lauren Hibbert is on her way oh hey Sean sean is coming in um Lauren Hibbert is on her way she is

at a meeting that's running a bit late um but I thought we would start just by

um going around and doing introductions because we have some new folks here um and I'm going to pass

it over to Sean sean would you just name and and and your role here because we have some new folks

uh Sean Sheen i'm the elections director here at Secretary of State's office and then I'm

just gonna go around the what I have on here um I've got Megan at work at the top hi again

do you guys want to just say a little bit about your about your roles for everyone can you hear me am I on oh I can hear you yes shannon hi I'm Megan you know I'm gonna actually

pause and say Kelly could you please start the recording oh I I started it started oh

great so this is So we are recording great we got that going wonderful so she is on it

all right now we're back on Megan hi I'm Megan yeah I'm Megan Aor and I work with CCTV Town

Meeting Television in Burlington Vermont and I'm here as part of the Vermont Access Network

and Andy sure uh Andy Hooper um 30 years in IT uh 8 years Montpielar city council currently

in my second term middlebury select board uh lot of experience on various municipal bodies

uh and delegate from VLCT to this uh to this committee next I have Laura hi welcome we're

gonna say our names and a bit about our roles i'm Laura Kushman i'm an attorney at Disability Rights

Vermont and um and I am sort of the standin for Lindsay Owen our executive director when

she's double booked on on meetings and uh what have you so I'm sitting in for Lindsay today

from disability rights thanks so much for being here uh Kate hi everyone caitlyn Rose she her I

um am with Vermont Center for Independent Living and was um suggested to be at this meeting in

thestead of the HRC i am here primarily in the role of somebody who has not been able to vote

due to inaccessibility um for the last several years um and many of the peers that we work with

have been unable to um be civically engaged sometimes ever um at local level so um yeah

just really excited to be here um to be part of this i'm popping an image in the chat that just came to me sort of this morning it's the um you know the the famous Norman Rockwell um Arlington

Town Meeting Day from 1942 maybe um and one of the things that we had just found over and over again

is when we talk about accessibility um and and trying to like support peers in getting access

um a lot what we were finding is a lot of select board members um and sometimes town clerks were

just experiencing and envisioning accessible meetings very differently than us and so I

very much look forward to um co-designing and envisioning recommendations for what

a third image of truly inclusive and accessible civic engagement looks like thank you thanks for

being here and next up here I have Kelly hello i'm Kelly Pyella i'm the newest member of the

3:51
Secretary of State's team and I'm uh working under Jenny and I'm kind of doing the the tech stuff for

3:57
the meetings here for you all now so glad to be here kelly and Cynthia hi Cynthia Shelton i'm in

4:07
Statford Vermont and I'm a member of the public but I've also sat on um various commissions and

4:14
committees and I'm a self-appointed watchdog and keeping people accountable type of person

4:21
and I've did a Setford welcome manual to try to include new people into the roles and also

4:29
am currently trying to get the semi-sentennial going which I feel like is a democracy activity

4:36
worth doing and is very much tied into what this committee is about thank you and Frank

4:46
i'm a planning commission member in pallet and also energy coordinator i have a years

4:53
of experience in computer integration at various levels with various operating systems uh also did

5:01
a um stent in that business uh financial services um various environmental groups um and that's just

5:15
the shortened version of a CV i have to say this is Andy holds rank here he has a signed copy of a

5:23
Bruce Schneer book all right thanks Frank so um I believe Yeah so Kelly sent around the agenda

5:32
yesterday um hopefully you all have it but I think the plan today was to pick up um the universal

5:39
design discussion um that we passed over in past weeks with the hopes that Kate and Laura would

5:49

have some input on that for the rest of the group um and then we have a 15 minute just an

update from the technical group that that met once I believe in the interim here um and then rolling

into our um technical discussion and I'm just pulling up our our mandate here is we have the

best practices guide that we're working on which includes the universal design piece um and then we

are to identify the technical assistance equipment and training necessary for municipalities to run

effective and inclusive remote and hybrid public meetings so that is what we'll be rolling into um

for the rest of this meeting talking about the the different aspects of what uh municipalities

are going to need here to really truly do this um and then at the end we're hoping to just um move

into what our our next um discussion topics will be um we do have on the agenda for next month to

continue working on um this this wrapping up the the technical assistance piece and then moving

into the accessibility guide for the polling and local meetings um and that's the next two weeks

after that electronic participation and voting and annual meetings so that that's really going   to be the bulk of our work for the next few weeks is a lot of this technical stuff um and how we can

use the the you know the tech supports to get us where we want to be with accessibility in both the

spaces of public meetings of public bodies and meetings of the voters so that's where we are

and where we're headed does anybody have anything else to add right now no okay so we have on here a

45minute discussion about universal design um full disclosure I know nothing about universal design

as is um and so and I don't know what Lauren had planned for for how how to run that portion of the

meeting what I'm thinking is does anybody and and I look at Laura and Kate because you're the folks

that we haven't asked this question of before in this meeting um do you have any um ability to like

sort of walk through the really high level of what we're we're trying to achieve when we're talking   about universal design is that something that is a term that I I know that that's like that's like

can can you write a book on that but um it's it's big i know and I think we have a group of folks

here we realized when we were talking about this meetings past that we just did not have expertise   in the room so is that something either one of you feel comfortable speaking to no i I I couldn't say

anything more than what you probably already know and um I'm an attorney and I and I am not I don't

understand technology or how technology is being um changed and modified to um assist folks more

universally so I'm not your girl unfortunately okay okay that's that's good information to

have how about you Kate yes i was looking over at the attorney um I mean the one of the things that

um as advocates we're always reminding folks of what's hard about universal design and beautiful

is that there's no one-sizefits-all approach right and so like when you consider like the ADA and

the state um laws surrounding accessibility um it doesn't say things have to be done this particular

way right although people will automatically go to curb cuts great that's great um and I think so

long as there's language that really does make it clear that universal design is what is universal

so if people are asking for something and saying that this is what I need access for based on my

disability then that is you know that then that would be so yeah I don't know like I writing a

book on it absolutely not the attorney saying no so I would have deferred to the attorney um but

yeah I do have some folks um at VCIL if there's specific things that you would like you know

language on language suggestions that I could run past them that would be I think super helpful i

mean so so the statutory mandate here we have this list of best practices right that we're supposed   to cover up the best practices recommend best practices we're envisioning that in in the best

case scenario if there is time make producing some sort of best practices guide right that would be

then sharable and useful if we can't get that far in time for this report what we would hope that

what we could do is present information that could then be rolled into a future best practices guide

that could be made usable Um but we have the list of things that we are to recommend best practices

on and one of those things is the use of universal design for annual meetings and the meetings of

public bodies um and it's that broad is there a definition you not in statute here i mean I'm

sure that there is like some you know general definitions that are floating around out there

in the in in the universe but um it is a term of art can can you pull up a Well I I don't know if

I want to I don't know if pull it up in a screen and maybe we can get a little idea because I'm

confused on it myself can I Can I say something yeah please i I have a whole list that people

have given me that their towns have claimed undue hardship on um and so this is sort of a backend

way to go into like I'm happy to share the list that disabled folks have said "Hey here's all the reasons why towns have claimed undue hardship." And if we design proactively for that um that

might that might be one that might be at least an initial checklist that could be useful yes that

that would be extreme extremely is that something you have handy um yes let me go pull it lovely one

of the things I think I guess we're just I I tried raising my hand do you I can wait no go right

ahead i think I think we're we're at least the point I think where people can jump in and we'll start hand raising if we have to but go ahead i think one of the things and maybe this is maybe

people all understand this is that you're trying to make something that you're trying to give best

practices that don't require um someone requesting or asking for something to happen um that's not

built in and one example could be for example captioning right setting up your Zoom meeting

to automatically allow for and to have captioning turned on and that you know I think we all know

and have experienced that captioning is useful for folks with limited hearing with no hearing with

ADHD with problems with focusing with you know and captioning is an example of a something that

can be recommended as a universal design element that someone should not have to request and then

somebody figures out oh how to turn it on and you know this this has been my experience is I've been

in a meeting where we started the meeting and then captioning wasn't already set and you had

to restart the meeting to get captioning going because somebody asked for it so and I think

there might be other examples like that that we could we could you know I think the ADA says that

also you know doors have to be a certain width you don't have to ask for a door to be a certain width

we've learned that and um certainly I'm sure there are still communities and town halls

that don't have doors that are the right width but there may be other things along those lines

so an element I mean as a as a as a baseline is providing what is needed to large constituencies

for various reasons without having to be an opt in ask for kind of not service but uh so a request is

not necessary you're trying to you're trying to identify which what what things you can you can   proactively provide that have universal use to lots of people for lots of reasons okay i yeah

that that that's that was the sense I had of it um do we I mean do we know whether there is

14:51

like I mean to not reinvent the wheel wheel right whether there is something either Vermont

14:59

specific or perhaps more nationally that that that is like the the that sets forth universal

15:04

design principles that we could be working from is anyone familiar with anything like that some

15:11

boiler plate well yeah i'm just thinking like is is is there and for M specific would be

15:17

great but if it's not you know if there is some sort of is there any case law around

15:23

it oh I'm sure but I mean I'm I'm not going to go straight to case law i think I think I

15:29

think I'm I mean I'm thinking you know these are the because ideally what we're going to be saying is I'm sure like these are the elements of universal design that we really think everyone

15:39

should be hitting on for annual meetings for these public bodies these are the ones that um are ideal but perhaps we need XYZ resources and then that rolls us into the the you know

15:49

the technological resources piece um but yes I think a question there is is yeah what go

15:56

ahead I'm sorry I was just going to say I mean in response to your question yeah there are you know

16:02

uh sort of recommendations for universal design for things like education and learning for

16:10

uh different disabilities i mean there's certainly we we don't need to reinvent the wheel to figure

16:16

out what some of those are we might just need to make additions and adjustments for the specific

16:24

purpose of public meetings and people's access to to voting okay okay do you have a sense of

16:36

what entities would be good places to look for for those for those sort of models like

16:43

um like education i'm imagining I actually I'm not I'm not even sure like what what group might

be putting forth such a guide for say education matters andy just put a useful link in the chat

um okay about from the universal design project that seems pretty comprehensive place to start one

is that mainly around housing or is that meetings I can't find I can't click on the link for some

reason but see if I can there's a University of Washington one see that one in the search

