

Act 133 Working Group Meeting [Hybrid]- 20251009_100348-Meeting Recording

October 9, 2025, 2:03PM

1h 37m 31s

● **Pajala, Kelly** started transcription

ML **Mareike Larsen** 0:08

Thank you so much.

● 0:10

Yes.

I've got the recording started.

If we don't get this computer started?

I'm going to have to go get my computer but it's currently being.

This is Lauren.

I'm having computer problems and an IT person is currently working on my computer.

And we also are having TV issues so.

If I'll have to either be with Jenny or she can do that or I will go up and check on the status of my computer which would be ideal?

But we'll we'll have to see.

Again.

OK.

Maybe we should go ahead and vanguard our friends and Oh yeah let's see if we can.

Right.

Let's try that again.

I'll see if I can.

We're gonna maybe change rooms here at 1:28.

This is a real time example.

Yeah right.

Of our intrusion of technology into the analog where the analog is to fail safe.

Technology is a tool.

But it may not be available like where'd that hammer go.

Everybody runs into it.

Mom.

What's the conference room?

How are you doing address?

Is it just north branch?

It's from the north branch.

Yeah it's not.

Mustafa.

The whole building needs to be rebooted.

I wonder if it's implied.

No it's not branch having the same problem Sean.

Yeah the same yeah.

OK OK.

So maybe we give that up.

So here's my suggestion.

Frank can you join the team 's meeting.

I think I can.

OK.

So then we will all go to our respective offices if my computer 's ready then I'm this is

Lauren I apologize.

If my computer is ready then I'll be on my computer in my office?

But if not Jenny I'll come to your office.

Sure why don't we do that.

OK OK that's on the agenda the teams.

KL **Kate Larose** 3:02

Look at all their remote meeting participation. Love it.

3:03

Link yes.

Well yeah we're having to.

SC **Susan Clark** 3:08

Looks like the whole meeting's going to go remote, Kate.

3:11

Do you have to adjust as we're moving?

Are?

You like.

Going to just turn off my camera.

So I don't make anybody motion sick.

Yeah can I.

Here I'll give you one of these frank few electric paper copy of the updated.

I have one visit the same one from if that's.

It's the one that's the one that was sent out.

Is is?

Yeah this one.

Updated.

This is the one that was updated.

From this so.

What this?

It's one that Kelly just sent.

Is ask me yes so that one can?

Get strapped and I'll tell you what yeah OK I will leave.

Do you want one of these?

PK **Pajala, Kelly** 3:55

Frank hasn't actually joined.

The meeting yet that I can see. So hang on.

Just a second.

SC **Susan Clark** 4:08

Ted Brady, do you still have a fever of 104? Like I heard yesterday?

TB **Ted Brady** 4:16

Back to 100%.

Just trying to stay away from people.

SC **Susan Clark** 4:22

Yeah, 104 percent was too much.

TB **Ted Brady** 4:27

You also need to assume that that was exaggerated by somebody because it never got that hot.

SC **Susan Clark** 4:32

Good.

Yeah, that's OK in infants, but for a little while.

You were very much missed. I will tell you at the town fair.

TB **Ted Brady** 4:45

I had some serious.

FOMO yesterday.

Yeah, that was.

SC **Susan Clark** 4:49

You did? I bet you did.

TB **Ted Brady** 4:50

And we sat to miss. And of course I heard the Secretary of State did a fantastic job.

SC **Susan Clark** 4:55

He did.

He did, yes.

TB **Ted Brady** 4:58

I really wanted to catch Tammy. And did you? Were you able to catch the keynote speaker, Susan?

Was she good?

SC **Susan Clark** 5:03

See, I really feel like she she is terrific.

She's terrific.

The whole idea of a dignity index.

Is is brilliant.

It's a. It's a. There's a lot of different people coming at this in different ways, and hers is really actionable and really relatable.

And she herself is really relatable.

Told a lot of personal stories about her own family, which has Republicans and Democrats and libertarians and socialist Democrats.

And how?

They how they get along and don't get along and it.

I thought it was a yeah. If if folks have a chance to read about the Dignity Index, I think it's it's worth.

I think it was a good choice for for a good choice for this moment too.

For the BLCT town, fair is what we're talking about.

TA **Tim Arsenault** 5:58

Sorry I missed it.

TB **Ted Brady** 5:59

I liked it.

SC **Susan Clark** 6:01

Oh.

TB **Ted Brady** 6:05

Tim, a conference isn't the same without you.

TA **Tim Arsenault** 6:07

Well, I am now the assistant town clerk, so I was filling for the town clerk.

I'm kind of semi retired because I'm still doing radio and still doing some backing up at the clerk's office and I'm still a wedding officiant.

SC **Susan Clark** 6:22

So you were being assistant town clerk, so your town clerk could go to the town fair. Probably.

 **Tim Arsenault** 6:27

Precisely.

I think she needed the training more than I did.

Because Ted and I go a million years back with one another.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 6:38

All right.

Hi everyone.

I'm really apologize for our various tech issues.

Sometimes days are like that.

I'm hoping that we can quickly introduce ourselves and then just move into the body of work because I I'm feeling like it is on the 9th of October and we have a report due.

The November 1st so I want to have as.

Good and productive and efficient conversation as we can today. So with that I'll introduce myself first.

My name is Lauren Hibbert. I'm deputy Secretary of State.

I'm just gonna go down my screen in the order that you are on my screen, Kelly.

 **Pajala, Kelly** 7:28

Hello, Kelly Pieala, administrative assistant.

For the Secretary of State's office.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 7:35

Thank you, Jessica.

 **Jessica Radbord** 7:41

Hi, I'm Jessica Radford.

I'm a senior staff attorney at the ACLU of Vermont.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 7:46

Thank you.

I'm gonna mispronounce your first name, Marquis Marquis.

Oh no, she left.

 **PJ Prosser, Jenny (she/her)** 7:57
That's she's our interpreter, Lauren.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 8:01
Yes.
OK.
Alyssa.

 **AG Alyssa Gagnon** 8:12
Yes, also a sign language interpreter.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 8:14
Awesome. Thank you.
Laura Siegel.

 **Siegel, Laura (she/her)** 8:22
Monmouth lost to Cause Department of the jury using an independent living as the director of DEF Part of Human.
Thank you for having me here today.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 8:32
Thank you for being here, Laura.
Nice to see you.

 **Frank** 8:33
Yes.
Hello.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 8:35
Laura Cushman.

 **LC Laura Cushman** 8:42
Good morning.

I'm Laura Cushman.
I am a staff attorney at disability rights Vermont.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 8:48
Hi, Laurel. Nice to see you, Kate.

 **KL Kate Larose** 8:52
Good morning, everyone.
Kate larose. She her I am the designee on the working group for the Vermont Human Rights Commission.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 9:00
Thank you, Kate.
Good to see you, Sean.

 **SS Sheehan, Sean (he/him)** 9:05
Good morning, Sean Sheehan, elections director here at the Secretary of State's office.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 9:12
Ted, I'm gonna look back to you. 'cause. You changed in where you were on my screen, Ted.

 **TB Ted Brady** 9:24
Sorry, Ted Brady from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns standing in for Andy, who can be here today.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 9:30
Thank you, Ted.
Good to see that you're feeling better.
Affair was very good yesterday.
Your team did a great job.
Tim.

 **TA Tim Arsenault** 9:42

Tim Arsenault, the assistant town clerk in Vernon.

Designee for the Vermont municipal Clerk Treasurer's Association and Aladdin, a semi retired broadcaster as well.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 9:54

Thank you, Tim.

Nice to see you, Jenny.



Prosser, Jenny (she/her) 9:59

Hello Jenny Prosser, Secretary of State's office.

I'm general counsel and the director of Municipal Assistants.



Frank 10:02

I.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 10:09

Oh, Laura, just one second.

Let me do introductions and then we can talk about what happened yesterday for some of us.

Susan.



Susan Clark 10:19

Susan Clark.

I am a facilitator and and trainer and I am representing the Vermont League of Cities and Towns on this group Co representing with Andy Slash Ted.



Frank 10:27

Umm.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 10:34

Thank you, Susan and Frank.

Oh, Frank, we can't hear you.

You're not muted, but we cannot hear you.



Frank 10:56

Can you hear me now?

Yes, OK, Nelson and Paulette clinic.

Should we coordinator?

I've had a background in.

