point of reference. They may seek out resources, information on any and all matters relative to the disability community, and will ask for direction on certain pieces of legislation. This is ultimately your committee's GOAL.

The committee should meet monthly and determine a set day and time. This should be posted on the site. Your meetings are open to the public, anyone can attend. Conduct needs to be professional and topics need to stick to the agenda. You may have to refocus members if they go on tangents or bring up personal items. Any topic that directly affects a member calls for that member to be dismissed while the topic is being discussed. The meetings are NOT complaint sessions. They are to be consistent with the intent of bettering services to residents with disabilities. You are advisory in nature. Your purpose is to advise the legislators and the departments within on matters that affect individuals with disabilities. This can include compliance, or lack thereof, with state and federal regulations, accessibility/universal design concerns, event planning, recreational/leisure opportunities, first responder matters, parks, and any other progressive initiative or project. These topics are contained within this manual and built into the training you have received. Some areas may call for further

research beyond this context or you can contact the trainer for advice on any further information needed. Some departments, such as Fire and Police, have specific trainings beyond what is provided.

Your committee should consider inviting the heads of the departments that are most involved in the disability community. This would include Recreation, Human Resources, Police, Emergency Services, Senior Services, and Highway.

A year end report should be presented at an end of year Board meeting. You may also want to do a mid-year report, however, we recommend only if there are pressing issues.

### Committee Flow chart

1. Resolution establishing the committee
2. Board appoints committee members
  - A. Official notification received
  - B. Register at Clerk's office, take oath
3. Committee comes together
  - A. Identify Chairperson
  - B. Set day of week/time of meeting
4. Committee agenda
  - A. Establish items of purpose and need
  - B. Is specific and is adhered to
5. Minutes
  - A. Taken and recorded
  - B. Approved and then posted
  - C. Referenced for next agenda
6. Posting
  - A. Committee members
  - B. Agendas
  - C. Meeting dates/times
  - D. Minutes
7. Board presentations
  - A. Year-end report
  - B. As needed per topics and/or mid year