I I'm sure so oh here we go yeah so Andy's got a link here what is What is universal

design the universal design project cool um so there is a universal design.org out

there um and it talks about design that is usable by all people to the greatest extent

possible without the need for adaptation and specialized design okay okay so that   is a good place to start it looks like Cynthia put one in the chat as well um

so we will I think one thing to one one starting place here I think is   to compile these these resources and look and see what we can find and then perhaps

um bring it back to the greater group um

I wonder if we want to talk about

um some of these specifics that we can if we can think of other things

um like the closed captioning option that that that off off the top of our heads that that are

are pieces where either where there's a problem that we should be looking for a solution or where

there's a solution that we're aware of that more people should be or more groups should be using

um and I think and is our goal to or is our goal to make some best practices or to some I'm sorry

19:10

I didn't need to interrupt you nope that's fine our goal is to recommend best practices for the

19:16

use of universal design for for both public body meetings and annual meetings which is going to be

19:22

slightly different obviously because the usage is different um go ahead and this probably is

19:29

advisory for the legislature so you can provide options different scenarios I would imagine

19:35

well yes so yes so the the the specified statutory duty is recommend best practices

19:42

for there's a list of four running effective inclusive meetings maximizing participation

19:48

accessibility and that electronic hybrid so accessible effective inclusive meetings then

19:54

that's one universal design is two um trainings for open meeting law compliance is three and

20:02

then recording of meetings and the means and timeline for posting those recordings which

20:08

um we've sort of thought about as a subset really of the running effective and inclusive meetings

20:14

um and the training really somewhat too i think the universal design is   a very separate piece but those other three kind of roll into each other a bit more um

20:28

I just lost my lost my direction here for a minute um so

20:37

while we're thinking about um did you find your your list Kate do you have it handy

20:47

um I'm just thinking about the the question that people um because I'm trying to listen

20:53

everything but I will um I will go back and look for it that's fine that's fine um oh I see i see

21:00

and I'm also failing at multitasking because I didn't I that's in the chat   and I missed it um but yes so this universal design project that Andy

21:10

um posted the link to talks about 24 categories of access um let me find up here and I think

and Laura has her hand oh thank you thank you Laura you know I just want to caution that you

know we can select 50 different types of universal design methods and there will

still be people who are going to fall through those cracks because there are folks who are

um deaf or heart of hearing who you know don't use American Sign Language or can't read so you

know maybe they used you know cued um translation um or they uh they there are many many different

ways to do interpretation for deaf people not just American Sign Language is what I my point is

simply that I think we can exa make an exhaustive list of of recommendations about universal design

um things that need to be added but we'll also need to um include a provision vision

that says for anybody who um you know is is still doesn't have accessibility

um with all of this in place that there's another method and way for them to request access

um you know maybe it'll be a small number of people that we can't cover with those

uh universal design recommendations but there will be people who um who even those universal

design attempts aren't aren't going to serve no and I think that's a really strong point so we

need to make sure that we're very clear in here that when we're talking about recommendations   for best practices that there are limitations on what you can achieve with those best practices

and you're going to need other other means of making sure that everybody um that that

everybody's able to get access you're not going to be able to do it all yes Craig yeah I'm in one for

the uh Washington edu and they're talking about accommodations so I'm wondering statute of wise

if there's a request that for an accommodation that as opposed to having everything available

everywhere across the state no matter the size of the town that they would be ready for something

for all the contingencies to arrive so the public meetings are by statute under the open meeting

law bound by public accommodations law right so we have other bodies of outside law that that compel

um any entity that holds public meetings or towns or the state to to be in compliance with public

accommodations law and and I only have a very high level view of you know how those requests

work i mean there's a there's there's that that that is a request and then um you know whether or

not the entity has to provide what's requested is a is a is a is is defined in law and plays out in

law um I think that's the correct sort of question what isn't that the correct sort of question well

and I think that's I mean and I would to me as a lawyer I would say that's the last resort right

that if someone's going to have to invoke like the idea here I think is to try to being proactively

setting people up to succeed instead of having people have to threaten a lawsuit to be able to

get what they need to be able to participate right well in case of a meeting along the way there's a   criminal aspect to it if you don't do it right so where does that fit in if you're not doing
it right is it fall under the criminal complaint category so if someone files an open meeting law
complaint and you a public body are held um as having violated the open meeting law there is
the civil element which a court could say you have to undo something or void an act or redo an act
or you know an injunction stop doing this right or there is there is a possible way that a court
could hold someone um criminally accountable for violating the open meeting law that's not going   to fix someone's underlying accessibility issue though that's going to that's going to compel
the board the criminal that's a penalty right someone's going to pay a penalty but that's   not going to actually fix the problem and maybe you have something on your record well Well sure
and I think what we're trying to focus on I think here is that there are these other Sure penalties
for violating public accommodations laws as well and if you step back from that there are standards
in statute that are the bare minimum that are legally required for public bodies and other
public government affiliated entities right to to follow so we have this in law we have there's
a bare minimum standard and I think what we're trying to flesh out is best practices which is
I think probably something that's going to go beyond the bare minimum that's in the law and   perhaps we're making recommendations for what the legislature ought to be doing to modify the law

right perhaps we're making recommendations for just practically speaking pra practices for for

what public bodies should be doing which falls back to what Kate was saying why the towns were

declaring undue hardship possibly yeah Jenny I I share a little bit of Frank's concerns right if a

town goes to provide um provide accessibility features for folks with hearing issues

um but the only person in that town uh does not speak ASL and the town invests in ASL

services because they think that that's the best practices um that is a whole lot

of effort and expense that doesn't actually address any of the needs of that community

but isn't there a different way of recommending that approach isn't there and I see Kate's here

but I also see Laura's and I'm not sure who had it up first go ahead Laura so I think you know

um to think that there would be only one person who is uh in a town who is uh deaf or heart of

hearing considering how we are all aging and the um Gen Xers who used lots of headphones

and went to very loud concerts are going to be aging and going to have more hearing loss

um than you know I think to say that there would only be one person in a town who would need

captioning or any kind of universal design to be able to hear a meeting is is super minimizing the

um the number of people who need accessibility um as a consideration but also I would just say

that we you know we're not just looking at hearing impaired we're looking at people who are homebound

who have been told by their open meeting um clerk clerks and officers that you've got to get to the

building we we're not driving a ballot to your house so you can't attend a public meeting or

vote on this issue unless you can get to the building so what do we do for those people who

are homebound disabled and homebound who can't homebound is maybe not the most politically

correct term to use but you know they can't leave their homes they're so disabled that they they

don't h they can't get into a car and drive to the facility there are lots and lot I mean um

the issue of disability is you know so expansive um and you know so I I I don't want to minimize

like oh just by saying it's I wasn't talking about a whole community and a town meeting necessarily I

was talking about a regional planning commission meeting that maybe has two members of the public

at a given meeting um right there there's a vast range in the audiences and the interest in the

groups that are covered by this law right but we're gonna create laws that cover all of them

right so we're we're looking at the the the public meetings all open meetings and the small meetings

and so you know my point is just that we it's got to be more comprehensive than you know just

considering a a few disabilities a few types of disabilities so so Kate's had her hand up for a

while here so I'm going to call on Kate thank you um so yeah I just reading through the Act

133 again like I wonder if So I I even cringe a little bit thinking about best practices for

universal design because it like Yes and there's a certain minimum things that that like minimum

recommendations that could be made just because like by virtue of it's the year 2025 and this

is how business is done right so like number one all towns should have a website because if they

don't have a website which many have decided intentionally not to do which are free they don't have to post their meeting minutes and it is not an accident that they don't have a website

it's because nobody has said they have to have a website and they don't want to be transparent or accountable right so like that's not a disability thing that's an everyone thing like there needs

to be a website so people can easily get meeting minutes so people can see when meetings are posted when meetings are held because if you don't have that to start with in addition to the other ways

of posting meetings um you know and things like that like it's already not working for for most

people right so like there's the bare minimum recommendations of this is what should be done just by virtue of this is the way we want to do things in Vermont so that everyone's included and

then when I think about best practices I mean I almost think the best practices are really about

hitting upon the knowledge skills and attitudes of people that are able to gatekeep maybe not

intentionally maybe intentionally I don't know um about being able to identify the spirit of

a request for access because I'm hearing time and time again from people that I work with that

um that the people that they reach out to and ask very clearly to me as an ADA request   um was not received as such um and so they were denied and so I think there a lot can be done

around best practices of how being able to not just identify what a a member of the public asking

for access looks like sounds like um but also just that other piece of like the attitude of

hey we want everyone to be involved and that is our goal so how do we help everyone be involved

yeah so Frank interesting curveball here is there's a fellow that lives down the street

who works for Homeland Security guess what he does he goes around to set up for disabled

people access to electronic uh systems etc right because there's so much of it now that's in that

direction and so anybody who would be disabled who would be wanting to get on a Zoom meeting or get

on to a whatever it is is possibly going to also have the same challenges to get other electronic

uh uh you know community access organizations so maybe there's some sort of a centralized

organization uh that multiple organizations can rely on including the towns where people are

identified as needing this access not only for the town meetings but for others that that same

equipment would be able to be used and so jointly you'd be knocking killing off a a whole bunch of

things with one stone just as a suggestion and I want to I want to just call on Cynthia because

your hand was up and it's not now do you is that is someone at the door is that Lauren maybe um Cynthia did you have something you want to share or or Bernard i did um I was trying to

figure out how to put it in the chat but it's too weird um so is there any way for towns to

um find out through some kind of a census or survey what kinds of disabilities are in their

area that could be anonymous but just so that they know which of the buffet of um options

that they really need to address proactively um do you know what I mean so that there are

so many and not every town is going to have them as has been said um so like we have people who

are deaf and I offered to uh live type our town meeting and that was rejected out of hand um so

