

Accessibility Standards Advisory Board December 9, 2024, Meeting Summary Report

Attendance: Jeffrey Normore (Chair), Juanita Ford, Joshua Menchions, Les Gilhome, Trisha Rose, Camille Rose, Kathleen Parewick, Allison Noseworthy, Terri Jean Murray (DPO), Karen Davis (DPO), Kate Dawe (DPO), Rhiannon MacDonald (DPO)

Introduction:

The Board Chair welcomed members with a special mention to newly appointed members. Documents that were provided for review in advance of the meeting were approved. Minister Pike brought greetings to the board and acknowledged the vital role of the Board in standard development and in helping to improve accessibility in the province.

Board Chair Updates:

Accessible Customer Service Standard Development Committee

- Board Chair, Jeffrey Normore has contacted potential representatives for the Accessible Customer Service Standard Development Committee. Selection letters will be distributed before the new year and the first meeting will be tentatively held in January 2025.

Board Request for Meeting Schedule Change

- The Board has received a response from the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities regarding the Board's request to have four full day in person meetings a year. The Minister supports four full day meetings a year and advised that this will include two in-person and two virtual meetings a year.

Vice Chair Appointment

- The process for selecting a new Vice chair is recommended to move forward. A Vice Chair will be appointed from existing Board Members.

Closed Session

- As per correspondence from the Minister, As the Accessibility Standards Advisory Board is a category 3 under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** and the Disability Policy Office is the legislated secretariat of the Board under the **Accessibility Act**, the Minister is unable to support this request for closed session(s).

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DPO Updates:

NL Disability Benefit

- The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Disability Benefit was announced in June 2024 and aims to improve the financial security of persons with disabilities who have low income. This benefit includes:
 - Up to \$400 per month to those who qualify (\$4,800 annually), beginning in July 2025; and,
 - \$1,200 annual contribution to a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), a long-term savings plan for those who qualify, beginning in 2025.
- An engagement session was held with the Network of Disability Organizations to help identify, prevent and remove barriers to access the NLDB. DPO is actively working with government departments to help remove identified barriers that may impact persons with disabilities in accessing the NLDB.

Accessibility Plans

- DPO is currently drafting the Annual Report for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Accessibility Plan.

Accessibility in Training and Technology

- There have been significant developments regarding accessibility of training opportunities, and the use of accessible technology. There are two courses under development with the goal to help educate the Public Service on accessibility and disability.

Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC):

Accessibility Standards Canada facilitated a presentation on the process of Standard Development and shared a status update of ASC's accessibility standards.

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Standard Development Discussion:

The Board discussed preparations for the Accessible Customer Service and Information, Communication and Technology standard development committees. The Board also discussed the next priorities for standard development. The Board Chair will make recommendations to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities on behalf of the Board.

Next Meeting:

The next Accessibility Standards Advisory meeting will be scheduled for February 3, 2025 (virtual). The next in-person meeting will be scheduled for March 3, 2025 (in person).

Minister Pike advised he would like to attend the next in-person Board meeting and an invitation will be sent for March 3, 2025.