Computer integration.

From 1972 I also have financial services background. I needed activists as well.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 11:20

Frank. Frank. I'm sorry to interrupt you.

I wonder if you would be better served to take off your headphones if possible. If you don't need them and just unplug because we're getting a lot of feedback and it's hard to hear you.



Frank 11:35

Are you getting feedback now?



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 11:37

Yes.



Frank 11:39

OK.

I'll try and figure that out.

But I think the heads on.



Kate Larose 11:45

I think your heads.

I think the headset the speaker was set, the microphone was set to your computer and not set to the microphone on your headset.

I think if you switch that setting, it'll be all set.



Frank 11:57

I unplugged it.

Yeah, I'll plug it back in and see if I can do that. Thank you, Kate.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 12:03

OK, I'm gonna mute you, Frank.

Just or can you mute yourself? Just 'cause. We're getting a lot of feedback.

 **Frank** 12:06

I'm also in the Asbury spectrum, so that's a concern.
Not the other day. Thank you.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 12:18

Thank you, Frank.

 **Frank** 12:19

Thank.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 12:25

All right. Ted, would you be willing to explain to the group what happened yesterday? Laura Siegel asked.

What happened yesterday and for some of us, we were together yesterday, so I thought it would be good for you to explain.

 **Ted Brady** 12:36

Of course.

So every year the Vermont League of Cities and Towns hosts town.

Fairs at the largest gathering municipal officials in the state and we had a conference in South Burlington and we had a great keynote speaker in addition to some some important dignitaries like the Secretary of State speaking.

At our keenest speaker, focused on civility and trying to restore civility, to dialogue in town offices and town halls.

This woman, Tammy Pfeiffer.

From the dignity and dignity index that encourage people to check out the website, it's a pretty interesting group of people that are trying to provide a practical solution.

To bringing civility back to speech, not just saying you should be more civil, but actually giving a tool to try to help people do that.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 13:28

Thank you. It was.
It was a good conference.



Siegel, Laura (she/her) 13:30

Thank you, tan.
Thank you. Time. I appreciate that.
I'm sorry I missed out on the fun.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 13:38

Well, Ted, just so you know, catching you up a little bit, there has been a lot of discussion in this group about providing more training to municipal officials on accessibility and on disability. And I think that one not getting ahead of myself. I think one of the core.

Recommendations will be that there's more available training on those topics for municipal officials, so maybe that's something that could be built into the next town fair.

As a as a breakout room or as part of the larger conversations, you know I did a breakout room on public records yesterday and it was very well attended.

So accessibility would be a great thing to do more training on.

So in terms of.

Structure for this meeting.

I was thinking last meeting, we were about halfway through.

The best practices guide I'd like to go finish that work very as quickly and efficiently as we can.

Being very cautious again, that when we're talking about best practices, we're not talking about something that is already currently legally required and will have to be very careful about that when we write the best practices guide and then.

I had a great conversation with Laura Cushman and she had a very good idea that I want to.

Get everyone's assent to because it's another act of work that I will be asking the group to do, but for the second-half of the meeting, I think we should go through.

The the top half of the chart that we all have and identify which recommendations.

We can pull out that we want to take action on.

Meaning I'm going to.

I'm gonna say one that I think we should.

Make a recommendation on.

And my purpose for identifying these things is then I'm planning for us as a Secretary of State's office, probably by the end of this week, to send a SurveyMonkey to all of you to ask what level of support you have.

On the issue and also what factors should be considered?

As considerations for the legislature, some of which will be in this chart already, so the one that has been most active in my brain recently has been.

Should the lower annual meeting law, the elections law, be modified to expressly allow?

Especially require not allow.

For a way for people with disabilities to request remote access.

Right now, the law is silent.

It's clear that the ADA does require accommodation, but the election law is silent.

And it would be, I think very helpful to have that.

Be more clear.

So that would be something that this group could make a recommendation on.

That may not be a far enough recommendation for some.

That might be a hard recommendation for others, but if that is, if we can coalesce around that idea, then I'm I'm really trying to work towards writing a report which is due very soon. So the way that I've been thinking about the report would be in that area.

Of the report, we would say the election law is currently silent.

This causes confusion.

The ADA is clear that reasonable accommodations need to be made.

The recommendation of this group is that the law around elections is more clear.

These are the ways that this has been done in other communities.

These are models for how that could be done talking about the Jericho, Cambridge, Middlesex models. Maybe we'll have one of those that we want to recommend the legislature does.

And.

Or we could not do that.

And that could be something that the Secretary of State could build up by policy.

So we would say this is the recommendation of the Act 133 group.

This is the agreed upon recommendation.

These are the factors that need to be considered, you know, security.

Intraut access.

Platforms. All the things that we've been talking about.

And for some members of the.

133 Group this was not far enough and I want to make sure that we explained why that was not far enough and what you know. I think some people would want universal access for all.

So we would put that in there and that's sort of how I was thinking for the recommendations that this group is making, we'd be structured. So existing state of the world confusion in the world.

The agreed upon.

The things that need to be considered, and if there's diversity of opinions, I want to make sure that that's put into the report as well.

Laura.

Cushman.

 **Laura Cushman** 19:12

Can we?

Can you just ask the question again? So we know clearly what your question is.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 19:20

I'm not asking the question right now, Laura, but yes, I I can ask the question again. But what I'm what I'm saying is, I'm what I'm asking for the second-half of the group is that we work together and I've I've done a little bit of this on.

 **Laura Cushman** 19:22

Oh.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 19:34

My own.

But I want to make sure that I'm not missing anything that we work together on which questions our office should send to all of you so that you can read, think about them.

 **Laura Cushman** 19:36

OK.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 19:46

And respond to them not in the meeting, but that we receive those responses. Back and that we talk about them at our next meeting.



Laura Cushman 19:53

OK.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 19:54

And my hope is that maybe we'll have a built out outline at that time. Once we know what those are, we may.

I don't know that I can promise that set in seven days from now because I'll have to get the responses and try and build up the outline.

So I'm just gonna do my do our best to do that, but and provide everything that we have at the time that.

We need to provide.

So that that's where I'm hoping we can go so that we can get further down the process of actually writing this report and making sure that everyone's perspectives and.

And everyone's input is considered.

And I really appreciate that suggestion, Laura.

I thought that was a very helpful suggestion so.

OK.

Yeah, Jessica.



Jessica Radbord 20:46

Thanks so much, Lauren.

Can you say a little bit more about your thinking on what's required in terms of reasonable accommodations?

How you'd want to frame that in the report, given that some towns may feel like certain accommodations are an undue burden.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 21:04

Yeah.

I I was not thinking to go into the particulars of.

Which specific reasonable accommodations are required?

Because what I have really heard is that it really differs person by person and scenario by scenario for what is requested, and then it also varies by town. What is reasonable to provide.

So the advice that we have been giving to towns is that they need to.

Consult with their town attorney to figure out how to accommodate and whether the request is reasonable.

And but what I would hope.

We drive to and why I think it would be a benefit to put this in the law expressly is it would provide.

More structure around those requests and more of a legal.

Obligation for towns to respond to them, and a road map of how to respond to them that that is my hope. But I'm open to to feedback on what's currently.

I mean, this is not my area of expertise.

I do not practice disability law and I would love your perspective or disability rights perspective on that.

Because it's not my area of expertise. So.

Do you have any feedback on that, Jessica or?

 **Jessica Radbord** 22:36

I was staying quiet because I wanted to give Frank the time. I saw that his hand was raised.

So Frank, do you want to go first and then I can, I can chime in with a response.

 **Frank** 22:48

Thank you.

Can you hear me now?

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 22:50

Yes, perfectly.

Much better.

 **Frank** 22:51

OK, I got my microphone fixed. Thanks to Kate. Good advice.

In reference to Kate's e-mail, for something to come up on the next meeting.

And my foot forward too, bringing out the Adai.

Don't think the towns have a choice in many cases.

I think that the whole whole of the, the whole of the of a meeting law relative to tears.

And everything.

Is basically all of it is governed from the top by the ADA, and that's how we're going to have to, you know, or have to the legislature's going to have to respond to that. It cannot ignore that.

And that's so I think we should work in that direction as well pointing that out.

And I have other things to say, but that's pretty much the the brunt of it. Thank you.

 **Jessica Radbord** 23:53

Should I go ahead and I want to jump in front of anyone else.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 23:56

No, you're you're, you're next.