I'm just wondering if there's a way to survey with HIPPA rules and all the rest um that they could

ask that towns could be aware of who's in their community who has disabilities to pay attention to

and select board members who are elected could be a disabled person who wouldn't be able to particularly access the meeting in a normal way as well we're not only talking

about the public but we're also talking about people who would run for office who can't be excluded from running for office because they're disabled with said disability

and I do just want to say when I'm hearing this that

I'm I'm hearing this like I think we want to stay away from thinking about there's

a normal way and one other way or other ways you know I mean I or or that that there are

there's a segment of the I mean we that we are divided into people who the system is

serving and people who it's not because I think the The whole point of the universal design discussion right is that we can find elements that will serve everybody and that

will actually include those people who are not being served but will also benefit everyone for

a lot of different reasons i agree that our group is going to say that it's burdensome

that's that's what our town is going to say to to a whole list of things they can't hardly

even deal with the chat during the meeting let alone remember to put on the closed captioning

i agree though megan's Yes Megan's got her hand up yeah I'm wondering you know sort of along what

you were I think heading towards Jenny is it sounds like you know even just based on this

conversation in this group of folks that some of the best practices may need to dial back to

the beginning of like you know there may need to be some training provided by the state and maybe

part of this this um report is that it's it's very clear that some training needs to be provided to

municipalities you know with the Vermont League of Cities of Towns or with um you know unfortunately

um what's the organization that just closed um you know they're you know with folks for communities

around how to think about universal design and that we really encourage folks to think of

accessibility ility as an opportunity for greater um involvement not only for folks with specialized

or specific disabilities but for everyone involved um and you know the captioning can be an example

of that sometimes people understand that um there is the use of the universal request symbol

you know that's something that we've done which is again um is is kind of a has been taught to us

as a best practice whenever we have an event or we have something that we're publicizing to put

the universal request symbol and have someone available and then to maintain and maybe this

is again along what Frank is saying that the state provides some accessibility supports which which

does not happen now and this dovetales with a request by Senator Gulick to create the office

of refugees and immigrants around language access you know there are things that people are doing

that we can support with our recommendations to say is there a place that the state can go

i mean is there a place where a municipality can go to say find a bank of um translators to find

a bank of folks who speak either American Sign Language or British Sign Language

or right so that when you do have a request the turnaround time does not feel burdensome

and Laura um so I I just wanted to address the like asking people to fill out a survey regarding

what disabilities they have you know we can't ask people for their private medical information

and to what benefit would that be um so now a town knows that they have five people with

developmental disabilities and three people with hearing impairment and so then they're

creating specific accommodations to deal with those specific disabilities that's contrary to

what we're being asked to do which is to create a universal design so I would just say that like I

don't know that there would be much benefit in identifying how many dis disabled people live

in each municipality um just because we're we're not trying to just deal with those specific issues

and I think as Kate mentioned in the comments like it changes from day to day disability is

the thi is a thing um that touches everybody and it's it's it's one um you know uh category of you

know a class of people that changes regularly because every single one of us um could become

disabled at some point in our lives it's not like um other disabilities that you're born with and

you know that's just the way that your life is going to be i mean a car accident could could

change anything for any of us and so that number is going to constantly be changing so trying to

identify a a a class of people in the here and now um to in order to create uh rules and

laws that are going to be longstanding on the books um it doesn't make a lot of sense to do

i think I'm gonna suggest that we I'm having trouble keeping up with the chat that is very

substantive as well as the the conversation and I want and I think there's a lot of important stuff happening in the chat over there um that is not so I guess my request is let's use the chat for

resource links but let's try to actually have the substantive conversation if we can pull that back

41:14

in to the the verbal um if that's doable for people um and I'm also a little nervous about

41:23

the not nervous I I want to make sure that our record you know the recording is is posted I'm sure we can capture this chat somewhere but I think it's really important that we also capture

41:32

that and save that and but maybe we could try to have a little bit more cohesive conversation and it sounds like I mean we're talking about this tension right there's this tension between

41:40

um trying to figure out a way to support everyone in a big picture way and include everyone which

41:47

is impossible um without adjustments for everybody's own individual circumstances

41:54

and then there's the resource tension right with you know and I think we're speaking to the

42:00

learning curve that not everybody is at the same place in terms of understanding I mean I I had

42:07

not heard the term universal design before this group and I am you know I was a legal aid attorney

42:13

um not the disability law project mind you um and I was not a practicing attorney when I was

42:20

at legal aid let's be clear about that so I am an attorney who has worked for legal aid um and and that was a new term for me so not everyone is at the same place

42:28

um when they're coming to this and a lot of well-meaning people are going to be

42:37

concerned about making mistakes concerned about um ways of talking about these things and I think finding finding a way to to to to

42:48

start at the beginning like Megan was saying is going to be really most useful especially for putting something out there for public use as well as legislative recommendations

42:59

does that does that sort of summarize I think where where we where we're at um okay yes Megan

43:10

one of the things just if if it's useful to you that Lauren was doing was just reading the chat

so that it was part of the public record so we can do that let me pull it up here i was Let's see

so what we have in the chat of substantive we have Kate's list we have let's see I think we okay so

we have from Kate some of universal design can also be practices and procedures for example a

waterberry resident was denied curbside voting this year because the town official was not   familiar with the laws so refresher training reminder checklist for town clerks to review

with election officials the month before and day for um meetings would be universal design

then we have some more guidelines from Cynthia um Kate noted that legal aids um CAP program is that

the consumer assistance program okay yeah um has links to resources they frequently use and that's

affiliated also with the attorney general's office for universal design and printed materials um so

we should be looking there um and then Kate says "Stability is dynamic and what's true today may   not be true tomorrow and even with one individual what is needed as an accommodation today might be

different tomorrow." Um and then Laura said "Yes that's ableism." Exactly we're trying

to avoid and I think that's like starting with a normal and then moving to like what's not normal

as opposed to thinking about the the whole like scope uh you know and starting starting

from the from the full landscape um yeah and Laura also mentioned at the beginning and this

is Andy which I thought I was adding to that no level of foreseeable accommodations will enable   every person to engage at the level they want to without specific practices i'm honestly confused

do you want to say any more about that Andy at this point or do you think we moved on or would   you like do you want to add to that um I I think it's it's really tough to design in a way that

gives everyone as much engagement as they could want without them asking and the the thing that

we heard that like none of these practices will necessarily uh meet that goal and so if

it's a balancing test and really what we need to do is say you should always be captioning

you should make hearing devices available if you've got a meeting and you expect a greater

population than this if if if we can boil this down to a set of practices that's great but I

think the idea that that we can meet everyone where they are without knowing where they are

um it it makes my head get a little a little explody but I think Frank had his hand up yeah um

as far as undue hardship is concerned that is with the Vermont state open meeting law however

the Americans with Disability Act as of as Laura may be able to testify to as expanding in in the

case law to also include those in the autism spectrum in some cases all right so you have

a civil problem here which I there was somebody running around we had an office and was we had we

put out handicap ramp and had the door sizes not everybody did but there was actually some people

running around seeing what places did not have handicap access hunting for a civil case location

47:00

that I experienced in my past and I met these people and that's what they were doing and they're going from village to village to village looking for people that didn't have handicap access in

47:10

order to engage with a civil action i thought that was interesting you know hunting for some cases

47:16

uh so you have that and one of the things that technology-wise that we had to me ask answer

47:25

some of our questions that I mentioned that put in the spreadsheet Megan with the over was the

47:31

uh everybody has these cell phones these days and if they can come into a meeting like we're

47:37

doing here virtually with the hearing devices attached to the cell phone they would be very

47:42

well able to audit the meeting without without having hearing devices or having simp hearing

47:50

devices that would be readily available that would be like those types of devices so I think that we

47:58

can get past this but the requirement that has to be done is something we were trying to deal with

48:06

with inclusive factor is we're not excluding and so uh the question really is if if the state wants

48:18

to set up a statute where accommodation would have to be pre-erequested and if that would be

48:26

legal then every town would be then able to know ahead of time and then if they didn't accommodate

48:34

at that point in time then it could run into like meeting more education you know you don't

48:40

want to take people to court it it's and and if the state were helping financially and with a

48:48

centralized organization to do this then it's a no-brainer that it can be plugged in because the

town folk aren't going to be comp dealing with the complexity of there's people that don't even know

how to put up a website ksk might know as well they just may get PSTD on the thought of it so I

think that we can I just rambled a little bit but I think that there's tools available to solve all

the problems so Kate's got her hand up ah thank you um I just so I think this is a a question

with a statement but there's still a question at the start so in reading through act 133's charges

my understanding is that we are talking about accessibility transparency and accountability in

local um municipal goings on not for a protected class of people but for all people right and so

I don't it it doesn't seem useful to really like ostensibly like disabled people have civil rights

in this in this matter right um except we know that like basically no because the de facto is

that you're going to have to like just do a lot of work as a disabled person at the end of the   day you're still not going to get what you need to have access to meetings and you're going to be

universally hated in your town you know um so like I really I don't think it's in this particular

case I don't know that it's actually useful to think about universal design in the framing of

people with disabilities because think about for example the towns who have spent a lot of money to

install elevators are those elevators ever turned on do they know where the locks are for the doors   no um but it's not just people with wheelchairs who should have access to that it's the mom with

50:28

the stroller right and so like if we can think about this as access for all I think it's going

50:33

if in fact the accessibility transparency and accountability and act 133's charge is for   everyone because like captions for example like you shouldn't have to have any sort of diagnosis

50:43

to be able to request captions like I might be a parent holding a sleeping baby in my arms and want

50:49

to be able to engage in the meeting and still get access to captions without being told no

50:58

john yeah I I like I think you have some really good points there Ken thinking about broadly for

51:04

everyone yeah my mind's been sticking back with those questions about I think were popped up I

51:10

think Cynthia or maybe NDS2 with with the surveys and my thought is you know for the survey if it

51:18

was framed not around you know are you a person with a disability or what disabilities do you   have or what do you need but more an assessment of whether people know about the town's meetings

51:31

whether they feel welcome whether they feel accessible things like that i think you'll get   a broader swath at what's preventing there from being the attendance you know it could be the time

51:42

of day it could be that people are busy it could you know it could be a whole slew of things and I   think that gives you something that you can have that metric to kind of try to build on and have

51:51

improvement going forward and it's not kind of focusing on the disability part but more on what

51:58

the what the solutions are and then I think it it sort of feeds into the point that some folks   have been saying about kind of having the menu i mean you're having that broader mindset of here's

52:08

things we should always have but also we know we have in our toolkit things we could pull upon if

we're hearing that meetings aren't as welcoming inclusive getting as high participation whatever

the case may may be um but not kind of going right to everything that wouldn't have used i'm thinking

like in the elections space we have the um the accessible voting machines that every municipality

has and we send trainers there to set them up and I think as you know as Laura and Kate know well a

lot of clerks feel frustration with them because the majority of the towns spend all the time kind

of setting it up and no one comes to vote and have the sense of okay we did all this work for nothing

but it's really shifting that frame to what are we you know are people feeling like they can

vote are they accessible maybe that doesn't work for them i think as Kate or mentioned before too

it's they somebody it's the need they need to come they're homebound to bring I think actually Laura   you're saying the homebound you know to bring the ballot to them that's shifting from meetings but I

think that broader kind of perspective um I got a question for the state is requiring this accessess

accessibility for voting and voting is controlled by the states is there any overlays that the ADA

