

Approved December 11, 2020

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Full Commission Board Meeting
Lincoln Firefighter Reception Hall
241 Victory Lane, Lincoln NE
October 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

A. Opening

Chairperson Candice Arteaga called to order the meeting of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) full commission board meeting on October 7, 2020, at 8:32 a.m. at the Lincoln Firefighter Reception Hall, 241 Victory Lane in Lincoln, Nebraska.

B. Notice of Open Meeting

Chairperson Arteaga announced that the notice of the meeting was duly given, posted, published, and tendered in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, and all board members received notice simultaneously by email. Publication of official notice of the meeting appeared in the September 30, 2020 edition of the Omaha World Herald, a legal newspaper of general circulation in this state, as required by the Open Meetings Act. The agenda was kept current in the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's office and on the board's website. Materials generally used by the Board for this meeting were available in the public folder for inspection by the public, and in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is available for the duration of the meeting.

C. Roll Call

For the record, Board Members Ms. Candice Arteaga, Ms. Frances Beurivage, Dr. Stacie Ray, Mr. Jonathan Scherling, Ms. Sandra Shaw and Mr. Norman Weverka all present. Mr. Robert Feit, Mr. Jeremy Fitzpatrick, Ms. Diane Schutt were absent. NCDHH Staff members present are Mr. John Wyvill, Executive Director; Ms. Stephanie DeGroot, Business Manager and Ms. Sharon Sinkler, Interpreter Program Coordinator. Sign Language Interpreter present was Mr. Ben Sparks. Ms. Margaret "Mydge" Heaney with Exclusive Reporting Inc. providing CART services.

D. Review of Agenda

Executive Director John Wyvill reviewed the agenda with the Board Members.

E. Acceptance of Agenda

Board Member Mr. Norman Weverka moved to accept the agenda as written. Board Member Dr. Stacie Ray seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Dr. Ray, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw and Mr. Weverka all voting aye. Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Schutt were absent.

F. Acceptance of Minutes

Chairperson Arteaga asked for changes or corrections to the September 11, 2020 meeting minutes.

Board Member Mr. Norman Weverka moved to accept the minutes for the September, 11, 2020 board meeting as written. Board Member Dr. Stacie Ray seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Dr. Ray, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw and Mr. Weverka all voting aye. Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Schutt were absent.

G. Chairperson of the Board Report

1. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Reinstatement Request – CulturalLink, LLC

Executive Director John Wyvill expressed his appreciation to the members of the board for coming together on short notice for this special meeting. We are here for the express purpose to consider the reinstatement request for CulturalLink, LLC which is a company that is providing VRI services to the Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) Hospitals. CHI has 14 hospitals with VRI services. Director Wyvill shared that CulturalLink, LLC is currently not providing VRI services as they are waiting on the reinstatement of their license in Nebraska.

Director Wyvill shared the process for VRI Companies needing to renew their license. VRI Companies renew every 2 years, and have a 30 day grace period. During review with our communication with CHI, NCDHH learned that CulturalLink was still providing services to CHI Hospitals in Nebraska. NCDHH then notified CHI that CulturalLink was not licensed, CHI ceased working with CulturalLink immediately waiting for them to get their license reinstated. According to the regulations established, any license needing to be reinstated after the 30 day grace period had to be approved by the board.

Director Wyvill noted that in the board packets the members will find the explanation for why CulturalLink allowed their license to lapse. Ms. Sharon Sinkler, Interpreter Program Coordinator is in the room if any of the members have any questions. Director Wyvill shared with the board that he and the staff recommend reinstatement of the license for CulturalLink, LLC.

Board Member Mr. Weverka asked for clarification on the sign language interpreters that CulturalLink uses, do they use qualified sign language interpreters? Ms. Sinkler added that with the licensing of the VRI Companies, sign language interpreters that work for the VRI Company don't have to have individual Nebraska licenses, as long as the VRI Company has a license. That interpreters license is covered under the umbrella of the VRI Company. The VRI Company has to provide a roster of the sign language interpreters that they use when they are applying for the Nebraska License and with each reinstatement request.

Board Member Mr. Weverka asked if CulturalLink, LLC meets that requirements to be reinstated. Ms. Sinkler replied that CulturalLink does meet the requirements to be reinstated.

Board Member Mr. Weverka expressed his concern if CHI is trying to avoid hiring on-site sign language interpreters. Does this force the patients to use VRI for their sign language interpreter needs? Conversation between the members regarding having on-site sign language interpreters verses using a VRI Company. Also added that the impact on COVID has had on being able to have on site sign language interpreters.

Board Member Mr. Scherling asked if there has been any complaints about CulturaLink, LLC. Director Wyvill responded that there have been no recent complaints filed with the VRI Services with CHI. Director Wyvill explained that Nebraska is the only one in the country that regulates the VRI providers and their licenses through the Commission.

Board Member Mr. Norman Weverka moved to approve the reinstatement of VRI license for CulturaLink, LLC. Board Member Mr. Jonathan Scherling seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beaurivage, Dr. Ray, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw and Mr. Weverka all voting aye. Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Schutt were absent.

H. Public Comment

Board Member Mr. Jonathan Scherling asked if the board could collaborate with Lincoln Association of the Deaf (LAD), and Omaha Association of the Deaf (OAD) as a way to see what the community needs are, if their needs are being met.

Conversation between the members on when NCDHH had a Town Hall Meeting at the OAD Hall in Omaha with the State of Nebraska Chief Medical Officer attending.

Director Wyvill added that at the September 11, 2020 board meeting we approved a strategic planning process in which we will be scheduling a virtual Town Hall meeting in early November. This information has been communicated with the Council of Deaf and Hard of Hearing stakeholders, asking for suggested dates. Director Wyvill shared that Chairperson Arteaga will facilitate the virtual Town Hall meeting, anticipating that these concerns / needs will be communicated at this time.

I. Old Business

No old business to report

J. New Business

No new business to report

K. Adjourn

Board Member Mr. Norman Weverka moved to adjourn the meeting at 9 a.m. Board Member Dr. Stacie Ray seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beaurivage, Dr. Ray, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Shaw and Mr. Weverka all voting aye. Mr. Feit, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Schutt were absent.

Next meeting is:

- December 11, 2020 from 8:30a – 1:30p
Lincoln Firefighter's Reception Hall
241 Victory Lane
Lincoln NE