 **Jessica Radbord** 23:59

OK, great. I think in terms of the ADA, while it's true that a lot of the times provision of a reasonable accommodation will be a case by case analysis, it requires a conversation.

There are instances where that's not the case, right where there are some things that are so basic that it just needs to be done. But I do think more broadly.

Because I put the burden both on the person with the disability who needs an accommodation and on a town to do all this work, that it's better to just set standards of.

Here are things that we're we're just gonna say have to be done for everyone.

And you know, when it comes to a fundamental right, like being able to participate.

Made in open meetings and and in voting, I think to ensure that we all have the common benefit of, you know, being citizens of the state of Vermont.

You know, setting some standards on here, the basic things that are just every town needs to do by law is really important.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 24:59

Yeah.

 **Jessica Radbord** 25:01

I am mindful that some towns being smaller are going to need some financial help with that potentially so. So it seems like and it would be more efficient too. Say it was determined that zoom is a safe platform to use. Doing group licensing probably would save a lot of money and just make sense.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 25:22

If I can, I agree with 100% of what you just said, Jessica. And I think that what we will need is that there's a pathway for assuming that we all coalesce around this idea, which is an assumption at this point on my part, right. But because we haven't sent out the survey, but assuming that's the question, assuming we all coalesce around that. In the factors are, you know, standardized at access. Security there's there's whole bunch of considerations, some of which you've you've mentioned. Some of that makes sense to put in the law, which for those of you who are not lawyers, that's like the the bones of of something, and then some of it makes sense to put in policy or rules which are like the muscles of something, so, you know. We'll have to decide as we move through the legislative process, which goes into the law and which goes into rules or policy so that we can be clear. You know, we would obviously not put in the statutes. Zoom is the preferred provider. But we would want to put that into policy. That the Secretary of State would issue so that we would be providing concrete guidance to towns on how to provide that reasonable accommodation. So that is the sort of the structure of the questions that we'll be asking via SurveyMonkey and then the conversations that we'll have after we get those responses. And sort of how I'm thinking at this moment to structure the report. Around those core questions, of course. Answering the other sections of our charge as well. You know the the different modalities of voting, the voting turn out, the Civic Health Index, all of those things will also be in the report. There was something else that you just said that.

Prompted at that, but it's escaped me so.

So I think what?

I'd like to do is just as quickly as we can go through the remaining best practices.

Tim, I did see that.

Your your hand was up.

Oh, it was Frank, Frank.

You before I get to you, Tim, I just want to respond to Frank's conversation about Kate's e-mail, and I really understand Kate's request for a list of the laws we clearly did not have that ready to send to all of you last week.

We could not get that done.

We and I'm hesitant.

To do it, and I've talked to Kate about this a little bit because we're sure to miss something.

So and I think I would really like to focus as a group on where we want to go as opposed to where we are right now except for understanding the ADA, the law, the election law that we have been talking about.

Sean could provide the citation for it.

It's really silent on remote access.

We've all we've been talking about it for a long time.

Time it it's pretty clear it's not working.

I think we can all agree it's not working.

That's why we're here.

And.

So.

That that's not working.

But I think what's really important is where do we want to go? And then we need to propose where we want to go to the legislature so that they can grapple with those policy decisions and create laws about where we want to go.

And.

And we will have time to work on this issue with them because.

Our office does not change election law in an election year, so we will be talking with them about these changes and then we would anticipate that those would be changes that are made in the 27th session because changing election law in election year is a very.

It's bad policy to do because a lot of other things can change in that process that are

outside of what we are wanting to change. So.

All that to say, I do want to make sure that this group comes up with recommendations that maybe not all of us, but the majority of us really want the legislature to tackle and that, and there's some that have nothing to do with elections that we've talked about.

So there there could be action.

From this report this session.

So.

Tim, you're on mute. Yeah, good.

TA

Tim Arsenault 30:04

Thank you.

Thank you very very much for your, for your leadership on this, Lauren.

I just want to say that yes, we should follow the law, but along with training, please, we will need education not just among officials but Community education, because I still see a lot of ignorance on this matter that all of us in this.

Table conference deal with every day, so please consider.

Through that as well.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 30:36

Well, you, you just brought it to the forefront. So now it is considered.

Sean.

SS

Sheehan, Sean (he/him) 30:43

All right. Thanks.

Just to kind of add to what Lauren is saying, I just wanted to note that think this approach that Lauren's saying is is consistent with I think how we and and others really work with the legislature and then how Legislative Council gets involved if we set kind.

Of the target aspiration of what changes broadly, we wanna see in those those high level and the legislature gets on board and takes takes testimony and and gets clarity on direction.

They then talk to legislative counsel.

And Legislative council then.

Finds the way to achieve that, and the wording in the law.

So just for example, looking at going through some of those citations, they're present in voting was what was one term.

That's that that's used throughout.

It's used 248 times throughout VSA, so could we come up with that?

Could we list all 248 of those instances?

Yes, we we could.

Same thing with public places. As mentioned 194 times.

In meetings, you know mentioned over over 3000.

Times and and Lawrence.

I'm sure there's many others when you get into actually the law of how they refer to things being handed off and voting and and so forth.

But.

For example, when votes on Australian ballots were expanded to to happen.

The law was changed to change that definition of president voting to to include to say that absentee ballots you know are in Australian ballots are a form of that.

So that may be a direction that the legislature and Legislative Council go if this was brought up in a way to them of what we want to see.

But really, that's their purview, and that's that's their area of expertise and how.

They.

Actualize what may be a vision of of this group, and then legislature gets on board with we think can be, can be left to them, and it seems like it would be the best use of our our limited time.

To really focus on on on what we want.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 32:51

Great, Jessica.



Jessica Radbord 32:56

I know that charge #5 was studying the feasibility of electronic platforms.

Do sometimes you just you hire a consultant and they, you know, do the big survey of because I know I'm no expert in all the different tech platforms and what the safety things are.

Do you think that would be something that would go in the report of, you know, we need to hire some sort of consult consulting firm?

It's gonna cost this amount of money to figure out, you know, whatever the five bullet points are that we would need them to figure out.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 33:36

Yeah, we're gonna have to require more exploration there because we could not find somebody who is an expert in that in the time frame that we had and.

And I think.

Yeah, that that's a place where we don't have really an answer to that bullet.

So it could be an area where the legislature should do hire an expert and do that, or have us hire an expert and do that.

But we did not.

We're not able to find someone in the timeframe that we had and get a consulting get that consultation.

Frank is your hand, a lingering hand or a new hand?



Frank 34:20

No, I'm just bringing up a point.

Is that one of the main concerns?

Why I'm here is that human beings don't learn things in groups.

Stuff doesn't come in a spray can where you can say boom, everything's there.

And one of the problems with the past version of law was the penalties involved.

With the misdemeanor charge, the fines.

Where like today, we can't.

You know, have the usual meeting in the room because we have computer problems.

And so you're going to have a whole a tier of of of ignorance that is out there that the the goal is to correct that through education. But during this period of time or any.

Period of time.

You know, to have these volunteers that are on select boards and all these other things suddenly facing a misdemeanor charge simply because.

Of their.

Ineptness.

We don't know about this and that, you know, we we're all dummies when we learn as best we can, but to be brought up on charges.

So I think that, you know, there's a level of operations of the open meeting and the

participation of.

That really has to be looked at from a non penalty perspective, but if there is blatant discrimination such as.

Ada or whatever.

Then that is another tier.

More serious tier that that select boards and everybody has to know is out there so that they know that, hey, we're looking at serious.

Legal problems coming our way. If we step outside and become.

A.

Discriminating against fellow citizens to want to participate in our government and our democracy.

So I think that that we really need to break out the the noise part.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 36:17

Yeah.



Frank 36:24

That we.

I'll deal with trying to learn how to do this system and try to adjust and over time we'll all get better at it versus the really serious, blatant discrimination.

Thank you.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 36:35

OK.

Thank you, Frank.

I'm gonna pick that up again when we get to questions that we all should answer via SurveyMonkey. Making note of that whether the penalties for open meeting law need to be modified as the expectations of open meeting law also may be modified.

Pete.



Kate Larose 36:56

Thank you so much.

I just want to clarify when you say that the Secretary of State's office doesn't make changes to election law during election year, that is state election like state elected offices, election year, not town meeting election year, that's every year.