A has federal which governs this as well that you have to follow and take under consideration other

than just what the state wants to do on the access issue yeah as far as the state controlling the

voting you know in Vermont actually elections are administered locally right so they're administered   locally but there are requirements also ADA exactly yeah so there are Yeah so there are

accessibility requirements there are election requirements from at the federal level there's   federal law that that localities have to adhere to and yes there's also state state law state

statute that they have to adhere to as as well and pieces that support so I'm wondering if

the states cook some the federal feds have cooked something up already in regards to this which may

we may fall under the umbrella of and we haven't passed that question yet i see Laura's hand up

uh I I haven't been to all of these meetings and so this may have already been covered and   you may already well have a list but you know would it be helpful to start with a list of

the barriers to accessibility and transparency and accountability that we're being asked to

uh eliminate or address um do we do we even know what what I mean i think we all can

think of examples right of accessibility or transparency barriers that we've heard of or

we've encountered ourselves in dealing with our open meetings but um it might help us focus the

discussion about I mean obviously we're looking for a universal design to deal with all of it so

um so in previous meetings um we so the short answer is we have a list in so far as we have

in some places we have we we've talked about that specifically and kept it we also have documents   that people have been contributing and we're compiling those here at Secretary of State's

office so if you have a list or want to make a list or if anybody has not done that and wishes   they would and thinks that they have things that we haven't hit on or or maybe should hit on harder

um I welcome sending anything to me and to Lauren and we're working on compiling all   of that and and trying to like the next goal we have in house really me is to try to streamline

all the conversations we've had so far into like an outline of a document that would answer the   first couple of questions that we've talked about um and so we we we do have some of that i don't I

don't think it's you know nearly comprehensive but it's a start anyway yes Frank I just emailed you

something it'll tell the rest of the group it's a an official website United States government GSA

section 508.gov and it is titled create accessible meetings and it has uh a whole bunch of like

policy and management content creation design development acquisition testing training tools

and events so if the feds have already coming down with this if this is something we're also have to

follow no matter if your state or not then that's something that we might model after it's like

making sure that we're staying within legal bounds and federally yeah yes because then then then that

removes uh lawsuit potential if we're addressing that need properly then we are some people are

going around hunting for cases to sue on if you if the feds are requiring it nationwide and then Kate

thanks i I perhaps this has already been shared in previous meetings but like I gosh I I want to

I want to just name this concept of people like hunting for civil rights violations is like not

really a thing because it's not necessary to hunt every disabled person I know has had civil rights

violations right um and I have like at least in my in the peers that I work with at BCIL I know

20 people like 20 different towns who have been denied access to public meetings in the last year

um some of them very rudely um so there's not there's not the need I don't think we should be

afraid of this concept of hunting for civil rights violations because like they're there in every   single town um and just by just by virtue of the fact that how many towns is it right now 75 that

do voting floor voting for public options local elected officials or budgets just by virtue of

that already um 173 at least are um systemically excluding people so and we have our federal laws

we also have our state laws that protect um the rights of people with disabilities um and those

are only as laws are great laws are only as great as the enforcement mechanisms the enforcement   mechanisms are horrible and the people and the organizations that are able to do the three and

four and fiveyear fights um like lawsuits are not fun they're awful actually they're really   awful and very expensive um and they never get any they don't really result in what people like basic

rights at the end of it um those organizations are also being defunded left and right so I I really

do want to push back that in my understanding of Act 133 is not about access accountability

and transparency for disabled people it is for anyone in Vermont that wants access and so if   that means that I am a town voter registered voter in Arlington but I want access to a town meeting

um in oh let's pick one uh Sheffield why not right because it's an issue that I care about so why

like like yeah I just I really want to push back from that and I'm just I'm sorry just from doing   this work and living this hearing this concept of like this this group of people that are going

out trying to figure out like make something that doesn't exist be there like it exists   everywhere i want to start with that there's inaccessibility in every town in the state always

so as I'm mindful that we're we need to move to our next level

very quickly Frank real quick so what you're stipulating is basically it's it's statewide

it's not a municipality with a citizen issue that any citizen statewide should be able to

attend any town's meeting statewide even though they're not a resident of that town essentially

is that what you did i just hear that you say that Kate yeah i wouldn't know why not right

like why if we want to be accessible why don't we want to be accessible right accessibility

is accessibility and so this concept of people pushing back that elections um that something

would be expensive or something would be hard guess what elections in democracy is hard   elections in democracy are expensive that's how it is so this isn't a separate thing right like

this is all part of the thing this is the cost of elections this is the cost of civic engagement

i think I think it's um I'm I'm going to move on from there   um right now just because I I am mindful of the rest of things we want to talk about so

I think well said Kate um I also think the next steps on this is going to be um

com I I maybe compiling the framework maybe what I will try to do is draft accomplishment of the

framework we're going to try to use not not the actual um not elements of universal design

per se but how how we want to be looking at this right and and and I think and I have been trying

to sort of jot down those those touch points and tensions that we've all been hitting on through

um this conversation um so I'm think well I'll set that one aside i do think we should come

back to it i mean I know we are going to come back to it i'm thinking maybe next week we will   add that next meeting excuse me next meeting um add that back in as a you know sort of a

a follow up and next steps on that piece as well as um the the best practices for the other parts

that are more open meeting law specific um so the the next topic that we're we're trying

to hit on for this report is the topic of um I'm going to get it up here the technical um

it is it's the technical assistance equipment and training necessary for municipalities and

this is zeroing on municipalities the rest of the report isn't necessarily um to run effective and

inclusive remote and hybrid public meetings um so technical assistance equipment training those are

the three elements and for the next agenda item we had here was just a to try to get a quick update

from the small group that was meeting to sort of discuss this on the on the side um and I'm

I can't remember who all was participating in that discussion but does anybody just want to   summarize how that conversation went i'm seeing Susan nodding i'm hoping Megan uh is going to

step up sure sure i had my I had my notes up in here um just to give you a quick overview Susan

myself Andy Hooper and Frank met on May 30th and the what we had sort of selfdecided was

to come up with some technical needs for hybrid meetings and to really focus specifically on that

um on to set aside archiving and town meetings for future conversations and this is technical

needs for hybrid meetings for uh local public bodies municipalities um we met and began to

kind of outline some options and realized um that of course things get complicated quickly

um and then um Susan and I met again on June 5th yesterday um to outline some of the kind of goals

of why we would want to support either best the best practices around hybrid access to municipal

meetings um that would be you know current and ongoing concerns with hybrid access to municipal

meetings the tradeoffs sort of acknowledging the tradeoffs the pluses and minuses around hybrid

meetings this would tie back to the conversation that we were just having with accessibility and

then what do we need regardless of whether this group is going to recommend legislation

or not what would be the best practices for hybrid access to municipal meetings

um we do have a list um designed and developed um that I'm happy to share with folks which is

um some hybrid setup meeting options from the simplest setup of a phone in and what the pluses

and minuses are on that to an in-house um builtin setup and our goal is to come up with some price

points so that if we are going to request or recommend as part of our working group a grant

that there is some uh there's some sort of drive behind that some logical drive behind that grant

recommendation and if you wanted to um let me share my screen for a minute I could share the

notes with folks that sounds wonderful yes and if you could also send that to me and or Lauren

after um but yes please i would love you to do I have to give you permission to do that   let me figure out i don't didn't seem to okay i don't know what you see now do you see anything

we do um that's yeah that's much clearer now yeah um so again breaking this into two con two places

there's the goals right and so this this area here where you see areas for discussion and reporting

back to the legislature might be places that we just have a conversation amongst ourselves

around these three main um buckets and then we have um come up with some hybrid meeting setup

options this graphic is not to be used it's just an example of a kind of graphic that we may want

to present if we were to do that um I you know again I'm not sure what this group what the what

what we want in a final report um if we want something as simple as a you know a friendly

um what do you call this a friendly kind of infographic or if we want some more detailed

like on the left um sorry I think that's awesome i'm not so not sorry accessibility request i can

I can this be sent out i didn't get a copy of it and the scroll of it is really Thank you ab:

Absolutely and and just Kate I don't think you were here at the last meeting i asked

Jenny and Lauren for permission to meet as a small subgroup to have some preparation so we could come

um with some preparation so I'll copy that and post it right in the chat right now and um

and let me know immediately if sharing option it should be public to anyone on the web so

I'm requesting access um okay think I have to All right um so you'll have to give me a minute

to remember where that is on here oh here it is sharing it was not so anybody on the web

anyone with the link it can be a viewer or a commenter and then we're done and I will just

um give a nod to Frank that like I apologize to all of you for bringing you into the Google

verse if I could break up with Google today I would um but we have been in a long-term

relationship and it is it's complicated it's complicated it's incestual it's even worse

yeah so here there are some questions i'm not sure how you want to approach this we

do have some questions for the working group which may not be where we want to start um

well I'm wondering do we just want to walk through so I see here in the second page you   got the hybrid setting options but you it's can you scroll to the top to the beginning

of your or is that Yeah so I'm wondering if we just want to go through these discussion

i'm thinking you want to go through these and go through these and then we can get to the   questions i love I I love that you put this together thank you so much and Andy or Susan

or Frank if there's anything that you want to um break would you like me to continue would folks

like me to continue sharing this document or would you like to open it on your own

um let's continue sharing it frank did you have a comment yeah I have a point   is we're looking at generic hybrid meetings for the open meeting and I think we have we

have three classes of viewers here we have your TV CCTV viewers who's Megan is is a CCTV viewer

a a interactive viewer who participates in a meeting or they're just watching the meeting

we for me hybrid meeting means that those who are joining virtually and those who are in the

room participate in the meeting on a equal or egalitarian footing according to the roles that

they take so if they're a select board member and they're virtual they are participating as if they

are sitting in the room and if they are a you know a a member of the public they're

participating according to their role as if they are sitting in the room so the that's to me the

word hybrid means that you have an ability to be in the room or online and in this case it

might be over the phone or it might be on Zoom or Google Meet some virtual platform but just

a live stream of a meeting I do not consider hybrid watching a meeting at the and on say

a YouTube live stream or some other live stream is just viewing a meeting it's not participation

um that's great clarification and I I'd like to see that this divided into two sections as we

think about it is we have the open meeting select board the public server meeting and   you have engagement and it's open and it's democracy and action you do have that aspect

of the meeting but there's another aspect of the meeting where the meeting and you

know where I'm going with this where they would the members the suck board would be

going potentially into an executive session and that executive session then has to operate also

