

Annual Report of the Lowell Commission on Disability

FY 2020 - 2021

Overview of Commission:

The Lowell Commission on Disability serves as an advisor to the city regarding matters of disability effecting the community. The purpose of the Commission is to work to improve the lives of all people with disabilities. The commission seeks to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in the social, economic, and political life of the city.

Members

Beth Brassel Chair

Sebastian Nash Vice Chair

Erica Harvey Secretary

Ron Lassman Treasurer

Dave Conway City Council representative

Janelle Diaz

David Feehan

Bill Mellen

Michael Des Roches

Narrative

The commission began the 2020 – 2021 year having lost several members and having gained new members. Additionally, we were faced with regrouping in the midst of a growing pandemic. Despite the above, the commission was able to meet, have productive discussions and begin planning new projects.

Meetings

The commission met every month on the second Thursday July 2020 through June 2021

Ongoing Projects

The commission worked on several projects during the year. These included:

- purchasing PPE for first responders
- researching the logistics of offering scholarships for Lowell students with disabilities who are pursuing higher education
- reimbursing Lowell Telecommunications Corporation for the cost of closed captioning for municipal meetings
- creating a survey to better understand the needs of people with disabilities in the city of Lowell
- working with the city's elections department to improve accessibility at the polls
- meeting with LRTA to discuss ways to improve access to transportation for people with disabilities

Completed Projects

The commission provided funding to Lowell Telecommunications Corporation to cover the cost of closed captioning thus helping enhance the accessibility of municipal meetings. The commission purchased clear fronted masks for first responders hoping to improve the ability of first responders to communicate with individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or who rely on seeing a person's face to understand verbal exchanges.

Expenditures

The commission spent \$12,939.00 to reimburse Lowell Telecommunications Corporation for the cost of closed captioning. Additionally, the commission spent \$1,589.65 to purchase PPE for first responders.

The Lowell Commission on Disability is grateful for the support it has received from the city and looks forward to a productive 2021-2022.