So my right.

Like so my concern my question is, is that a desire or is that a requirement? Because my concern is that if there is a change in.

Who is at the SOS office?

And that leadership is not as committed and supportive of voting access for all that that would be a very different outcome if we leave it to 2027.

Thank you.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 37:38

That's a very fair concern and.

Yes, we really, really, really try.

Now, it's not our decision.

The legislature could do it without our without us supporting them, doing it right.

But we really, really try to not make any changes in any election law, local or state level, during an election year because.

It it opens the door for a lot of other things to come up.

And.

I I hope that the same leadership is in charge and in 27 I don't know.

Nobody knows that's the purpose of an election, but what I'm hoping is that there is a strong recommendation in this report that remains consistent and is not ignorable.

Susan.



Susan Clark 38:37

There it is. OK.

I just wanted to respond to something Jessica asked about the technology. And I I just think that, I mean it will come up. But in the when we discussed when we talked about, I don't know, I think maybe you went there, Jessica, when we had a whole meeting.

About the ways different towns have dealt with remote town meeting participation in Cambridge and Middlesex and and Jericho, as well as Massachusetts and work that they're doing.

And.

Basically.

In terms of the technology.

My big take away was that there the technology to have a universal access to town

meeting participation, to have a universally hybrid town meeting is possible in theory, but in practice the technology needs to be expanded and that's what Massachusetts is working on because they have the.

They have the population to basically demand of the capitalist system to develop this.

Because of town meeting.

From any other kind of meeting, because we're amending from the floor because we are.

So my participation from home is A is a very different thing from a Planning Commission meeting or something like that.

You know 2/3 votes.

There's, there's just a bunch of stuff that needs to be dealt with. If you have a large number of people, but if you have a small number of people like and and this is in Middlesex, we we had ten meeting for participation for over a decade and if.

You have two or three people on zoom you can manage it.

And that's the thing about a hybrid meeting.

Fully remote meeting is easy, fully in person. Meeting is easy or easiest.

Hybrid is incredibly complex and the more that the deeper the hybridness gets, the more people.

The more complex it is for the facilitator, the more number of staff people you need the in order to make it a rich experience for everyone and high quality.

So I really like what we're talking about here in terms of how can we.

We now now create.

Accessibility via the ADA guidelines. How can we create access now for the number of people in a town that needed access with a long term vision of the universal access?

Because I think that that's the that is the speed with which the technology is developing. If we try to go for the whole thing now, we're going to.

I'm worried we're going to wind up with security issues.

We're going to wind up with.

Crappy access.

And crappy experience in the room.

So I really want to focus on the quality of democracy and what's the way that we can make sure that it's all the access that we need with aspirational in the future.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 41:25

Thank you, Susan.

Jessica, is your. Your hand is still your.

You have a new hand, OK?



Jessica Radbord 41:33

When you mentioned that we don't typically make changes in an election year because of the thanks for bringing up some of those security issues, Susan, I really appreciate that. I had been looking at Brookline, Mass and and their use of zoom. I don't know if that's the place in Massachusetts you were talking about.

Is Dan A so because there are these technological things to figure out and you'd have to have a consultant and then people need to get trained on how to use technology.

Lauren, do you think so?

Sometimes you know when you need to take a bunch of preliminary steps.

Do rulemaking, etc.

Like a law will be passed one year, but the implementation date or whatever the changes are might be a year and a half out.

So can you explain a little more about is it?

That you wouldn't want to implement changes in the law during election year or is it possible that you'd change the law during election, but that implementation because there are multiple stamps will actually be a little further out.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 42:29

Yeah.

Yeah.

So we would not want to change the law in an election year, have an election bill moving in in 26 because other things could be added. I think you know, these laws become like Christmas trees for other ideas and things get added all the time some of.

Which we support, some of which we wouldn't support.

We wouldn't support changing any deadlines for any petitions or.

Any filing?

We there's a lot of things that would be very disruptive to either.

The primary or the general election in 26 and.
Given the climate, quite frankly, of the world.
We can't have an election bill next year.
But what we would do is have an election bill.
We will, whether this issue is in it or not and whether this issue is in it or not.
It can be added, but this we will have an election bill in 27.
It would be effective July 1st, we would be working on implementing it immediately
that summer and fall of 27. And so it would be effective for.
Town meeting in 28.
Een that would be the timeline.
It doesn't mean that there's not things that can be done right now under the ADA to
provide accessibility.
To to town meeting.
You know the law.
The law needs to be more clear.
That's, I mean we as an office we need that.
But that doesn't mean that.
And I think towns need that. And I think that will provide a lot of clarity. You know, I
really think that this should not be, you know, accessibility should not be debated in
a select board meeting. You know for instance that that needs to be, it needs to.
Be more clear that this is a requirement.
And that should be in the law.
And I think there's work that we can do now to make this better.
Laura.
And I and I just want to say, I know that's unsatisfactory and probably doesn't make
for, I hope most of you understand what I'm saying and why, but.
It it is a frustration that we don't change law in an election year. Sometimes for us
too.
Laura, sorry.



Siegel, Laura (she/her) 45:16

But the intuitive I wanted to stay.
Let me ask you something.
All of the town when they host any buffer meeting are they argued in the same
platform.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 45:30

No, and that will be definitely one of the questions that are in the SurveyMonkey, because that's one of the things that we talked about very early on as making a recommendation to the legislature or creating an approved state platform for accessibility, that there was sort of two vers.

Of that, that conversation and that will be a SurveyMonkey.

Question, Laura, because we have heard.

We've talked about a lot in this group that there are good platforms and there are less good platforms and that there are platforms that have a lot more accessibility features than others and towns do have choices. But if there's ones that are approved and known to be access.

Town should use those.



Siegel, Laura (she/her) 46:24

So I've got. I mean, a lot of people who asked me for technical guidance and all of the platform.

So, but a lot of the technical guidance that they asked for is how to make sure that their platform is dustable.

So I just find it interesting.

You were like, we need to hire a consultant.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 46:45

Oh, no, not not on accessibility of platforms. Laura on electronic voting.



Siegel, Laura (she/her) 46:46

But a lot of what I do.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 46:55

Meaning casting a vote electronically. But the accessibility of platforms I, despite the rapid speed that we're all learning these platforms that I think there's like you have done a lot of work on which platforms are good and which platforms are subpar.



Siegel, Laura (she/her) 46:58

OK.

I've got my thought process of kind of let that guide that I share with you offline. I was just trying to find a template to whoever is facilitating any meet and they don't have to make it so complicated. They just have to simplify the process of what need to be done to ensure that the meeting is fairly adaptable to that. Not that faster than. That I thought.

The electronic voting. I don't really have any comment right now, sorry.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 47:41

OK. Yeah.

We did.

I forget if you were here last meeting, we did talk through the beginning sections of the best practices guide, which did talk a lot about.

Those earlier sections talked a lot about training for how to hold a hybrid meeting and including guides on how to hold an electronic meeting.

I really do anticipate putting a lot of links to your resources, Laura, because you've done a lot of work, so.

I want those.

Built into our best practices guide so that when a town clerk has oh, sorry.



Siegel, Laura (she/her) 48:17

Sometimes it helps to do a mark action you know, just to run through. The people can do the best damper and how it looked and the one who's seen it and been exposed to it. Then it it moves down after that.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 48:33

Well, and back to the earlier comment that I made to Ted.

I'm hopeful that both the clerk's association and the league having this report and participating in this report then.

Does trainings for their for their members on these issues because it is really important and whether that's mandated by the legislature, which will be a question in the in the SurveyMonkey.

I'm confident, or whether that is.

Voluntary on the associations is a policy question for the legislature and.

But you know, we can have a recommendation on that and but regardless of whether it's required or recommendation of ours, I'm I really hope that both of those groups

proactively do it because I think it would go a long way to improve accessibility and trust.

So.

8.

 **Kate Larose** 49:32

Thank you.

I love so much this concept in framing of coalescing together now on the future that we want.

And so yeah, it could.

It is a little bit of a bummer that, like it wouldn't be codified in law this year, and it's actually kind of maybe a little bit irrelevant because.

For those of us working in this space, it it's not that the law doesn't currently provide for it 'cause it does, right?

So what is changing?

And what's so exciting is that.

This would be a report where.

A new opinion of the Secretary of State's office is clearly issued and listed because it is opinion that has made it so that remote voting couldn't happen starting few years ago, right.