uh accordingly to the intent of executive session from a privacy and security perspective where

it's black and white because you keep you don't have a gray area where your public can maybe be

participating in some capacity in an executive session is no public involved sure so the public

yeah the session is a closed portion of an open meeting and so the hybrid element would apply

the statutory requirements for hybrid and the recommendations as I understand them generally

address only the open portion of public meetings and I think I mean it I'm not sure that this is

where we need to drill down in that but I do think there probably is a place for a discussion about   the use of technology and inclusion in executive session for board members i'm not sure that this

is necessarily where we're going to pick that but that's a separate that is a separate place   because of course is going to I mean if you're going to have a hybrid meeting you are going

to have members in that executive session who are attending from various locations as well   there may be a higher bar technology-wise as well than just the regular meeting so

noted on that point um so let's see I'm looking through here i'm seeing your um
the the areas for discussion and reporting back from the legislature and all and the
trade so I'm seeing a list here on what I think is your page two um that seems like a good pile
of discussion points do you think if we go down to your questions on your page four are we going
to be is that summarizing or additional to the information and your thoughts i think
we're too early on page four i think I think if we stay on page two and maybe start with
these questions current and ongoing concerns with hybrid access to municipal meetings and
then the tradeoffs you know acknowledging what the tradeoffs are for hybrid meetings
and then what do we need for best practices for hybrid access to municipal meetings and
it sounds like we need to make sure we define what a hybrid meeting is as well
it's to me again having been in that it it seems obvious but it's not obvious right so let's maybe
that's just where we start is define what is that what are people meaning by a hybrid meeting
well under the open meeting law I mean my understanding of a hybrid meeting matches what you described in so far as under the open meeting You need to members need to hear and be heard by
um everyone who's participating in the meeting at a minimum audio not video at a min minimum
audio i'm interrupting i'm sorry i'm just I'm I so I'm going to back up that agreed that the an
option to just watch a meeting without the ability to participate in that meeting directly you know

which would include yes absolutely minimum audio to be able to um give your op express your opinion

on the matters considered by the body which is an entitlement in the open meeting law for members   of the public um you need to have that interaction element that's that's essential um or the ability

to interact you don't have to not every person has to interact but every person has to have the   ability to to be able to um to to speak right and it's within the parameters of the meeting

procedure so reasonable expectations and so forth but um but yeah and I think the you know you think

about what the the legislator's live streams are an example of the other format that I'm

considering not a hybrid meeting right they put the they they they put it up on YouTube everybody   can watch it but you're not you're not able to testify from that YouTube station you have to be

invited to testify and that's they're they're not an open meeting law discussion but we're within

open meeting law where with hybrid meetings that's a requirement that that that's my view   based on the legalities of it um we might want to come up with cleaner language than that rambling

analysis but um but I do think the interactive portion for public participation is essential

to comply law

inclusion again does that seem clear to everyone else is there more to add to that i guess I

also I'm going to add one more thing which is you is is the spaces in which you meet right

a hybrid meeting would require under the open meeting law a physical location um staffed I think

that's still in there yeah staffed by a physical staffed location designated staffed location where

the where public can attend and participate and you would also need to have the electronic access

um which includes telephone access that statuto language as well so you need to have at least two

locations one of those being electronic one of those being physical and when you say includes

telephone does that mean telephone could cover it i just I just I'm pretty sure it does but I

just want to be clear um and certainly one of the techniques that I've seen used is to have

um the visual access then the one that we were just talking about the CCTV one that's not

u interactive have that exist so that I can be sitting at home and I can be watching the meeting but then have the ability to call into the meeting

um and that so it would only be audio uh in terms of the participation but um but the CCTV would would enrich my my understanding of what's happening

i put must include telephone call and access by a landline and so I you know I haven't I

haven't had this experience so this would be something to test is I feel like I I haven't

called into a meeting except using a cell phone that allows me to punch in a bunch of code numbers

so I don't know I don't know what the difference is there but I also see K

hand raised and I know we're following um so also just listed there the the wording um hear

and be heard by participants to truly make it universal i think that it would need to include a way for public comment to be provided written that could be read aloud by a moderator

is there a universal Is there something else besides hear and be heard other than members need to be able to participate the hear language comes directly from the text

of the of the statute and it's spec specified at members of the public body who are participating

electronically need to be able to hear and be heard so the idea is you can't

um you know you you can't be joining a meeting by say email or some other medium you have to at bare

minimum be able to to hear all participants and be heard by all participants and that's just for members participating electronically as per the statute i want to be careful here though

when we're defining a hybrid meeting because I think there's there's like the legal elements that are required and then there's what we're recommending and I think we just want to I mean

and I think what we're talking about it we're justing all those and that's fine we just want to make sure we when we when we break it down you know there is going to be this is

non-negotiable this is what's in the law right now but this is what we're saying is needed this is what we're saying we should be we should be considering as the baseline for a hybrid meeting

and what are we doing right here with this paragraph is this the Is this existing law or is this the wish list um well we've got call in by landline that's not existing law um

I'm looking at this the members need to hear and be heard that statute I mean allows participation according to participants role in the meeting i mean I think that's implied by the law it's

not explicit in the law yeah we leave that to you andor Absolutely yeah lawyers to I

think this was just sort of here amongst us do we all you know have a general understanding

of what a hybrid meeting is sure i I I would add some language and in between

uh and a virtual platform that allow it's fuzzy here it goes in and out allows two-way audio and

or video electronic access that's back and forth and I don't want to get mired down in

this like we're trying to hardwire a definition right here i think we're we're trying to make   sure we're level setting so we're all talking about the same thing but I don't think that we
have to lock this down right here right now for the purposes of this discussion if that   electronic access is big you're talking about audio video and Andy did you have your hand up
um I I did i found something that actually referenced that speakerphone or Skype for
audio participation was compliant with uh the open meeting law so we weren't going beyond that
but then I realized that this was on the cannabis control board site it's not necessarily secretary   of state or elections guidance but it is a vermont.gov site so make of it what you will
so we want to and Frank to Frank's point I think that when we get down to best practices for hybrid
access we could get into sort of the differences what what the what the temperamental and kind of
emotional I'm lacking word difference is between webinar participation and meeting participation
so where would it be best that you see everybody else who's on the meeting and
where is it acceptable that a municipality has only the um the members of the body the select
board say visible and everybody else hidden um and that again is getting into the weeds
but I think has to do with best practices and probably would not be in the definition
and the goal that's listed there about not overt taxing meeting leaders um is that where where does
that goal language come from i made it up um what I was and what I was trying to do there
was create and maybe taxing is the wrong word but um what I was trying to do was do talk about the

1:23:57

sort of two polls that we're talking about and it was essentially the the the ones that Jenny mentioned earlier how do we support and include everyone and also acknowledge that that calls on

1:24:07

resources uh and that creates attention um and it's it's it's kind of along the lines

1:24:12

of what we were talking about earlier we are focusing very directly right now on the needs of

1:24:19

uh the participants um and that's super important and I I fully endorse it and I also know that our

1:24:28

municipalities are funded by tax dollars and they are staffed largely by volunteers and

1:24:36

um we need to acknowledge that there are going to be limitations to what we can provide and so how

1:24:43

do we how can we be most efficient um in providing these needs how can we um uh be most welcoming

1:24:51

while we are also um recognizing that there's only so much um that we can do um I guess maybe as one

1:25:01

of the only people here who's been denied access as also a volunteer voter um denied access to

1:25:06

voting year after year after year um and public meetings um along with all of my peers I want

1:25:13

to be really careful that we're not seating the authority and the the focus of this group before

1:25:21

we even make recommendations so if the purpose of this meeting is to ensure best practices for universal access I would really hate for us to see hedging language that cuts at that from the get-go

1:25:34

i agree so can Yeah Kate can I So I appreciate that i think one of the things that um when Susan

1:25:45

and I met and it was just Susan and I coming up with these frames for everybody to respond to

1:25:52

um and my you know if I were to be in charge of the world be like come on people get on board

you know what I mean like what an opportunity um I hear you I mean what an opportunity to um

connect with one another and to grow by by ex by embracing the most um the broadest accessibility

standards and and putting our resources putting our money towards that um if we could it would

be great to hear that to get into this and like what are let's let's get into what the pluses

and minuses are if if we dare and then we can then move forward having acknowledged our own we we can

move forward with making recommendations so does that does that make some sense or you would rather

not even have pluses and I don't I don't want I really want to push back about this two-sidism on   this right because on one hand there's paid people to do elections and to provide access and on the

other hand there's people who have been begging for access for their entire lives and aren't   getting it so there's no two sides to this right this is what this is what we are charged with to

be able to make this more accessible and honestly none of what we're talking about is revolutionary

like most states have figured this out right and so like I don't want to act like what we're

like the ideal is this like panacea that would cost a bajillion dollars because it literally

wouldn't it would be a free website you know maybe a couple thousand dollars to like and like post it   like it's not I I just really want to be careful that we're not going into this with internalized

abbleism and other isms as our framing point i see Sean's hand up do you want to Yeah I can if

I could just be quick on that i think you know I think as Susan noted with whether or not the overt

taxing is the right word or set up or you know plus or minus or one or two but the way I the way

I see it or one possibility what I think the group and I wasn't part of the group of that language

but with the not overt taxing leaders isn't like a it's not like an eitheror necessarily because I

think even with our work as this committee is to try to set up the the structures or the broader

supports or whether they be financial or pieces from the state or whether they be best practices   or whatever they can so I think even if the goal even if the expectation is to be at an optimal

level how you get there whether it's all put on a local leader in the town or whether it's put on

the expectation that the group or other resources best practices things are going to be brought to   bear to make it easier for those local leaders to hit that top level that that's how I inferred that

line in reading it and I'm um Susan you go next and then I'm going to jump in because I want to

