

Approved on March 14, 2025

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of
Hearing Full Commission Board Meeting
Held at – 4600 Valley Rd, Room 4A, Lincoln NE
December 13, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

A. Welcome

Chairperson Frances Beurivage called the meeting to order for the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) Full Commission Board December 13, 2024 at 8:26 a.m. at 4600 Valley Rd, Room 4A, Lincoln NE.

B. Notice of Open Meeting

Chairperson Frances Beurivage announced 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 November 30, 2024, 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 NCDHH website. The materials generally used by the board for the meeting today are on a table in a public folder available to the general public for the purpose of this meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act {Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1412 (8)}. 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, Ms. Valerie "Vali" Hitz, Ms. Diane Schutt, Ms. Sandra Shaw, Mr. Jonathan Scherling and Ms. Peggy Williams were all present for roll call. Ms. Brooke Fitzpatrick and Dr. Kay Crabtree absent. NCDHH staff members present were Ms. Kim Davis, Lead Advocacy Specialist, Ms. Kelsey Cruz, Marketing & Communications Specialist.

Sign Language Interpreters present were Ms. Amber Tucker and Mr. Ben Sparks. Ms. Sharon Sinkler was a sign language interpreter that was present for the zoom meetings only. Inclusive Communication Access Nebraska provided Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services.

D. Review of Agenda

E. Acceptance of Agenda

Ms. Williams moved to accept the agenda as presented. Ms. Shaw seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

F. Acceptance of Minutes

1. Full Commission Board Meeting on September 13, 2024

Ms. Arteaga moved to accept the September 13, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Williams seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

Procedural notation: Chairperson Beurivage noted for the meeting minutes in the meeting on December 12, 2024, there was a procedural error. The Chairperson moved the meeting into closed session by asking the staff to leave, no public members were in attendance, and the door to the meeting room was closed. All notes during the closed session of the meeting, (Interview of Candidate #1) are not to be recorded in the transcript or forwarded to NCDHH.

G. Executive Director Search

1. Interview (Closed Session)

Ms. Arteaga moved to go into closed session for an interview for the Executive Director position at 8:29 a.m. Ms. Schutt seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

Ms. Arteaga moved to go back into open session at 10:41 a.m. Ms. Schutt seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

Back in open session at 10:41 a.m.

H. NCDHH Chairperson's Report

1. Board Member Appointments

Chairperson Beurivage shared that Governor Jim Pillen sent letters to six individuals and appointed them to the Full Board. These members are not official until they are approved by the legislature. Except for Dr. Kay Crabtree,

she is a replacement for Mr. Bob Feit. Ms. Kelsey Cruz has tried to reach Dr. Crabtree numerous times with no success. Technically, Dr. Crabtree could have come to the meeting today because Mr. Feit resigned from the board.

- Dr. Kay Crabtree replacing Mr. Bob Feit – term until January 31, 2026
- Mr. Richard McCowan replacing Mr. Jonathan Scherling – term until January 31, 2026
- Ms. Valerie “Vali” Hitz – term until January 31, 2027
- Mr. Mark Anderson replacing Ms. Candice Arteaga – term until January 31, 2026
- Mr. John Culver replacing Ms. Peggy Williams – term until January 31, 2027
- Ms. Julie Ann Mruz replacing Ms. Brooke Fitzpatrick – term until January 31, 2027
- Ms. Diane Schutt seat has not been replaced – current holdover until new member is appointed
- Ms. Frances Beaurivage and Ms. Sandy Shaw’s current term ends on January 31, 2025

Ms. Williams asked if any of the new members have any background in deafness. Chairperson Beaurivage responded that NCDHH did not get any information from the Governor’s office regarding this. Ms. Williams asked if we could request that information from the Governor’s office. Ms. Kelsey Cruz will follow up and see if she can obtain this information. Ms. Williams added that the current board members should have a right to obtain that information.

Conversation ensued between the members regarding the new members that were appointed by the Governor’s office.

Ms. Arteaga shared with the members that this will be her last meeting, she has appreciated working with everybody here.

Ms. Williams shared her concerns for the new board members coming in who are not aware of the history that NCDHH has been through. Noted that members of the board are going to write letters of concern to the Governor’s office.

2. Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) Advisory Committee Appointments

Chairperson Beaurivage shared that we have two reappointments, Mrs. Tami Richardson Nelson and Commissioner Tim Schram. Also received was a new application from Mr. John Wyvill to serve on the TRS Committee.

Ms. Arteaga moved to accept the reappointments of Mrs. Tami Richardson Nelson and Commissioner Tim Schram. Ms. Williams seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

Ms. Williams moved to go into closed session for the discussion of Mr. John Wyvill's application for the TRS Committee at 11:02 a.m. Ms. Shaw seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

Ms. Arteaga moved to go back into open session at 11:12 a.m. Ms. Shaw seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

Back in open session at 11:12 a.m.

Ms. Shaw moved to accept appointment of Mr. John Wyvill to the TRS Committee. Ms. Arteaga seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

3. Interpreter Review Board (IRB) Appointments

Chairperson Beurivage shared that we have two members who are seeking reappointment to the IRB, Ms. Margie Propp and Ms. Meghann Cassidy. In addition, we also have Ms. Bethany Koubisky seeking to fill an interpreter position and Mr. Shawn Shannon who would be filling a deaf position on the IRB.

Mr. Scherling moved to accept the reappointments of Ms. Margie Propp and Ms. Meghann Cassidy to the IRB, also appointment of Ms. Bethany Koubisky for an interpreter position and Mr. Shawn Shannon for a deaf position. Ms. Arteaga seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

I. Management Team Report

1. Deaf Centric Hospital Update – Ms. Kelsey Cruz

Ms. Cruz shared with the board members a copy of a PowerPoint that was provided by Ms. Ronda Rankin. Recently a meeting was held by zoom with the

Deaf Centric Hospital organizers and NCDHH. The consensus of the meeting was just that Deaf Centric Hospital could count on support from NCDHH for the 2025 event.

2. Interpreter Review Board (IRB) Update – Ms. Kelsey Cruz

Ms. Cruz referenced the board packet handout detailing IRB discussion about a Canadian certificate and an intermediary license. One is a Canadian certificate to review, the IRB voted to suspend the applicant based off of the rules and regulations and their training hours. The second is a request for an intermediary license and the IRB denied the acceptance of Canadian certification of interpretation based off what is in the rules and regulations.

The last item for update on the IRB report was regarding a complaint shared and discussed. Included in the packet is the details of the complaint from the investigator that NCDHH contracted with. The IRB voted to take no disciplinary action based on the complaint.

3. Legislative Items – Ms. Kelsey Cruz

Ms. Cruz referenced the legislative item in the board packet. Discussion was had regarding a request to update language in a Nebraska State Statute and effective communication during an arrest. Ms. Davis will work with the legislative subcommittee to finalize what is being proposed to the legislature in the 2025 session.

Mr. Scherling asked if during this year's legislative session if NCDHH will be having a Deaf Awareness Day. Ms. Cruz replied that this could easily be planned.

4. Advocacy Specialist Monthly Report

Brief discussion between the members on the handouts that were provided.

Ms. Williams moved to accept the management team report as presented. Ms. Schutt seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beaurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

The members took a break at 11:35 a.m.

Back in the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Ms. Arteaga moved to go into closed session for an interview for the Executive Director position at 12:01 p.m. Ms. Shaw seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

J. Executive Director Search

1. Interview (Closed Session)

Ms. Williams moved to go back into open session at 2:15 p.m. Ms. Shaw seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

Back in open session at 2:15 p.m.

K. Old Business

Ms. Beurivage informed the Board that the Governor’s office did not approve our request to keep the position of the Interpreter Coordinator open. We have been advised to start the process for development of a new Interpreter position through DAS.

L. New Business

1. 2025 Meeting Dates

- March 14, 2025
- June 13, 2025
- September 12, 2025
- December 12, 2025

Ms. Williams moved that the 2025 proposed meeting dates be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Arteaga. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw, and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

M. Public Comment

No public comments.

N. Adjourn

Mr. Scherling moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:35 p.m. Ms. Williams seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with Ms. Arteaga, Ms. Beurivage, Ms. Hitz, Mr. Scherling, Ms. Schutt, Ms. Shaw and Ms. Williams all voting aye. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Crabtree absent.

Next Meeting Dates:

- December 16, 2024 by zoom and 4600 Valley Rd, Room 4B, Lincoln NE