So I would love to in thinking about how we work now towards the future that we want, really want to just make sure that there'd be the full support of your office and the working group members organizations.

To promote this new town.

So that towns aren't having to wait until 2028 to get with the law, right? Like they can get with the law now.

And so that's super, super exciting for me and I would love to hear what your thoughts are about that, particularly with like, you know the civic engagement position that you have, if that's something that could that could help put this out into the world sooner.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 50:48

Mm-hmm.

Yeah. So to be really clear, our position is that towns need to follow the ADA and need to consult with their attorneys on how to follow the ADA. If they're holding

floor meeting.

And our position is that towns need to offer curbside voting and absentee voting for Australian ballot and all of the variations of voting.

So yes, we would be able to put that as an FAQ for towns. That's something we could talk about with town clerk.

Clerks, it could be in this report.

But it still doesn't really tell towns how to do it, and and that I think needs to be talked about at the legislature. So and how far it extends. I mean we we feel very committed to being able to say very publicly towns need to follow the ad.

The ADA Trump's state election law and towns need to work with their attorneys.

On how to do that right, that is that we can say.

The process the I think it'd be more clear in the law. We can't.

We can't do on our own and that's a conversation that the legislature needs to have.

And if we're talking about expanding access beyond the ADA, that's really something that the legislature needs to grapple with and.

So but yes, we can work on making that more clear.

But first, first, please can we work on this report so we can get it done so that we can get to where we can be more public about all of this and promote all of this?

So with that, I just want to go very quickly through the rest of the best practices and then I you guys are really brilliant and engaged and I want to make sure that we're asking the right questions of you in the SurveyMonkey.

So that we as an office know what to send, we're getting the right feedback from you.

And we can go forward.

So we left off best practices on page 31 in the sub.

This the subcategory of meeting structure and community norms.

Does everyone have a copy of this report?

Ted, I think you were the only person who our office hasn't directly mailed it to.

But do you have it?

No.



Siegel, Laura (she/her) 53:20

Did you send it to e-mail?

I mean can we resend it right now?

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 53:24
Yes, yes.

 **Siegel, Laura (she/her)** 53:26
Who sent it with the carrier?
The carrier send it.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 53:29
And Kelly sent it and you responded to it.
Laura too.
It was that big spreadsheet.

 **Siegel, Laura (she/her)** 53:32
Oh, OK, that one.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 53:34
That big, big spreadsheet? Yeah.

 **Siegel, Laura (she/her)** 53:35
That one they're talking about, OK?

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 53:37
Yep.
Kelly, do you mind?
Or Jenny. Actually, since you're Kelly.
Since you're keeping notes, Jenny, can you send it to Ted?
Just so that he has it too.
Thank you.
Umm.
So we were on page 31 meeting structure and community norms.
What the structure that we were having is and just to reiterate everybody, we were going through topics that came up during our meetings related to meeting structure and community or best practices or Susan, you had a different term for it which we've written down.

But I'm forgetting at this exact moment.
What was that?

 **Susan Clark** 54:22

I'm sorry, a different term for which?

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 54:24

Best practices?

 **Susan Clark** 54:26

Well, promising practices is a way is it?

People use promising practices as a way to indicate that towns should, or communities organizations can try this.

It is a.

Best indicates that there has been a that there that there's research that proves that this is great for everyone, whereas promising practice is.

Try this one out.

This is one that has worked for a lot of folks, so it gives a little more welcoming so that that's a that's a term that we can use. And I think Kate has made a really great point that that.

Things that belong under best practice are not things that are required by law.

That's a whole other category.

You gotta do this.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 55:20

Yeah.

 **Susan Clark** 55:20

This and that belongs, I think in in all education that goes out to towns and communities and people who are requesting access, they need to know what their rights are and then promising practices are like.

Here are ways that we can.

Meet those needs in creative ways or or go beyond them.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 55:44

And so we will.

We will make sure that we're as expressed as we can be at the beginning of the best practices guide that this is a layer on top of what is already legally required.

And just we'll make that very expressive. OK. The first piece is clear articulation of how long community members may speak at the start of the meeting.

We talked a lot about this in terms of letting everyone know the rules.

Road at the beginning of the meeting.

It's not legally required, but is it a promising practice or best practice? We want to include?

No votes for yes, no votes for no.

 **Susan Clark** 56:31

How do you want us to express our votes?

 **Kate Larose** 56:32

Oh, wait, are we voting?

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 56:34

No, not voting.

Voting's the wrong word.

Feedback I'm I'm using the word voting, but really what I mean is like no commentary.

Does anyone have anything to say about that? It seemed pretty.

 **Kate Larose** 56:42

So you're you're wanting us to say yes, this is the thing we want on the SurveyMonkey to vote on.

Is that what you're looking for?

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 56:49

No, that's a different part.

 **Kate Larose** 56:50

Oh, OK.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 56:51

Thank you, Kate.

That's a different part of our meeting.

This is what we were doing.

Last meeting was do we want this in our best practices guide?

Is there anything that we want to have considered?

Are there existing resources on this that we want to have?

Listed in the best practice or promising practices guide.

That is the work that we were doing last session.

Frank then.

Ted, then Jessica.



Frank 57:23

At the beginning of the meeting of our select board because of past confusion, we've gone into some policy.

Development and one of them was to adopt the.

League of Cities and towns introduction thing to the rules of Rd. type of thing for the conduction of the meeting.

How the sub board operates this?

Are you talking about that?

Whether that should be codified, that something be read to at the beginning of the meetings by the select board chairperson or something like this, is that what you're talking about?

Because we're doing it and it defines the amount of time that the.

For example, the public comments would be and all that stuff, so it doesn't.

So the meeting just doesn't run totally out of control where the meeting is described.

It's the meeting of the body.

And the public is invited to the meeting.

Etcetera. And it goes through that as a clarification of what the meeting is actually there for.

But it's open to a certain degree, and that is also explained at the beginning of the meeting.

Thank you.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 58:34

Yep, I'm just going to respond to you, Frank, and then go to you, Ted.

No where we are right now is we are creating a promising practices best practices guide that this office will create with this work group that will be published on our website will hopefully get used in other spaces will be sent out to people.

That's my hope.

And these are things that we are not saying the legislature should codify.

Should make into the law.

These are things that we're saying to communities. If you want to run an inclusive meeting, which all communities want, let's hope.

These are things that you can do to help make that possible, and one of the things that has come out and the league has been at the front of this for a while.

Is set up the rules of the road. The 1st 2, the first two topics here are really in line with the league's model policy.

On how to run a public meeting, which is, it is fair and equitable to let people know who don't come to the meetings all the time. The structure of the meeting, what's expected, when you can talk.

How long you can talk that that that is something that the league has been promoting for a long time.

That's something that I'll just say as Secretary of State, I really want to be in our best practices guide.

I want for when a member of the public calls our office to say when do I get to talk in a public meeting that you that we can say?

Practices guide recommends that.

Bodies do this. You may want to bring this up to the to the body as a way for them to make it clearer how to run their their meeting. And I know that the the league has been doing this to all of their saying that this is a.

Best practice to all of their public bodies as well.

10.



Ted Brady 1:00:33

I think you've said it.

Thank you, Frank.

Thank you, Lauren. Agree.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:00:37

OK.

Thank you, Susan.



Susan Clark 1:00:40

Yeah, I agree with all of that.

And building on that, I'm just wondering, I mean I I remember.

I think I remember where these words came from and we were sort of brainstorming that should be in a best practice guide and I'm just wondering in terms of this group being using our time as best as we can.

Whether we wanna clump these.

And say, yeah, we think there should be a best practice guide and we kinda know what a lot of the best practices are. And we have some models.

Here are links.

To groups that already have good models.

And and then we can move on to some of the gnarly gnarlier stuff.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:01:17

Yeah. I would really like to do that.

So we just have one more page of what we were talking about.

So I I would love to just make sure that as we run through all of these lines so that so that we have a transcript and a recording that we are in some general consensus and then we will work on this and probably send requests out to people.

For existing resources as well.

And some of the existing resources are behind like the leak.

Some of them are only available to the league, so we'll have to figure that out with them.

So we don't want to recreate it, but we also want to give an actionable link to something for people to use who aren't part of the league, for instance, or a member of the public.

So Jessica, I see your hand is up.