Well actually yeah Susan you go ahead and respond sure yeah um as a like a meeting facilitator

um I I really resisted the pluses and minuses framing as well because I don't think it's useful

i think it pits us against each other um us being the world um and there are way better ways to do

this and in fact I I suggested a process that we could use um to flesh out the um the benefits and

um what could be termed the over reliance on some of the values that we that we're leaning in here

and I Kate I definitely hear your your concerns um and I also just want to be sure that we are

understanding that um I think everyone is here with goodwill um and these are um I think to talk

about yeah seeding um ground is is is um is is not the way we want to be framing this we want to be

framing it as both hand we want to be framing it as if there are things that are that are hard for

um existing resources uh to to fulfill then how can we get the resources to fulfill them

not pretend that those aren't hard not pretend that we aren't talking about already overtaxed

volunteers um how can we how can we um broaden the mindset of the volunteers uh c certainly

that's going to be necessary and also how can we give resources to the volunteers and and part of

framing this is also not just saying not just pointing the finger at municipal officials but   also empowering um uh citizens of all residents of all uh stripes to be able to say "Hey here

are best practices that I could help moderate and facilitate and bring to my town." I can go to my

select board and say "I know you guys are super busy uh can I help um and here's here's a list

of best practices that I can pitch it on um so that we can so that we can raise raise all boats

thanks Susan and that a lot a lot of that was what I was going to mention i I think there

isn't a line necessarily too between those who are in the uh meeting official role and

those who are or the members of the public role because we're hoping that that's going   to be a flow and that members of the public are going to be empowered to become officials

um as well and opening that to a broader group of people but I just I want to point back though to

that this particular guide this particular element that we're discussing today um the best practice

that we're recommending is exclusively for technical assistance equipment training for public

meetings so this piece and there we're going to be talking about meetings of the voters in many

places elsewhere and in fact the next topic that we'll be doing is a guide for accessibility for   polling and public meeting locations so it's going to include the polling um the voting

locations but this particular piece is looking at what tech assistance equipment and training do

towns need to be able to do all this stuff that we're hoping that they they will be able to do

uh you know and so um I want to focus in on that public meeting element as opposed to make for this

purposes of this conversation as opposed to to to broadening out to also meetings of the voters

yes Frank andy could you share your letter that you sent to me because I think it pretty

much encompassed all the challenges of that that Jenny was just talking about yeah I'll forward

that to Jenny to be included in the record and shared with the group thank you um yeah

so so I I guess I guess and within that charge right that we're we're identifying what help towns

need it's going to be difficult to talk about what help they need if we aren't able to talk about

um what's not working right now and I I hear you that that the framing here is not helpful

1:33:27

and I I I think we we have to figure out a way though to be able to identify what

1:33:35

if we're going to if we're working from a place where we're assuming it's not working for everyone right now which we know it's not then we're going to have to figure out some ways

1:33:43

to be to to be saying what it is we're trying to assist when we're act when we're saying this is

1:33:49

the assistance we need this is the equipment we need this is the training we need yeah and I just threw like a sample reframe right like for what the goal is in the chat so I put goal instead of

1:33:59

goal is to improve accessibility and transparency while not compromising meeting quality or overt taxing leaders or participants i wrote goal is to recommend equipment to improve accessibility and

1:34:08

transparency yeah and Susan I think you could leave it i could I just put those two down and

1:34:16

I I want to be really clear that these notes are for our internal review and I would not I would

1:34:25

not stand behind saying like me personally I would not say I want to present a a a role of pluses and

1:34:33

minuses i would want to I would want us to you know for example like this one or distractions

1:34:42

of remote participants right that's that is a universal experience that I think I think

1:34:49

many of us could have right like for me the the introduction with co of remote meetings means I'm

1:35:01

having back-toback meetings I don't have any time between meetings It's you know it's ridiculous

1:35:06

it's exhausting and my tendency to start checking email and and trying to multitask and this happens

1:35:15

with select board members as well you know when somebody is on public comment they start reading

1:35:24

their emails or texting to you know and that would be something we would want to put in a best

practices guide is facilitation that encourages people to focus on what is happening um in the

room so this is not meant to be um specifically pluses and minuses around um resources or uh

accessibility for people with specific needs and notice Laura's had her hand up for a while

uh yeah I just wanted to piggyback on what Susan said about you know um remembering that you know

this I think that there are a lot of people who uh you know clerks and board members that

um that are that want this guidance that don't know what to do that this accessibility questions

or transparency questions are put to them and they don't know how to answer them and they don't have the they just haven't been given the tools or so anyway I just wanted

to to say that this the I think there are a lot of people and just in my experience you

know it's like one clerk wants to do this and then someone else wants to do that and they can't agree because it's not written for them on how they're supposed to approach an issue and so

anyway I think it will it it uh I don't see this as uh adversarial as much as really help providing

um everybody involved with some solutions that they all want on either side if there are sides

megan is that a new hand oh sorry did I not take my hand down i can't see myself

anymore it's still up so with Would it be useful to go through these did I take

it down now i can't remember i can't even see where it is i think it would be useful

i mean this current and ongoing concerns and tradeoffs are sort of the same thing and it

may be useful just to have folks say um what those what those are um and you know I'm going to again

reiterate that my you know maybe we don't need to spend much time there maybe everybody's ready

to move into best practices um because we have a kind of general shared understanding that we

love we we just we are in love with hybrid access to meetings and we want to spread the gospel we

may not be ready to share um a recommendation to make it legal or or mandated but or or maybe we

do but maybe we maybe we skip this first part and we just move into best practices i would defer to

the group frank what did you have something else you wanted to add yeah um because we're talking

about the technical side but we possibly need to bring into the discussion the people side   because like in our planning commission we had somebody that could do whisbang things on the

screen like this and when that person couldn't be at the meeting was chairing the meeting you

couldn't have the meeting in the same way so you have redundancy issues in the labor side

as well as equipment sites right and and and our charge is technical assistance equipment

and training and I think the training piece there speaks to what what you're bringing up

hand up oh thanks Susan

yeah yes um I um we actually did our town meeting I think I've mentioned this before

for 12 years we did it um offering remote town meeting participation so I'm a big fan of of

offering that and I would also say to Megan's point about being in love with hybrid meetings

as a meeting facilitator I can tell I mean I know that hybrid meetings are the uh gold standard for

um accessibility and I 100% support that and I also know that they are whatever the opposite

is of the gold standard um for deliberative democracy um they're the like you know poop

standard you know like as a facilitator I would much rather um facilitate and I know this is

universally true easier to facilitate an allon online meeting or an all in-person meeting um and

um a hybrid meeting is the hardest kind of meeting to to full to do well to do well for the people uh

online and for the people in the room and so um to say that But I'm in love with hybrid readings it's

like I'm half in love with hybrid readings and so I can't I don't want to um underplay the need for

um facilitation training um for understanding the value of quality deliberation it's not just report

it's not just I got to say something you know I got to put out words there's connection that

happens there's community building that happens there's understanding that happens when we see each other um and and understand the experience that we're having our communities are are small

and the community building aspect um of a really well-run meeting um should not be underplayed it

is what makes Vermont Vermont it's what builds social capital um and I want everyone to have

access to that um and so I guess I'm just I just want to want to be clear that that's like that's a

hurdle that as we bring hybrid meetings um up as a gold standard we also need to understand that

um that element of it as well i agree Susan 100% and I just want to apologize to the group that

I'm late my day did not go as anticipated lots of pots juggling so I apologize and sounds like you

guys are having a great conversation i think that you brought up one of the I'm talking to Lauren

uh that at the training session in Rutland that there were some meetings around Vermont and one

in Pney i was informed by one of the R regional planning commission members who lives in Poland   where there was uh vulgarity introduced to the meeting intentionally disruptive to the meeting

with no intention of contributing at all to the meeting to show up there and so the question

becomes is it possible to set up the text so that there that can be filtered out ahead of time

uh where it doesn't even get into the general discourse or to the record because it's a big

problem getting it out of the record out of the out to edit it out and that's being de dealt

with as Laura is well that's in a bill yeah um it is a problem and but it's a problem it has been

a problem in a traditionally all public meeting in person as well so um but just with technology

documenting it and keeping it forever for the duration of time potentially or for a month um the

legislature uh tried to tackle that by allowing um redaction for certain specific purposes but

it's very specific but if there's something in the tech where you could figure it out ahead of   time that would be wonderful yeah i don't know if there's a tech ability to do that but yes

so we are on here on the the current and ongoing concerns

did we have anything else we want to add to that part before moving on down the list here

as I'm taking notes on this which you may or may not find helpful the you know for for Frank

to bring that up allows us to put into the the current and ongoing concerns or the tradeoffs

allow us to move into best practices for hybrid access to municipal meetings

and I wonder you know also similarly you know you mentioned Susan you know social capital

by being in person which I think is complicated you know I think there's there's there's a flip

side to that too that the the kind of insular you know you know that but it could be that

we need to say in a best practice for hybrid access to municipal meetings it may be that

that town officials or community members need to become aware of you know need to be aware of the

impact of technology on their participation so I'll give an example the neighborhood planning

assemblies in Burlington which are community um meetings where people gather to discuss

uh various elements often start with a with a dinner before the meeting portion so that

1:45:28

people can have that social capital meeting place and then they move into the business

1:45:35

portion of the meeting and those who want to socialize and meet and feel comfortable can do

1:45:42

so in one one format and then those who want to be there for the business of the meeting

1:45:48

so as we come up with the with the tensions we can move into making some best practices

1:46:00

uh respon sort of responses to those tensions

1:46:08

so with that do we want to move into the to the list of best practices that you   have here and sort of work through those and see if we want to add anything or

1:46:16

elaborate on anything well I guess are there other things that people want to   say on the concerns or you know for lack of better term tradeoffs right

1:46:37

i I think the VLCT would like us to have expense listed on here

1:46:46

is C cost was the first one on the list oh was it oh got I just Unless

1:46:53

expense cost no that's fine no that's that's what it is i was I was scrolled   down too far i didn't see that paragraph that's okay very good

1:47:13

laura Laura I mean I don't know if this is the right place for it but a means for alternative

1:47:20

um forms of communication because visual and um audio may not good visuals good audio

1:47:30

is good alternate means of communication I think for people who you know can neither see or hear or

1:47:41

speak written um part of what we something that came up earlier was like um in the the sort of

1:47:53

like ability to hear and be heard um there's was nothing really in there that talks or addresses

