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| ​​Minutes​ | |
| Digital Accessibility and Equity Governance ​​Board Meeting (DAEGB)​ | |
| **​​DATE​** | ​​March 18, 2024​ |
| **​​TIME​** | ​​10:00 AM​ EST. |
| **​​MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY​** | ​​Ashely Bloom, CIAO, EOTSS​ |

1. **Introduction and Roll Call**

Jason Snyder, Secretary, Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (present)

Ashley Bloom, CIAO, Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (present)

Mark Fine, Assistant Secretary for Administration, Executive Office of Administration and Finance (present)

Heath Fahle, Assistant Secretary for Finance, Executive Office of Economic Development (not present)

Antoine Harrison, SCIO, Executive Office of Education (present)

Faye Boardman, COO, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (present)

Olivia James, Executive Office of Health and Human Services (present)

Tim Reardon, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (present)

Paolo Franzese, COO, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (present)

Maria Michalski, SCIO, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (present)

Dave Bedard, SCIO, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (present)

Brian Chase, SCIO, Executive Office of Veterans Services (present)

Yarlennys Villaman, Director of Community Affairs, Governor’s Office (present)

Dr. Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Commissioner, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (present)

John Oliveira, Commissioner, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (present)

Julia O’Leary, GC, Massachusetts Office on Disability (present)

1. **​​Roll Call approval of Minutes**

​​Members present voted in favor of approval of January 24, 2024 meeting minutes, one abstention by Mr. Reardon.

1. **​​** **Annual Digital Accessibility Report Timeline**

Chair Bloom presents the Annual report timeline. No questions raised about the timeline. EOTSS Chief Digital Officer, Devyn Paros, emphasizes that this is a tight timeline and rapid turnaround in terms of review and feedback. This is putting people on notice that there needs to be active and responsive engagement to complete the report by the deadline.

* March: Create annual report outline
* April 16th: Board meets to discuss fiscal year 2025 goals and objectives
* May, first week: Board meets to vote on goals to include in the annual report
* May, last week: Board meets to review draft of annual report
* June, last 2 weeks: Board reviews final report and meets to approve report

1. **Chief IT Accessibility Officer Updates & Next Steps**

**Updates**

CIAO Bloom provided the following updates.

Chair Bloom has been meeting with stake holders. She appreciates folks bringing in others to the stakeholder meetings. It is helpful in better understanding the secretariates and who will be a good stakeholder and ally in this process and assist with various needs of the various secretariates.

The application for public nomination process was launched in mid-February. It was open for two weeks and ended up getting a good number of very well-qualified candidates. Chair Bloom is leased with response.

A standard job description for each accessibility officer has been developed.

Beginning to prepare for the expiration of the statewide ITS61 Accessibility vendor contract with Operational Services Division.

Has been working with document remediation vendor to create accessible background check forms. Chair Bloom gave thanks to Rob and the Office of Disability for updated certification form and supplemental educational materials. This is a big win.

Chair Bloom is actively tracking notice of proposed rulemaking which will be receiving feedback in April from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division to ensure that accessibility is being integrated in all of digital government state services as well as local and municipalities.

Secretary Snyder remarked that it is great that ITS61 is being redone, it is critical and absolutely essential for all state application teams to make sure they give input, he suggests that we understand what the application teams have had issues with and what they would like to see moving forward and how to provide value to the commonwealth . Chair Bloom shared that they are putting together a strategic sourcing team with agencies who have used the contract to assess experiences and will base new scoring strategy based on this feedback to ensure best services and best value for the commonwealth.

**Next Steps**

Chair Bloom outlined the following next steps:

1. Kick off effort to start drafting an outline for accessibility Stategic plan.
2. Hiring central team positions and assist with hiring secretariate accessibility officers.
3. Continue to meet with stakeholders within each secretariate. Chair Bloom will take a deeper dive into procurement, legal, communications etc. to make sure we have everyone’s voice involved. Will continue working toward annual report.
4. Managing candidates during background check phase through appointment phase—will finish up within the next month.