Jessica Radbord 1:02:07

Just a quick share and I'm sure other people who have testified in the legislature

before have experienced this. Then it is quite common in, especially for the days that they're having the big, you know, public hearings where you can go talk to, you know, a committee on a.

Particular topic that they will advise you in advance.

You know, we expect people to be able to have no more than 3 minutes and we will cut you off after three minutes and sometimes at the last minute they need to change that because even more people show up.

 **Frank** 1:02:33

I've been there.

 **Jessica Radbord** 1:02:37

But I do think you know, even with that, I would hope that where it's clear that a person needs a little bit more time because of the communication barrier that a town like, you know, give them some grace and and give them a little bit of extra time. But in general, having gone to many legislative hearings, it it is kind of handy when they let you know up front.

You get 3 minutes or whatever it happens to be.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:03:02

Yes.

Yep, frank.

 **Frank** 1:03:08

Yeah, yeah, the ADA I think should be mentioned then.

Because what I sent out, I don't know if everybody got it. Was the information on the ADA with the Aspergers and autism spectrum now included in that? Is that some people have more difficulty communicating and so may need more time.

Same as this, it takes more time to go up.

To the access ramp to the building. They just I myself may go that way and I can go on and on about it.

Believe me, people tell me this, but I don't have that sensitivity with the queue is because of my brain was organized at birth a certain way.

So sometimes there, and really the ADA is specifying yours to be accommodation to that.

So, Jessica, you're entirely right that the time limits being set being boilerplate needs to be mentioned in this guide. For example, even for towns to make this accommodation.

Even on public comments. Thank you.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:04:12

Frank, thank you for sharing your personal experience of this. And yes, we can put that into the guide as well, assuming we have some coalition which I'm reading with you, hearing that moving on, being clear that duplicative comments should be avoided.

And so that was one of the best practices promising practices that were raised.

And another was not having public comment set for after a decision is made.

That happens a lot on the agendas, but.

I one thing that was brought up was listen to people's public comment on an issue before a decision was made.

I don't know if people have feedback on whether or not.

Anyone as opposed to putting that into our guide, but that was something that we talked about quite a bit.

OK, I'm not hearing a lot that there should be alternate ways to submit public comment that you shouldn't just have to be in the room, that you should be able to submit written comment or verbal comment in a hybrid platform.

Yep, OK.

Recommending that all of the body members do their homework. This is a little bit of a goes without saying, but just that public meetings run better.

If that is true, having that be in our guide.

OK, hearing none.

That all body members do.

Oh, no, that's was our last one.

Sorry my dyslexia.

The reason why these are color-coded is because I have dyslexia, so I can't I skip around all the time on a page.

Clear communication out for when a decision will be made.

So that the body will tell folks when a decision will be made and and how a decision will be made, I would add probably.

OK, hearing.
Yeah, Jessica.

 **Jessica Radbord** 1:06:18

Just adding one thing. Sometimes people like to supplement in writing what they said in the meeting and having a clear if you want it to be considered, you need to let us know by.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:06:30

That's a good point.
Yeah.
And Lauren.
Hush men.
Sorry two eyes.

 **Laura Cushman** 1:06:38

Sorry I'm I'm a little confused.
So if we're not commenting.
Like.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:06:44

If if there's no comments, I'm gonna say we're gonna put it into the guide.

 **Laura Cushman** 1:06:48

OK.
Thank you.
I was like, if I don't say yes, there should be alternate ways to submit public comment.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:06:49

Yeah, yeah.

 **Laura Cushman** 1:06:54

Does that mean we're not adding that? OK, thank you. OK.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:06:55

No, no, that's yes.

These are things that I that in reviewing everything these were ideas for best practices, promising practices that everyone there was really not a lot of debate in this section of our conversation.

These were all things that we all thought were very good.



Laura Cushman 1:07:11

OK.

Great. I just needed that clarification.

Thank you.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:07:17

And yeah, no problem anytime.

That the body should address side chat and the protocol for side chat.

OK.

That there should be an expectation.

Oh, sorry, Frank. You have a new hand.

Laura Cushman is your hand old.

I think it is. Yeah. OK, frank.



Frank 1:07:46

Yeah, the side chat issue.

Becomes a problem with the inclusive situation of the meeting operating. So I think there should be a subpart to that emphasizing that side chats may be contrary to the concept of open meeting because they are side chats and not out in the meeting. It's almost like an execut.

Session unofficially off to the side.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:08:18

Yeah.



Frank 1:08:19

So if somebody wants to leave the meeting.

And talk fine.

But if it's during the meeting, then they control the meeting by the chair.

Is about everything operating.

In the procedure of Robert's rules etc. Thank you.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:08:38

Yes. And just to be clear, this also includes, you know, chatting that's happening between meeting participants on the side of, you know, of a digital platform.

That, that, that there should be a protocol about whether that's allowed, how it's brought into the meeting, if it's brought into the meeting, it's not just between body members, which I actually think open meeting law is pretty clear on.

Already, just just to be Frank.

Sorry to use your name, Frank, but to be clear.

Jessica, I'm going to go to Laura and then you. OK. Laura Siegel.



Siegel, Laura (she/her) 1:09:16

So regarding the spats that if if there was any that's happening, whoever is leading the meeting would need to repeat what's been spoken in the chat, because if you haven't someone who's in the audience and blind or had low vision impairment, they wouldn't necessarily be able to see.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:09:27

Yes.



Siegel, Laura (she/her) 1:09:34

It.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:09:35

That's a really great point that we will make sure to put into this guide.

As a very active consideration when they're thinking about the protocol.

I think I've said this to this group.

I have a really hard time following the chat and facilitating the meeting.

That's a very difficult skill to do, and and that's one of the reasons why I've asked, like, can we just not do side chat because it's so hard for me for resources.

Maybe. But even then, you know, I want to make sure that everyone knows what's in

the chat.

Folks don't have another problem with Sidechat is people don't have access to it after the meeting unless it's displayed on the screen. People don't see it in the recording, it's it.

It has a whole host of issues.

So.

Me personally, if I were designing a protocol, I would say that there is not side chat unless it's for resources and that people post.

What they're putting inside chat, but that doesn't work for everyone too.

That's just what I need for me as a participant and as a moderator for meeting.

So there just should be a protocol.

People should know that again, the rules of the road around side chat and people should follow that, whatever that is in the meeting. Jessica, I saw your hand was up and then Frank, I'll go to you.

 **JR** **Jessica Radbord** 1:10:57

I was actually just gonna ask, are we just saying have a protocol or we gonna make best like best practices or sorry what I can't remember the word that Susan used promising practices around.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:11:05

Promising practices or best practices.

 **JR** **Jessica Radbord** 1:11:10

Maybe don't don't use subchat.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:11:15

I I think we can be a little bit elaborate. I mean I really think to Laura Siegel's point, we should say that people need to be mindful that not everyone can see a chat and that everyone's technology may not allow that.

Another factor that I would really hope this group would support is that there's people that don't have access.

To a computer and are joining by phone.

You really don't have access. If you are joining by phone to side chat, so that needs to be thought of as well, not just people who are in on on the technology platform,

but those who don't have the privilege of having a computer as well.

So.

 **Siegel, Laura (she/her)** 1:12:04

So that was another thing I wanted to mention.

So like whenever I thought the one yesterday, the policy guy and what people don't realize is not all doom pat, all the platforms to me were allowed.

To but like for that, but I have Doom God and if someone wants to call in, move on the relay, they can't.

Because they can't bring the interpreter right on the screen.

In.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:12:35

Bye.

 **Siegel, Laura (she/her)** 1:12:35

The other platform where you can bring the interpreter through the relay on the screen so that way you can see the interpreter and family care.

Like I said, we got them started after the platform using really the pan and they allowed you to have to be able to participate at the level that they were.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:12:55

Yeah.

Well, yes. And I think there's some big questions.

That Ted and I have talked about in terms of are there state resources to provide the approved platforms for municipalities so that they know exactly. So they don't have to do their own research essentially on what is accessible and what's not accessible.

We we know as a state what's accessible.

We should provide a list of what's accessible.

And make it available to communities. I'm speaking just as myself really right now.

But we know.

And so, you know, can can we make it easier for communities to provide accessibility on platforms that we all agree upon are accessible or have as much accessibility features as they can? And and I think this is going to grow and grow and grow. I mean the amount.

Of change that's happened in platforms is really.