1:48:01

the issues of people who can only communicate by alternative means and so inclusive inclusive

do you have any Laura any examples of that that might be helpful to put into

Well like braille to braille to speech might be one oh well I guess that provides for hearing but

um or braille to uh text to speech or um

yeah I mean I'd have to think a little bit more about about what those sort of

um peripheral device you know peripheral uh communication devices might be but that

um not using one myself i I'm not exactly familiar but

one question that I have is just like who is the definer of the things um and the default continues

to be the town clerk or the select board members and I know that like this is not a place really   for examples but I often I'm constantly thinking of the examples me and my peers have experienced

and so I just want to give one um this was a city a large city like this was like the like one of

the top largest cities in Vermont so this is not a resource issue um two years into COVID um there

was a group of community activists who wanted to share public comment at a city council meeting for

something that they cared deeply about they showed up there were like 15 people at public comment   amazing guess who didn't like it the select board members they did not want to hear from 15 people

about that issue concerned about it and so one of the city council members um had said during that

meeting that the meeting quality was very bad and they looked forward to all of these rules ending

that required hybrid because they quote couldn't wait for those same people to be there in person

look them in the eye and make that comment like it was so I just want to be really careful when we

talk about meeting quality that it is not defined by the systems that are making things inaccessible

we're talking about sausage making i'm not sure how to put that in the notes Kate maybe if there's No it was just Yeah

it was just a reaction to um so Susan had some like generally Yes i agree with the offer of the

um the wording that acknowledges inherent tensions and Susan wrote goal is to   improve accessibility and transparency while maintaining meeting quality and adequately

resourcing communities to do so like whenever we put in a caveat the question then becomes

who defines that caveat and I will tell you time and time again I know who's going to   define that caveat and it's not going to be the people who want access to meetings mhm

we we hear that concern quite a bit here at the Secretary of State's office um and I want

to just acknowledge that that is a deep concern um and people feel this way particularly around

public comment um and I think that when um when there are guard rails put up about the length of

public comment how the dup whether duplicative whether people can say the same thing all of

those things I think we really need to be thinking about um the unfortunate thing is somebody needs

to define it it usually is the public body um and and we can challenge that and explore that

um Kate but I also think um and but they are accountable to the people that they serve and

to the people of the public so they should be responsive um I go back to something that

um was stated at the very at one of our initial meetings i I just think the rules of the road

need to be explained very clearly to everybody at the beginning of a meeting so that people who

are waiting to participate in public comment um are not caught unaware you know I I see that a

lot or are um feel like they've done something wrong because they haven't followed the rules

of the road and I think um good public bodies sort of read the room about whether the their

rules are reasonable um and should be doing that yeah and thank you for that and just to

be clear this was an example where all rules of public comment were 100% followed the city

council members were just very angry that people had the audacity to be able to join online and   share a public comment when they should have been sitting in front of them under their

scrutiny yeah well that doesn't sound uh at all appropriate nor does it sound um responsive to

the concerns that are in front of them but that intimidation happens in small towns and with

uh so-called able-bodied people as well um and it just it's it's who you have in leadership

and what the flavor of that leadership is is going to determine how um inclusive it's going

to be and that seems like that's the elephant in the room you can make all the rules you want in   the world but whether or not they're willing to follow them is something quite completely

different and we have a very divisive time right now that's pushing in the wrong direction

i see a couple more hands up that is it Susan's next on here and then Frank um

yeah I um just want to point out that I think that in our duties um we've we've talked about

recommending best practices for and what we're talking about right now is hybrid meetings but I   think there's another thing that we're going to be doing i hope which is running effective what

we're saying of running effective and inclusive meetings um so there's a whole wonderful school

of thought and training and research on addressing the kinds of issues that we're talking about right

now and they don't have anything to do with hybrid meetings they have to do with how human   beings interact and how to set up a meeting that's well facilitated so that's a separate

um question that I think that we're going to be I hope addressing in a in a in a an additional

um part of this group's work yes and and just to respond to that our first charge in here is

to recommend best practices for running effective inclusive meetings maximizing participation and

accessibility in electronic hybrid in person and meetings meetings of public bodies so and

I think that is something that is running through it's a through line through all of the work we're   doing here um but that is specific charge to us as well so and and we can tease out here

what is what what what tech help is needed to make remote and hybrid meetings happen um but

we yeah we we're going to have to take a step back for sure to hit that and and I think talk about meeting facilitation and and and meetings in general before you really are touching on how that

changes when you add an additional electronic or hybrid element no Frank's up of interest is that

our select board we have had a lot of activity and there's a statement that the chair reads at

the start of the meeting saying that this meeting is essentially I'm paraphrasing is is a business

meeting of the select board which the public is party to but is not uh it's not the purpose

of the meeting is just have the public there and then the public's invited to participate

essentially but the the reminder is is is the purpose of the meeting is to do the business of

the town and so that uh phrase I was looking for it uh on a video to forward over to you to see

what is read at the start of every meeting and might be posted on our website too so

my understanding about that language is that it derives from model rules put forth by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns which is a number organization for their municipalities um

and that is a position that they've articulated now and again saying look we they they tell their

board members their members that meetings are meetings of the public body you know and it is

for the town right but but it's a the meeting the I think the point they're trying to make is that

the business needs to be able to be conducted right which makes a wonderful skeleton for us

to expand on and I think the tension there of course is with the needs for folks in the

1:57:24

town or whoever is attending to have their needs met to express their views and to to be able to

1:57:29

contribute to the conversation in meaningful ways which is the public meeting requirement   section on the agenda but they can limit the time frame of that reason to a reasonable time frame

1:57:41

there hasn't been anything that says that they can't limit it yeah very loyally lawyerly way of

1:57:52

putting it yes and you know I think part of this too is the supposition and understanding that the

1:58:01

majority of our public bodies have elected members who are supposed to be representing the public

1:58:06

so they're representing the public during the course of the business of the body at all times

1:58:12

but that doesn't of course mean that there shouldn't be accountable to the public as   well either on an individual level outside of the meeting or in the meeting collectively so there's

1:58:22

a couple of talking about tensions there's a couple of tensions there um that are worth noting

1:58:37

is everybody familiar with that language

1:58:42

that might be a good thing to set out i mean I I I think that language comes from the League of   Cities and Towns i think it's one perspective it's one way of framing it i'm not sure I'm comfortable

1:58:51

with adopting that as our way but it's something we consider as we're as we're working through this

1:58:57

then we're going to alter that situation with a whole new paradigm when it comes to the meetings   when you up with this report that well I don't think I don't think we have the power to alter

1:59:08

anything quite the legislature would possibly uh but I think I think we should we can like talk

1:59:14

about that in our report that that is commonly happening and that there is this tension and

um that if there was clarity that could be helpful but I don't know whether

I mean the this the reality is statutes you need to be very general very big cover everybody um and

the the advice that the league is giving um is for a specific type of body too so

um but there are other public bodies that would not cover state ones for example so

Megan

Megan did you want to say something i I was muted and I'm unmuted and muted again so I apologize i have to leave the

meeting i have to be somewhere for 12:15 and I miscalculated the time

um I think there's more to be done on this certainly um this you all have the link to

this document um and we could get into you know I just want to reiterate again that this

um this page this hybrid meeting setup options is really uh very draft very early draft so please

um you know it it was to show options for how we might present some information in a way that

was not intimidating and again um can give um some guidelines to for so for a potential grant

um that might be part of the request i know that the original the original act 133 had some

grant funding in it to do this work and I would encourage us to think about that also but please

don't use these as they are um and then um you know I would love to get into these questions a

little bit more but I don't think we're ready to do that today um and I apologize that I need to

2:01:42

And I just want to add that Megan has speaking of intimidating Megan has even more information um that she has uh is is brainstorming onto a onto a spreadsheet so when it comes time there's

2:01:51

there's even more there's more i if Megan's still here I really want to thank both Megan

2:01:59

and Susan for this document it is a really nice uh collection of ideas around the the

2:02:09

junction between technology and and various uh meeting sizes across Vermont thank you so much

2:02:25

so we have about 20 more minutes a little more then um we've been sort of mixing together all

2:02:35

of the different elements we broke out on the agenda and been going with um the breakdown in this document which I think is was a really good way to go um because it hits on all these points

2:02:45

i'm wondering do we want to I know Megan said that she thought maybe we weren't even ready for the

2:02:53

questions for discussion here i'm wondering if we want to take a look at on this document the list

2:03:00

of items as a starting place for for best practice suggestions and work through these and think about

2:03:07

whether we whether we want to add to any of these or what what what spa what other spaces we want to

2:03:13

be you know addressing here um and I'm seeing the it's it's broken down into 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 like

2:03:27

12ish items listed does everyone have access that they can see this list it's up here still isn't

2:03:33

it yeah um it's about to not be up here because I'm sharing it so you may want to share you're So

2:03:42

you're still here Megan okay as I am still here but I I got you let me see if I can figure out how to share it i hate I hate leaving you all at this time because this is exactly what I want to

2:03:52

be here for and I'm I'm But um I look forward to this will not be the last time we talk about it

Megan we're going to talk about this is like this is like the thread that connects every meeting so

you will there's more and I am trying to figure out how I'm gonna but so I'm gonna stop sharing so

that you can then go ahead and share it yourself see if I can get that to make that happen here

um Kate this was my first time meeting you it's great to meet you i really appreciate everything   you have to say and Laura thank you for being here um you and others okay take care here it is

yeah i don't know do you have a sense of how to get the document that she shared in the chat up

there yeah you click on it right is it open on your screen yeah wait so that's going to

Sorry y'all if the document is open then it's easy to do okay let's see

if I can get back into it because it's wanting me to sign and see

the alternate is that we can just talk through each item but that's not ideal

kelly do you have the document open by any chance can you are you able to to

share it i do know I can try sharing my screen and share from there thank

you yeah give me just a second thank you Cynthia for being here oh she left already

how's that for everybody got it we can see thank you okay um where do you want me to

scroll to exactly um I was thinking the the list of best practice suggestions i think it's page two

right there but there we are what do we need best practices for hybrid access to municipal   meetings and this was the one that Megan and and Susan and Frank put together um and do we want

to take a moment to just read through it or would it be helpful for me to read it we've just start

editing it as we go here i know that things have things have been being added as we've been talking

about this this Kelly are you um right do you want are you comfortable officially yeah do you want

me would you be able to drop that in there yeah so just adding in jotting down notes um on there

would be very helpful okay so the first thing we have on here is good visuals right for we're

specifically talking about just hybrid not remote only good visuals can the speakers be identified

this may include stating names visually impaired or phone participants um also good practice for

keeping a record of a meeting for because because you need to have that in the minutes anyway um

