



MEETING MINUTES  
Benton County Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC)  
September 17, 2020

The meeting of the Benton County Accessible Communities Advisory Committee was held by WebEx at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 17, 2020. Present at the meeting were committee members Brenda Chilton, Chair, Matt Nash, Vice-Chair, Amanda Hatfield (County Elections Manager), Luz Rupp (Chaplain for Benton County Corrections), Judith Davis, Teresa Payne, and Deidra Beck (Committee Coordinator). Present and assisting us with our WebEx virtual and public access were Cody Shelton and Alex Garcia from Benton County Information Technologies.

Brenda Chilton opened the meeting at 2:03 p.m.

Deidra Beck introduced our new method of virtual meetings and the capability of providing public access by the assistance of using WebEx and the County's public meeting phone line. Utilizing this capability allows our meetings to be open and available to the public. The links for the public to join our meetings virtually or by phone are accessed on the ACAC page of the Benton County Website under ACAC Agendas & Meetings. Brenda stated that we would continue to use this method as long as Benton County remains closed to the public due to COVID19 restrictions, however, perhaps we could investigate a hybrid model so that, once the County is cleared to open meetings in person, we could all meet together and still provide video access for public viewing. This would also make it possible for members to virtually participate in the meetings when they are unable to physically attend.

Brenda updated the committee regarding a grant and her budget appropriation request to the County on ACAC's behalf. A budget revision is necessary with an expense line item for anticipated expenditures. She stated that she had requested an appropriation of \$30,000 in both revenue and expenditures for the 2021-2022 biennium in anticipation of applying for and receiving approximately \$15,000 per year in grants. Of course, if we do not receive the grant, those appropriations cannot be used. Or, if we were to receive a lesser amount, we would only be able to expend the amount actually received. This request, if granted, would be reserved for projects that we may have in the future.

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As discussed in our August meeting, Washington state's Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) had sent an email notification about their intention to develop an All County Virtual ACAC meeting. Deidra is in contact with Elain Stefanowicz, their Program Coordinator, and has expressed our interest in participating. Once this meeting's details (date and time) are decided, Brenda, Matt, and Deidra will represent Benton County's ACAC in the beginning. After learning details and experiencing how this meeting works, they will inform this committee, and, if it is successful, others that desire to participate will be encouraged to do so.

Deidra shared about the videos that we had learned about during our last meeting which were submitted to the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ADA Celebration. After unsuccessful attempts to share the videos during our virtual meeting, Deidra promised to send the link to the committee with the September meeting minutes. Teresa Payne submitted a video, and although it did not get included in the ADA web posting, Deidra promised to find access to it and to send it along with the other videos.

The Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) has sent an invitation to our ACAC with information for applying for open positions on their committee. Matt Nash shared his experience as a member. Although he had only begun his membership as the COVID19 restrictions began, he is already a part of the Community Outreach Subcommittee. He reported that the committee strives to have very diverse membership with a wide scope of disability experiences or exposures. One event that they hold is an annual Employers Awards event. After accepting nominations, businesses are awarded according to those that have excelled at employing persons with both physical and mental disabilities. Besides the awards event, they provide training and technical assistance to business and employers to help them employ persons with disabilities. In addition, this committee oversees all of the ACAC's in the state, monitors legislators and legislation for laws proposed, and they weigh-in with advice and suggestions as well as advise the Governor, Legislators, and state agencies on Disability issues and awareness. Matt highly encouraged that if anyone is interested in applying for membership, they should begin to do so sooner than later because the application process is very involved. The due date is mid-October, and the application requires several references and resumes.

Brenda offered that if anyone interested in applying needs a reference, she would be happy to provide a letter of reference for them. Brenda requested that Deidra forward the GCDE membership application information to the staff member that handles the Auditor’s social media sites and to the County to post on their social media.

Our last month’s speaker, Donna Tracy, with the ARC of the Tri-Cities had promised to connect us with Darla (last name currently unknown) who is developing an application where restaurants can post their ‘autistic friendly’ accommodations. Deidra has had contact her and will continue to reach out to her for more information.

Brenda thanked Matt for his involvement in the GCDE and mentioned that Matt had volunteered to help at the Benton County Voting Center during this General Election cycle. She also expressed her excitement for Teresa who now has a new job at the Federal Building’s Opportunity Kitchen. Congratulations to Teresa.

Deidra reported that she is still keeping in contact with Bryan Bailey about the Prosser High School football stadium and their interest in our Site Evaluation once the school is again open, and that she will continue to reach out to Access4All Spokane to invite one of them as one of our meeting speakers in 2021.

Brenda mentioned that it would be good to reach out to members that had not been present in last few of our meetings. Deidra agreed to do so on the committee’s behalf.

Our next meeting is scheduled for October 15, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. We will again be meeting virtually by the WebEx link that the County IT department sets up for us, and Deidra will send the link to the committee one week prior to that date. As a reminder, there is no need for each committee member to acquire their own WebEx access.

Brenda, adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