Amazing so.

And and should grow Frank and then Kate.

 **Frank** 1:14:03

OK.

In regards to side chat or any other features that you have on your hybrid.

Program.

What? I'm gonna pitch something that nobody really knows that much about, but I know a lot.

Is in the open source model. You can customize.

Your program that you're distributing, you're essentially the interactive.

Active.

Zoom like experience to exclude chatting.

To basically focus on the elements of the meeting that you really want to have.

The.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:14:49

Yeah, that could be part of the protocol, Frank, right?

 **Frank** 1:14:49

Including.

Right. And and and it's free software?

The state just has to jump in and build the server system out and and then everybody doesn't have to pay all these licenses.

All over the place, making other making companies Rich.

So if that can be done and investigated, then Vermont could do whatever it want and it would be across the board everybody. And it would be homogeneous with the essentially the open meeting law at the same time.

So that's just something that a lot of people don't have a lot of knowledge in. I happen to.

Work in live in that world pretty much I I don't like proprietary software because it of its structure.

Inability to be modified to what I'm looking for, so just wanted to say that that's one

of the advantages of the of open source environment.

Thank you.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:15:46

Thank you, Frank.

Kate, I'm gonna go to you and then we have one more topic.

And then I really want to move us to the questions to send to SurveyMonkey because we have not that much more time in this meeting and I want, I really that's a very, very important part for for our office. So Kate.



KL Kate Larose 1:16:02

Yeah, I actually feel really strongly against this one.

So I think the best practice here is actually that there be a signed a separate facilitator to moderate fat that is actually the best practice.

I think that along with the next one, it has a lot of big power and control vibes and energy and it actually is one.

It's it's forcing people to self disclose possibly.

Particularly around the tech and two, it it's just coming.

It's stemming from this place. That's not a good place.

Place it's like we believe this is the one and only way to engage.

We believe the way that I do this is the one and only way that we could do this as a Community, right?

So like, I feel really strongly across the board universally that that's not OK, not the best practice, but also from a disability perspective, it's not OK.

So I am against that one.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:16:50

Meaning cut off access to side chat, Kate.



KL Kate Larose 1:16:55

Yeah. So I think the best practice is having a moderator for a chat.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:17:01

I think I think that's in line with what is here, which is to have a protocol, but we

should mention making sure that people who cannot see the side chat.
Have access to the SIDECHAT and also consider having a moderator for side chat.

 **Kate Larose** 1:17:19

Yeah, the moderator would voice the chat. They would bring up like it's it's a moderation and it's a moderation skill.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:17:21

Yeah, yeah.

 **Kate Larose** 1:17:25

And you're right. One the town, the floor person who's moderating cannot also be the chat moderator. There needs to be two.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:17:30

It's it's. Yeah, it's really hard. OK, thank you, Kate.

And the next one is.

The next one is meeting should end with each agenda item having resolution or decisions.

Do people have feedback on that?

OK. And I think that's our last one.

That's the last one on my chart.

Is.

I agree with you, Jessica.

Good, good point, Kate.

I I the way I I have to handle a meeting doesn't mean that it's the way everyone does.

So a separate moderator makes sense.

Was there another one, Jenny?

 **Prosser, Jenny (she/her)** 1:18:18

Yes, on page 33, there were just a couple more.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:18:22

I don't have a page 33, so maybe you can go from here.

PJ **Prosser, Jenny (she/her)** 1:18:24

The print.

Oh, sure. Why don't I do that?

I'm sorry the printer might not have gotten us all OK.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:18:27

That's OK.

PJ **Prosser, Jenny (she/her)** 1:18:32

So the there were three more on here.

One was to go on the record at the end of the meeting.

Saying discussion among members on business is closed until the next meeting, so that's making that explicit.

Anyone have thoughts on that one?

Hearing none.

People identify themselves when they speak, and I see Frank's got a hand up.

F **Frank** 1:19:04

The the business at hand at the select board meetings typically.

They do.

It could be emphasized in a best practice guide that this would be.

It may be a grant discussion, maybe not mature for the next conversation for two weeks or something.

Or for a deadline.

And so there's a lot of stuff that gets pushed off to a following meeting that amongst themselves.

They decide upon typically during the meeting, so maybe as a best practice to suggest it that.

That doesn't have to be because it oftentimes doesn't go on record at the end of the meeting.

It's just during the course of a meeting, they're deciding to well, we don't have, you know, the bids in or the bids aren't coming in. So we're not going to decide until often.

So that's always going on during the course of meetings.

I'm trying to figure out.

What important things should be go on record to saying it's going to be postponed?

What I'm not I'm confused as to what, because it's it's going on so frequently in every meeting I go to now, what are we talking about in that section?

I'm just any clarification. Thank you.

PJ **Prosser, Jenny (she/her)** 1:20:29

I'm trying to recollect what I think this meant. With this we were getting at was being very explicit that two folks in the room that the meeting is ending making clear that that that there will not be side chats among a quorum of the members.

Offline or however I think that I think that was what this was getting at was making people feel more trust.

What would be done in public versus what might be happening behind the scenes?

And Ted is up next.

TB **Ted Brady** 1:21:06

Thanks concerning the identified themselves when people speak.

Just reflecting on our meeting here and how awkward it would be if the best practice was that every time one of us spoke, we identified ourselves.

I don't know how you address that here to meet what the goal was, which I'm sure there was a good goal to say when you first spoke or something like that or.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:21:23

It was if you are not on screen, if you're in the room because people don't like we.

We had that experience at the beginning when.

TB **Ted Brady** 1:21:30

OK.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:21:36

The interpreter for Laura Siegel asked for the people in the room to identify themselves because you can't always see who's talking.

If you're in A room.

But we stopped doing that when we modified to hear because we can all see who's talking.

TB **Ted Brady** 1:21:51

Yep.

So thinking of a three person select board in a room with a phone meeting going with a, you know, a hybrid meeting, a three person select board's going to laugh us out of the room if our best practices that the three of them have to identify them. Every time they speak. So thinking about how to frame this and exactly you just did. Lauren would be important.

Similarly, going back to that side chat thing, no matter how you know we however you resolve that in any kind of best practice guide, being very Cognizant and saying something like.

If your town has resources to dedicate somebody to monitor the chat, and I know you'd already think of that, but I think that's the important way to frame this.

So it doesn't seem out of the realm of possibility or fictional to municipalities that simply don't have those resources.

And just so I don't need to speak again on our next one translation interpreter services made available again, a fantastic idea necessary, I think right under the ADA. I think this is where we have to get even deeper and say, well, who's gonna provide them?

I think the best practices that the state should make this available to every town and the town could reach cause a town of the town of Baltimore.

Is not going to know where to start.

And so at the very least, there needs to be a pathway to get them to that person.

I don't know what that looks like, but they just leaving them.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:23:15

Talked about.

Yeah, we've talked about in the best practices guide.

You know, there's there's guides on how to to find an interpreter and guides on how to use an interpreter in a meeting. So. So linking all of those things, Ted, whether or not there's a Bank of interpreters at the state level.

We one thing that we talked about is.

The requirement or expectation can't wait.

For the state to provide that, and so I just, we have to be careful about that because that the the requirement is there even if the state doesn't have it.

So that's just the the perspective that we talked about.
In previous meetings.

 **PJ Prosser, Jenny (she/her)** 1:24:01

Just to say on the on for those who don't have the the paper in front of them, it's not just the made available, but also advertised was in here is the idea being you want to get ahead of letting people know that this will be available if you.
Show up so that you have a reason to show up.
And then Kate's up next.

 **KL Kate Larose** 1:24:22

Thank you.
This is another one where I'd be adamantly against.
That that, especially the the funding part.
So this is one where I think that.
In the preface we talk about ADA even provide examples of these are the things you all should already be doing right?
We're clear about that, OK. And so then, you know, providing an interpreter as a best practice gets tricky unless it's universal access.
No one's actually asking for an interpreter.
If we say that is a best practice counselor can get real angry real quick, but I don't think it should be a best practice and the precedent of the state providing funding for that gets like counts have funding for this. It's called taxation, right?
They have budgets.
You pass budgets every year. If you have a need, you pay for it, so I just.
I don't think the state providing an out for their legally required obligations is something that should be put in a best practice.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:25:25

Kate, if I can just ask, you don't think this should be in best practices at all?
Or you think that we should be clear that translation services should be provided, but best practices is to and here are ways to provide it.
But best practices are to also advertise that they are available or to ask Community members to identify which services they need.
So they actually are there.

