

Olmstead Consumer Taskforce

Community Access Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: January 14, 2026

Time: Approximately 2:00–3:00 PM

Location: Zoom

Attendees: Joel Vander Molen (Chair), Andria Pooley (Staff), Ernie Geiger, Megz Stroback, Jessica Williams, Edward Esbeck, Kris Graves, Laura Leise (HHS Aging & Disability)

Committee Updates and Discussion

Transportation and SEATS Updates

- Ernie Geiger shared that he has not yet received follow-up from Angie McConnell regarding SEATS and transportation concerns.
- Ernie plans to attend the next Transportation Committee meeting in person and contact the SEATS Director directly to seek updates and accountability.

Personal Care and Waiver Concerns

- Joel Vander Molen reported a significant reduction in approved personal care hours (approximately one-third reduction effective February 1).
- Discussion highlighted broader systemic issues related to personal care funding, workforce shortages, and reimbursement rates in Iowa.
- Members discussed possible advocacy strategies, including contacting legislators, requesting exceptions to policy, and engaging media outlets if necessary.

Legislative Advocacy

- Joel encouraged members to contact their state legislators regarding policies that affect community living, including the "Work Without Worry" initiative and waiver reductions.
- Ernie and other members committed to writing to their representatives and sharing correspondence with the group to support coordinated advocacy.
- Megz Stroback emphasized the importance of outreach to legislators who may be undecided or less familiar with disability-related policy impacts.

Upcoming Advocacy Events

- Edward Esbeck shared information about an advocacy event and press conference planned for January 28 in Des Moines related to disability policy and employment issues.

Olmstead Plan Update

- Laura Leise provided an update on the Iowa Olmstead Plan.
 - The plan is in the final stages of approval within HHS.
 - Anticipated publication is early February 2026.
 - A condensed, user-friendly version will be available, including one-page summaries of strategies and goals.
- Laura will share the plan with Andria Pooley upon publication for distribution to committee members.

February In-Person Meeting and Video Project

- The next full group meeting will be held on **February 13, 2026**, with an in-person gathering at the Pella Library beginning around 9:30 AM.
- The committee plans to join the full Olmstead meeting via Zoom at 10:00 AM.
- After the meeting, participants will work on recording a video about the Olmstead Consumer Taskforce.
- Josh (videographer) will assist with filming and production.

Transportation Coordination

- Transportation logistics for the February 13 meeting are pending confirmation due to state and university vehicle policies.
- Andria Pooley and Laura Leise are awaiting clarification to ensure appropriate coverage and compliance.

Action Items

- **Ernie Geiger:** Contact SEATS Director and attend next Transportation Committee meeting; write to state representative.
- **Joel Vander Molen:** Proceed with waiver appeal; explore advocacy and legislative outreach.
- **All Members:** Contact legislators regarding waiver issues and disability-related legislation.
- **Laura Leise:** Finalize Olmstead Plan approval and share upon publication.
- **Andria Pooley:** Send meeting reminders the morning of meetings; coordinate transportation guidance and group communication for February meeting.