

**From:** [Alma Vasquez](#)  
**To:** [Michelle Crocker](#); [Chet Janik](#)  
**Cc:** [Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Letter to BOC for public comment & public record regarding ADA law  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 3:58:51 PM

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September 21st, 2021

This is for public comment. This is for public record for tonight BOC meeting.

I wrote a letter already regarding the mileage. This letter is in regards to the ADA law and the current FM systems being used. I have emailed and spoken to your office already and shared additional information.

In light of the on going meetings I have attended and the comments I have received in the last several meeting from both Commissioners and a person or two that spoke at a meeting, I want to inform you that part of the ADA Law includes that there should be signs posted making the public aware that these devices are available upon request. These should be at the entry way and easily seen as people are walking in.

The public may not know to ask if they don't realize you have them available. Also, I understand that not all systems are universal for every that is hard of hearing. It's usually the case in most things in life including programs and resources very rare is it a one size fits all.

I did email your office to share that while a loop system is an option and in my opinion a really awesome options as for standard to upgraded hearing aids most if not all modern day hearing aids are Bluetooth compatible & it allows to you stream directly into the hearing aid without the person asking for assistance or a device to me reserved or handed to them. It also does not require batteries or additional attachments such as headphones that wear and tear over time. It also isn't something that you'd have to replace very few years to keep current and updated. This is way I mentioned the loop system because it's will save time and many.

Yes, you are correct the loop system will not help everyone. If they don't wear hearing aids then they would need an FM system or assistive listening device like it to be able to hear like the ones you already have however they do appear out dated and worn including the inner earphones you offer with them. You also only have one inner ear phone that had for both ears while the others only offer one. People don't only have one ear. Giving them two allows them to use it in both if necessary enhancing the quality of the hearing and being able to engage in the conversations.

While I understand you have to do your research and do what is best and most cost effective, the ADA law has been in law since 1990. The governmental center in which you are in was built within the last 10 or less years. This isn't something new. I also understand business are only required to meet the minimum requirements to comply.

As an individual who personally wears hearings aids and have the majority of my life and as a person who works for Michigan Rehabilitation Services an agency which promotes and assists people of all diverse backgrounds with physical and mental disabilities to reach their employment and career goals, I have an obligation and the right to protect people with disabilities and that includes advocating for them. MRS assists both businesses and customers to address barriers for people with disabilities.

I have names of organizations and business that I can refer you to if you need additional assistance in improving the Governmental Centers current systems to be better in compliance with the law. I would hope that Leelanau County would want to do better than the bear minimum to better serve people with disabilities and help remove or minimize barriers.

Not only do people of all ages have disabilities but for a county that is home to a large population of retirees, I would hope you realize there is a huge population we serve that can benefit from better tools, devices, & signage in the building. It would be residents, visitors, and perhaps even your own employees, your families, and perhaps even one of you.

I also think after the way things have been handled at the last 3 meetings I have attended by some of the Commissioners and another County in a leadership role that all of Leelanau County employees need some training on the ADA law and how to assist and treat people with disabilities with respect and dignity.

I had already previously shared several of these suggestions and have yet to receive any response in writing from our Commissioners.

I do believe as a governmental entity having been made aware of the FM system and the headphones & how it was impacting my ability to hear and the issues that arose the Commissioners could have and should have supported and made clear statement that folks had to step up to the appropriate area to ensure that I could transmit the sound into the FM system I was using. The County could have purchased a headphone set that went over the ear but you chose not too. The ADA law isn't new. People with disabilities isn't new to our area. In addition all people should be treated with respect and dignity regardless of their abilities, education, status, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sex, gender, employment & etc..

I do appreciate Mr. Bunek apologizing for his inappropriate and rude comment and action. The way I was talked to and treated was disrespectful.

It was inappropriate that even after I advocated numerous times at a previous meeting that people who work for our county still did not comply & made rude comments not only to me as well as for all others to see. While I don't have a problem advocating for myself, I have to ask why did I have to advocate for myself in a governmental place with county leaders when the ADA law has been around for several decades & human decency and respect should be first nature?

Some people with disabilities don't know how to advocate from themselves and may not know their rights. I do know my rights & to advocate for myself and others. I know Leelanau County can do better!

I hope to see at the next meeting what actions you will take to make our governmental center better for all people to access and interact and engage if they wish too with our governmental employees and leaders.

Sincerely a very concerned citizen,

Alma R. Vasquez

Sent from my iPhone