Because I think those are two separate things.
Maybe I work maybe three separate things.

KL **Kate Larose** 1:25:58

Yeah. So the advertising and promoting probably would be a best practice like you know, three months in advance or whatever that would be.
But the provision of an interpreter if somebody is asking for one is not a best practice.
That's just an obligation.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:26:19

Jessica, you're on the 1st.
I'm gonna go to Frank.

F **Frank** 1:26:23

Yeah.
When the ADA is involved, I think that that's trumping everything. As you mentioned before.
But a courtesy and a best practice might be that anybody who would be anticipating going to a meeting.
Could advise or the town that they would be showing up and would be helpful for them to participate in meeting if there was some level of transcription or translation happening.
Either an in person analog version or a digital version that we still haven't discussed, and I'm confused about why an in person.
One signing versus a digital one with the state of Maine.
Does ability folks seem to be going for? It's why it wouldn't be acceptable, especially when it's getting so much better with All don't work with it, but if that could be explained at some point in time, but.
So no matter what, if it if it complies with the ADA, the only thing that would be a courtesy that could be in a best practices guide is that the town be notified that someone who would be wanting the this assistance this this accommodation would notify them ahead.
Of time so that so that so that.
Any little bugs in their system can be potentially addressed.

Because a lot of people are just simply not going to be able to be equipped with this unless we have a centralized system like I described before where it's all built in.
Thank you.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:28:06

Thank you, Frank.

Jessica, I'm going to go to you and then I actually have to also go to another meeting. So and and we didn't get to the questions to send via SurveyMonkey. So I am going to which is really really important.

So I am going to ask.

I don't know what to do.

I am going to ask.

What? How do you want me to handle that?

I'll take feedback. Yeah, Susan.

And then I'll go to you, Jessica, I promise.



Susan Clark 1:28:46

Sorry. Yeah, just an idea would be.

I mean, I feel as if you and Jenny and the folks in the office have spent a lot of time with this document and my sense is that you have a pretty good sense of what are some of the key things that you want to maybe that you.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:28:58

We do.



Susan Clark 1:29:04

Want to put in or maybe that you're not sure if you should put in, but you sense that people want to put in some of those key Nuggets.

Put those into the SurveyMonkey.

And leave a space for other so that.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:29:15

Yep. OK, I'll do that. Great.



Susan Clark 1:29:16

If you missed something, or if there's something one of my favorites didn't get in there and then offer us all all the organizations a chance to give feedback on that.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:29:28

OK.

And then there may be a supplemental is what I'm hearing. If if there's things that we've missed, please be open to a supplemental. SurveyMonkey OK.

And if you don't like the way a question is phrased, just respond to it like that. Since we didn't have time to I I may ask the questions in a way that is not how you anticipate the question would be asked.

So provide feedback on that as well.

And Jessica?



Jessica Radbord 1:29:55

Super quick. I've worked in a lot of places where for interpretation services we had a contract with a place, right?

And you could just call that number and get and so that might be a, you know, just have this set up in advance, right, that you have a contract with a place that does this and then, you know where to call when you need it.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:30:03

Yeah.

And I think to Ted's point, if the state had, if municipalities could utilize the state contract, which we have that contract, that would be phenomenal and solve a lot of problems.

But we as a state don't have that support from municipalities in some places and in some places we do and maybe this is a place where we should.

Ted, is that fair synopsis of your feeling on that topic?

So Laura Cushman. Oh, you're the only Laura now, Laura.



Laura Cushman 1:30:50

Just to because we I don't know that we've finished whether or not the discussion on the translation interpreter.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:30:57

Yep, I would say we haven't.



Laura Cushman 1:30:58

Situation and and I think you know Kate making the distinction between that should be mandatory not a best practice not a suggestion for best practice but somehow included at least somewhere in this report that it is not.

It's not simply a best practice, but it should be a mandatory practice and and I think I don't know if that would.

Satisfy the issue at hand, but I get that we all agree that it has to happen to some degree.

How how much?

We agree on that is maybe different for everybody, but.

But.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:31:37

Well, that can be a SurveyMonkey question.

I'll I'll make it a SurveyMonkey question, but I also think that in the best practices, what we're really talking about here is how to identify an interpreter, how to make it actually happen on the ground. I really firmly believe that nobody doesn't want to provide a translator. I.

Can tell you just very here. When somebody comes in needing translation services, we always have a scramble.

It takes us 10 minutes to figure out how to get connected to the service and how to, how that and we have a state contract and we want to provide.

We want to provide translation services.

So interpretive services, sorry.

So you know, it just takes a minute and so having best practices, if you know ahead of time and you have a contract, like Jessica said, it just makes it a lot smoother.

And and doesn't alienate that person from the beginning of the meeting, which is the goal.

Or alienate the person from not being able to participate.

In the service that they're coming in to do.

Kate, there's a little bit of chatter about what you meant by your last comment, and

it's Laura's asking.

And she's 'cause. She's the state employee. She can see access to the teams after she's gone.

So she's asking what you meant by.

 **Kate Larose** 1:32:59

So it needs to be, I think for me it's about they need to be pulled apart, right?

So language access, ASL interpreters, and then ASL interpreters.

So ASL interpreters, when someone asks, that is an obligation, right?

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:33:14

Right.

 **Kate Larose** 1:33:14

And then best practice.

So I just don't want that to be lumped in best practice. Unless maybe the best practice is that they already have an account set up with Van Crow and they know how to schedule and they they maybe even reach out and schedule and then cancel if they Don.

Need it.

We do that a lot with our events to make sure we're never left without an ASL interpreter, if needed. If someone requests and then for the language translation and interpretation that that I think that might be a little bit of a different thing, right where it's like what?

Winooski does is, in fact a best practice. Their website is already able to be translated.

They have the headsets available for everyone at events, so that's a best practice.

 **Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her)** 1:33:59

OK.

Frank and then.

Unless anyone has anything more, we're going to close the meeting, Frank.

 **Frank** 1:34:10

Yeah, for for discussion of the committee level.

This came up.

Is in the absence of the interpreter at the meeting. Given the ADA presence and all this other stuff, is that suddenly Trump the meeting?

So it can't happen as if there wasn't a quorum.

Because we have a select board five members, you have to have three there present.

But if you don't have this other interpretation.

Tool, whether it's digital.

Handheld, etc.

Whatever the option is, V can the meeting actually proceed?

Can they approve?

Can they meeting move forward where they can approve payroll?

Can they meet grants, date dates and time?

Can all the business end of the town be actually conducted?

If this suddenly it's a snowy night, it's the weather, it's that somebody can't travel.

They got sick.

They couldn't get their last minute.

Who's going to do these services if it's in person?

Or digital if there's a snafu like suddenly we're not in the room here anymore.

OK. Can the meeting actually proceed?

And is that is this a?

Is this something that becomes?

Overrides the overall meeting and and and even the existence of a quorum at at the meeting.

That's being held and I think that's a serious question because it has to do with the business at hand.

That's very important and sometimes time is of the essence that things get done at that meeting. If the meeting can't be held.

Just because it's against the law that has to be seriously discussed at the legislative level and when this topic is is tossed around because that's the real brunt of the issue, because the meeting really should go forward somehow.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:35:52

I think.



Frank 1:36:07

If it possibly can.

If there's some really important issues like approving something that is a deadline that might have to do with the voting on the actual ballot issue that has a certain time frame that has a cushion before town meeting day, it can be voted on.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:36:25

Frank, I I hear what you're saying.



Frank 1:36:26

All these things.



Hibbert, S. Lauren (she/her) 1:36:27

I hear what you're saying and I'm I'm gonna just say that that is a discussion that I'm confident will come up because the league and us will be talking about that because. The the the ripple effects of of how this actually like what a community does. If something doesn't go according to plan always comes up so.

That that will be discussed quite a bit and I'm really sorry I'm being called into my other meeting.

I want to end this meeting just because I really appreciate all the conversation that we've had today.

I really feel like it's been a productive meeting.

I hope that you guys have felt that too and we will get those survey questions to all of you.

My hope is by the close of business tomorrow.

So please look forward to that.

Please provide feedback on that and I appreciate all of your time.

Thank you.

● **Pajala, Kelly** stopped transcription