I think there's going to be a piece in here about dealing with the people in the room

being able to see the people on the screen and all the people on the screen and the people on   the screens being able to see all the people in the rooms right i mean that's it's it's not just

identifying so much as that interactive element that Susan was talking about like the actual

act of being able to to see and connect with people and then the the feeling of connection   that you're able to build and and how how you can use your visuals to to be part of

that um and I don't have an answer for that or the audio question in terms of I I don't

know what technical tools are out there that would that would be the the the gold standard

and it probably varies the type of room you're using too as well right i mean

the same as a are we just offering suggestions in this shared thing because I mean the 508

stuff is fantastic like and as Laura has shared previously like it is not possible   to start listing exhaustive things because the moment you do you're going to you're going to

not have everything but like for example sharing everything in advance electronically and printed   making sure it is in accessible font making sure that the colors used are appropriate if it is

um electron electronic making sure that it's going to be compatible with screen readers   making sure that all images have accessible alt text right like there's a whole lot like

it really I I don't even know that going down this it it's gonna it's going to exclude and

will never be possible to capture all of it um but the basics of things like sharing

everything in advance virtually electronically and print um right following the 508 provisions

um making sure that um yeah I mean there's just so much I and I don't I really I just wanted to

share like because I don't know if this is part of it but like you know it all it feels a lot because   hybrid meetings are it is our world and that is where things happen um and virtual meetings like

it's a little bit akin to me of like putting out there like best practices for like the pros and

cons of including wheelchair ramps right which is one of the more popular accessibility standards   and so I just you know there's going to be a lot of select board people who are going to

be like "Oo we have a really nice building and the wheelchair ramp is going to make it look   ugly right?" So it's again just I just want to it's who is defining who is defining the thing

right it always needs to come back to who is defining the the opt- out caveat and with the

list of items which is great love the infographic um I would love to see in a best practice guide

2:09:48

that number one is just removed completely um because I don't even agree with the fact that

2:09:54

it would be the simplest setup and I don't think anything about it is part of a best practice

2:10:02

reasons oh I see what you're saying

2:10:08

I know and I want to acknowledge that the the list is going to be limiting i I think it's maybe in in the way I was looking at it was a springboard for sort of trying to find the

2:10:17

the bigger categories of um practices that we want to address and one that you just mentioned

2:10:23

that that that has many many nuances and many many small items you could list under it is the advanced delivery of information the advance you know that the meeting setup piece that that

2:10:35

here you know and that's that that's a big chunk that was in on this list I think already that's it's going to be it's super important right and then and you could drill down and try to

2:10:43

list everything out of that i don't think that's where we're going but I think to try to to try to identify some of the bigger overarching goals here it would be useful i just want to say

2:10:55

I'm jumping in and catching up so I don't know what number one is if it's a recommend

2:11:01

recommended setup or not or if it's brainstorming brainstorming okay um I will say I agree with you

2:11:08

Kate number one is not good for a whole bunch of people uh video is also not good for a whole bunch

2:11:14

of people because they don't have internet access so there needs to be in any meeting the way to join in with only a phone um and whoever is facilitating needs to understand

2:11:24

that there people could be people who cannot see the materials cannot see who's talking

2:11:29

and are appearing just on phone and to your point that's why materials should be provided   beforehand or posted in a public location um so I but I don't understand if one was

a recommendation for how to set up a meeting or not so I I just wanted to add that piece

um raise my hand sorry who's that laura technically was just an old school hand we like

uh Sorry I had an old school hand up um I I do think that maybe best practices can be an evolving

list i I think we've talked a lot about them for the last little while and trying to redefine them

but um you know moving into the issue the sort of the next section about whether or

not one is functional I think stepping back and looking at you know more big picture like

what is what what means are we already using what's already what's readily available like

understanding what what is being used I if anything for those that are doing hybrid

s how easy it would be to make those all readily available um forms um available throughout the

state and then you know and then beyond what's readily available um things that are you know

available with minimum um uh expense or minimum you know confusion what whatever those barriers

are and then talking about what what else is available that we haven't considered like what

provider premises equipment you know will be needed what uh customer I mean are we helping

to provide customer premises equipment like you know inhome you know uh devices for people

to be able to communicate or um you know what telecommunications options are already available

to us and then and then things like we you know I mentioned before like uh braille translators like

other additional equipments um but I think maybe just kind of getting a general sense of what we

already have what's already been in use and then kind of breaking down from there whether or not

that can is something that can be mandated for everybody to use from the beginning from the you

know premeating communications and uh like Kate has suggested websites you know how easily would

it be for you know every town to have a website that communicates in advance And so anyway I I

mean I think just kind of stepping and then we might be more better advised once we've looked

at what's available in terms of technology as to what our um best practices might be

reverse engineering yeah and and Laura I think I just want to respond we are

asked all the time what is required like people call us wanting us to determine

whether someone is complying or not with accessibility standards which is very tricky

um I I think I think it's just very tricky because and I want to be careful that we're not

skirting around like that we are clear as a group what should be required versus what is

best practices because I think there's a lot of public bodies that aren't doing what's required

and that's a problem and I don't want our best practices guides to be used as an excuse for

what's not being what is not actively happening i think that's probably as clear as I my thoughts
can articulate right now but I just worry I think we have to really grapple with that as a group
because there's a lot of instances that I can think about that we have heard about where public
bodies are not accessible and legally they should be doing something different our office cannot
tell them that that is not our role but if we put a bunch of things that are legally required should
or should be legally required into best practices then people could use that as well that's best
practice we don't actually have to do it um and I'd worry about that when you have the legally
required then you have all of a sudden something technology wise fails then the meeting would have
to be suspended you go immediately you wouldn't be able you you wouldn't be able to continue the
meeting type because you're not following the law well I I just come back to the example of a a a
handicap accessible um entrance to the building we would never put that in a best practices
guideline uh it's not a best practice it's legally required no um and so I just want to be careful
um that we are clear as a group what's legally required versus what it would be good so I don't
know is a a Braille I'm gonna get the words wrong Laura because I I don't this isn't my world but is
the the text to Braille reader legally required or is it best practices you know and and that's

2:17:10

what people ask us i'm sure that's what people ask you about but um if it's a best practice and not

2:17:17

legally required then okay but I if it's legally required then we should be clear about that right

2:17:25

understood and that's sort of why I was saying maybe we should look at what what all is available

2:17:30

and and then make the decision as to whether or not we think that's something that should be legally required or if it's a best if if it's a best practice goal like just to you know like

2:17:41

I said we've we've got a list of things we think right now might be best practices but maybe if we

2:17:47

look deeper at the possibilities of what should be legally required then we might you know just

2:17:55

in terms of tech and hybrid meetings but and this is all developing and unknown some in some regards

2:18:04

too so um Susan Yeah yeah i just want to back up what Laura is saying about the you know the idea

2:18:14

like phone being number one it it it's ide not best practice but it is a practice um and it is in

2:18:22

many towns the starting point is where we are and so what I think what's useful and we did some of

2:18:28

this I think in the spreadsheet is it's like okay here's here's a starting point and then say what

2:18:34

are the strengths and weaknesses of this tool like phone has you know hey it's easy most people have

2:18:40

one it's cheap hey you can't see anybody it kind of has a crappy meeting quality you know like and

2:18:46

it helps a town sort of say oh well that's where we are but boy there are a lot of minuses to this helps bring them to the point that they want to take the next Um and so by outlining those steps

2:18:58

and and the the um sort of the uh the work that needs to be done to get there helps not only I

2:19:05

think the municipal leaders but also people within the town and by offering those best practices it offers them a tool guidelines to say oh here's the next thing that our town could do to make our

2:19:15

town even more welcoming and accessible um and um you know again I just want to come back to this i

2:19:22

I really think that the pros and cons list is there there's an important uh there there are

2:19:28

important tensions and trade-offs that need to be I think in our conversation and I don't think pros

2:19:33

and cons are the best way to do it but I don't think we can only talk about the pros because um we need to know what we're up against um in uh so that we can um address the so that we really

2:19:46

can have the both and um otherwise we're just going to be kind of you know yelling at the wind

2:19:51

we need to be able to identify uh the the the tensions uh within so that we can move forward

2:20:03

this might be a good moment to start wrapping up i think so um because I think um all of us

2:20:11

have probably commitments at 12:30 um did you guys go over the next meeting Jenny

2:20:17

we just talked briefly that the next step is are planning for the accessibility guide but I think we're continuing this conversation as well um as part of that right yes yes um does everyone

2:20:30

have We have a current accessibility guide um for voting for voting locations right and our

2:20:39

mission is to create that for voting locations or all public bodies our mission is to produce a guide for accessibility for polling and public meeting locations so yeah including voting but

2:20:51

not limited to okay does everyone have the current accessibility at voting locations access to that

2:21:00

okay um we'll make sure that that's sent to to everybody before the meeting speaking of

2:21:05

providing materials before the meeting um so that everyone can have an opportunity to look at it um

2:21:11

because I think it will as Jenny said that's going to be a continuation of the conversation that we're having but we should be looking at what is previously provided building on that i think

2:21:24

does that sound good to you guys to everyone yes is Kate going to be coming to all meetings

2:21:31

now k are you in good yeah yay we We need Kay and Laura for sure or Lindsay because I'm not really

2:21:43

sure if it's me or or Lindsay well we'll take whoever we get but we love the boys we need the

2:21:50

perspective so yes and thank you everyone for for contributing to this i don't think it was an easy conversation at every point today and I think everyone um brought a lot and put a lot out i

2:22:01

also am kind of curious about the uh town clerks as a constituency that we still haven't uh had

2:22:06

in attendance at any of these meetings yes we need them we had somebody that was changed over I think

2:22:14

or something yeah we we have some some churn there um and uh we do need to get them here somebody

2:22:24

it's good to keep on that clear is there a plan for that because we've we've raised it

2:22:30

at every meeting is there is there a plan is there somebody I can call yeah I mean you can call the

2:22:35

association um I have asked um and I think just somebody hasn't been assigned but um so as long as

2:22:45

yeah it's it has been um requested u and this work has been on their radar I think there's just a lot

2:22:53

of competing priorities right now and um somebody hasn't been assigned to the work so I will make

sure that at least one of us asks again uh before our next meeting um but that that is the issue

well thank you everybody if that is all we're ending a couple minutes early um and our next

meeting is where are we at we're at June 16th 10 o'clock see Monday we're shaking it up um I just

want to um say that it's very likely that I will not be here that day um for that meeting because

it's the legislaturator's uh day um and we have an elections bill we're trying to move and uh we're

getting pulled into the education conversation so I'm apologize if I'm not here uh that is what is

happening if I'm not here i guess I'm going to ask is that going to affect the bulk of

folks here the legislature being back in session that day maybe maybe Sean yeah okay it doesn't

seem like everybody okay that's okay all right well thank you all thank you we when we made the

plan nobody would have thought the legislature come session on the 16th of June so right yeah

there's all sorts of things that are just getting a little kurfuffle but here we are we're rolling   with it i appreciate everyone's patience for me not being here this morning and look forward to

reviewing the video andor the transcript and catching up more fully thanks everyone

what's your email should I move to