Tim Reardon asked for more information about secretariate accessibility officers. Will all secretariates need someone designated in this position? Can someone on staff be assigned to this role? Chair Bloom expects 100% job duties and responsibilities to be dedicated to accessibility and that they report to a CIO or one level down, so long as it’s to someone with the influence and authority within the hierarchy to ensure that we have accessibility flowing down through the agencies. There will ultimately be a public reporting dashboard. The job description is finalized and ready to go today.

Mr. Reardon asked about the funding source. Secretary Snyder remarked that we need a budget model that works and is effective.

1. **Board next steps**

1.Public candidate background check and appointment

2.Discuss Board strategic goals and vote on public board members at the April 16th meeting (voting on candidates will depend on how long the background check process takes).

3.Vote on Board strategic goals in May.

4.Review annual report draft review in May.

5.Vote on annual report in June.

1. **Board Remarks**

Antoine Harrison shared some remarks; it is good to have someone as part of your team to assess if we are meeting standards and goals of an organization, thinks this is really good.

1. **Public Remarks**

None.

1. **Review Public Board Member Candidates**

Chair Bloom thanked Sarah, Mary, Yarlennys and David for assisting with application review and application process itself. Emphasized that we have some very good candidates that have applied; 26 applications, 14 lived disability experience, 18 candidates have had or currently have experience with digital accessibility barriers. Narrowed down to top nine for review and potential background check phase. Chair Bloom opened the floor for questions.

Antoine Harrison asked about outreach process. Chair Bloom shared about the press release and social media outreach and outreach to various organizations throughout the state, and making it “pretty easy to apply”. Very happy to receive as many candidates as we did in only a two-week timeframe.

Dr. Sotonwa asked about the criteria used to narrow down to the final nine candidates. Was it based on lived experience, professional work experience?

Chair Bloom discussed 5 criteria: Massachusetts state residency, 18 years or over, lived experience with disability, having disability/access experience, and having a general perspective on digital accessibility. We made it broad and had people submit a resume along with a personal statement of interest. We also looked at assistive technologies i.e. screen readers or dictation, and we factored in other areas of intersectionality.

Julia O’Leary asked if the number of public members will be remaining at 3. Chair Bloom said yes, still 3, we might expand to 5 just because of the qualified candidate pool—this would go to board vote.

**Public Board Member Candidates**

Chair Bloom shared background information and experience about each of the top nine public board candidates. For anonymity purposes, the information was shared in a de-identified manner without candidate name or personal information.

Julia O’leary commented that that the candidates sound fantastic, glad we got a positive response to our call for applications. No matter who we pick, we will wind up with great board members. She expressed nervousness about sending this many people through for background checks, sought a recommendation for how we decide between these applicants. Seeking feedback from other board members on the number of public members 3 or 5. Mentions that the board had talked about our rational for 3. She feels more comfortable with 3 but wants a robust discussion on what it would mean to change the number of board members.

Chair Bloom emphasized that we want to make sure we have representation from different industries and different backgrounds—picking three will be extremely difficult based on candidate profiles—looking for diverse set will be key. Happy to take any additional feedback.

Board members discussed the number of public board members. Tim Reardon inquired about where 3 came from. Dr. Sotonwa expressed interest in having 5 public members.

Secretary Snyder agrees that the board needs more information on candidates that will be more helpful to the board in making these decisions.

Chair Bloom suggested that we might find a way to share personal statements with the Board but feels very hesitate to put out names or disclose disabilities at this point in the process.

Dr. Sotonwa suggested there could possibly be a way to communicate this information via email with board members. EOTSS attorney, Christina Kovach provided some high-level guidance on open meeting law and described potential issues with “serial” communication.

1. **Motion to Adjourn**

11:16am the meeting was made by Secretary Snyder and seconded by Maria Michalski. A vote was taken by roll call; all members present voted in favor.